

# RHETT SMITH (MBA '17)

**Industry:** Education

**Where he works:** Roxbury Prep (Uncommon Schools)

**Job Title:** Director of Operations

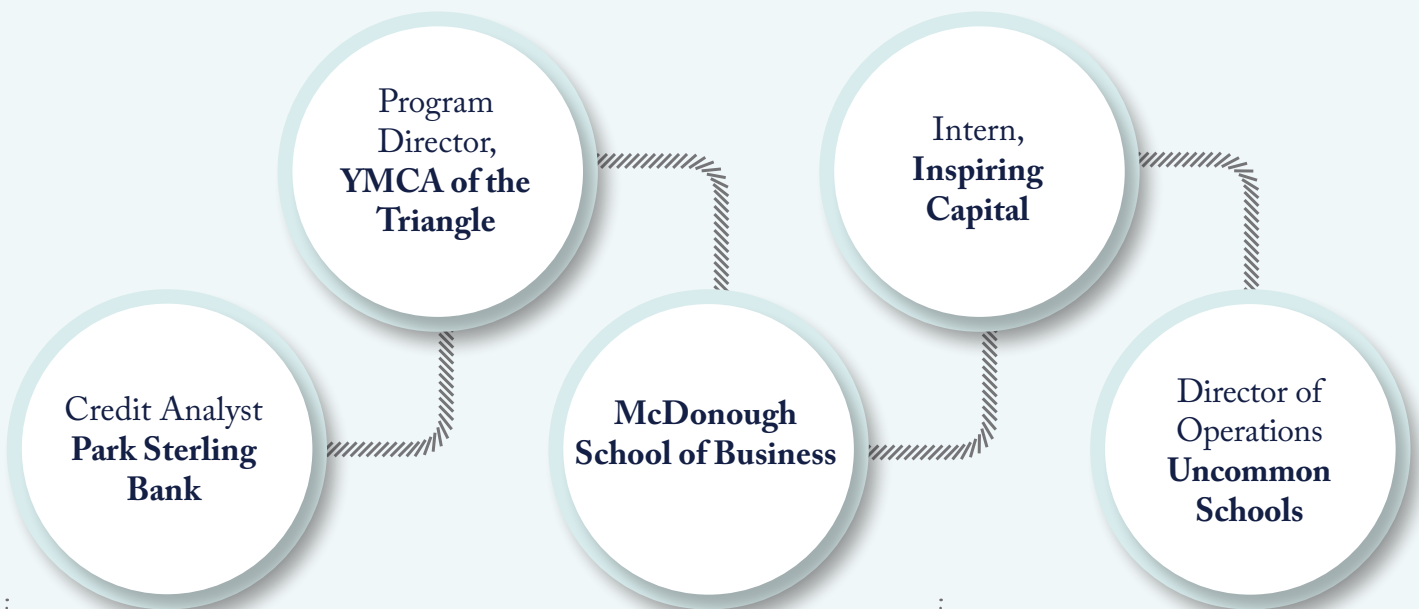


Schools are large and complex institutions with business goals directly tied to the life outcomes of students. Uncommon Schools is a network of charter schools on the East Coast that serves tens of thousands of students a year and has seen remarkable results: 82% of their student population is economically disadvantaged, yet they have managed a 99% college acceptance rate over 20 years.

As operations leader at Boston's Roxbury Prep, Smith focuses on the business side of the school, with wide-ranging responsibilities from hiring to student retention to financing.

**Job Functions:** Operations // Strategy // Finance

## SMITH'S CAREER PATHWAY



“I think of business school as the bridge between the two very distinct careers that I had before. After college I went into finance for four years and just hit that point where I felt like I was done. I totally flipped and became a director at a summer camp for a couple years.”

### Useful classes:

Social Entrepreneurship  
(*Melissa Bradley, adjunct professor*);  
Negotiations  
(*Michael Fitzgerald, professor*);  
Fundamentals of Finance  
(*Lee Pinkowitz, associate professor*)

“I met the founder of Inspiring Capital at a Net Impact conference and applied shortly after that. Something I would encourage people to realize is that even if you get an offer in October or March and you think it's the last offer you're going to get, it won't be; that's ridiculous. The reality is that some opportunity will always come along. Pick the right job, not the first one.”

## CAREER ADVICE FOR MBAS:

**Ask alumni about their career arcs, not just their current positions.** “For most people you network with in business school, their current careers are not where they will be forever. I wish I had asked more questions about career trajectories when I was networking. How did this person get to where they are and what does he or she think they will do next? How will their current job prepare them for the future?”

**You took a bet on yourself for business school, take a bet on yourself for employment.** “The private sector will give you comfort and security, but “impact” sectors like education will give you outcome dividends: fulfillment, gratitude, a daily challenge, a competitive salary and benefits package, and an enjoyable work-life balance. There is an immediate impact on efficacy, development, and tangible growth that you won’t find at more established firms.”

**Focus on problem-solving with a strategic lens.** “The MBA at Georgetown offers a lot of different paths, but it’s important to adhere to the hard skills of operations and finance as well as the soft skills of management, presence, and negotiations. When you’re managing people, you will be thrown into a negotiation situation at any given moment on any given day, and you don’t want to ever find yourself in a position of either caving in to every request or of being someone your staff can’t approach.”

## IN HIS WORDS:

“As an operations leader, I can make an immediate impact on the efficiency and efficacy of the school. I didn’t come into the role thinking I could solve the educational achievement gap; that’s ridiculous. But I can figure out how to make a single school run well and get students at that school onto an equal playing field, regardless of their skin color.”

### THE IMPACT SPECTRUM: Uncommon Schools

