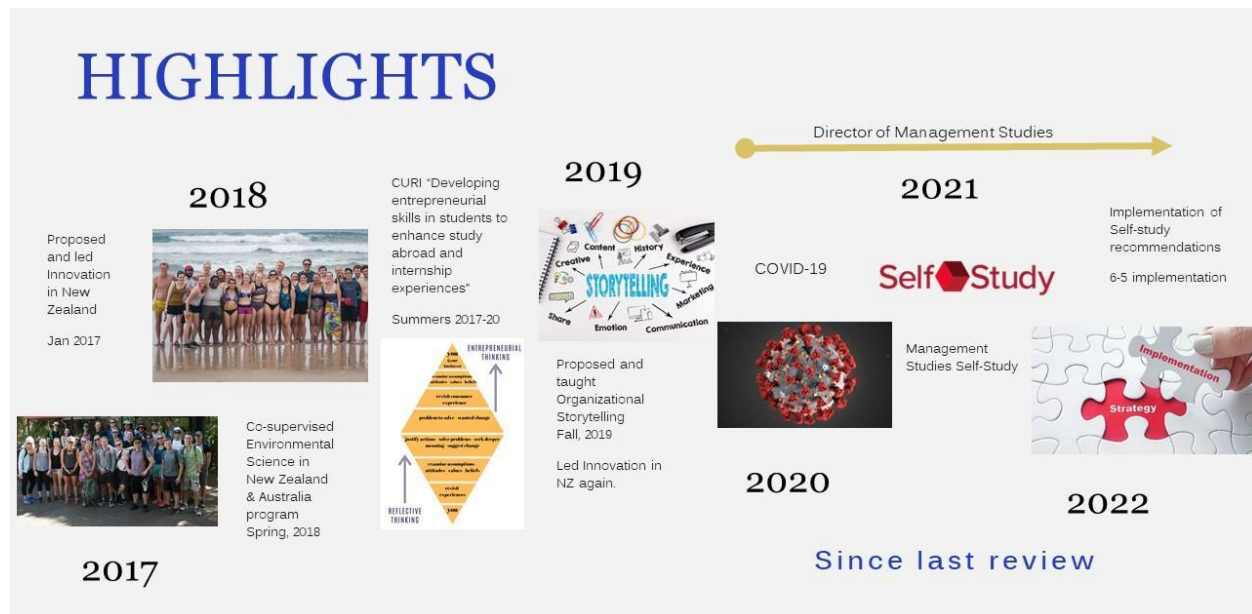


Statement of Professional Activity

Sian Christie, Director, Business and Management Studies, Entrepreneur-In-Residence,



Over my 19 years at St. Olaf College I have worked tirelessly to develop business curricula that supports the changing needs of our students and helps to prepare them for a dynamic work world. In the business field, students learn best when they apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world problems. I achieve this application through these three interrelated methods:

- Active, team-based learning: Students work in teams on challenging tasks and projects to develop their critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.
- Supporting vocational discernment: I help students reflect on their values, interests, and skills, and identify career paths that align with their values and goals.
- Exploring issues from local, national, and international perspectives: I encourage my students to think critically about the complex challenges facing our world, and to develop solutions that are sustainable and equitable.

These teaching methods are closely aligned with the college's mission to challenge students to explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community.

I am passionate about infusing creativity and innovation into the curriculum. My classes are rooted in motivating students to develop curiosity and turn ideas into action. I teach a broad variety of business classes: Design Thinking & Entrepreneurship, Organizational Storytelling, Marketing, Innovation in New Zealand, and Management Policy & Strategy.

This lens of innovation also informs my leadership style. I have been the Director of the Management Studies program for the last three years and, as a result of our 2021 self-study, have implemented curricular changes that will:

- More effectively scaffold a student's progression through the concentration;
- Improve our ability to assess the program;
- Promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

I have been fortunate to have had many opportunities to collaborate and serve with a variety of talented staff and faculty at St. Olaf from all over campus to develop new interdisciplinary connections and programs. As an entrepreneur I strive to work on the edge of my comfort zone and I am constantly learning new techniques from others that can improve my teaching.

I appreciate this opportunity to share my teaching philosophy and achievements at St. Olaf and will conclude with my goals for the future. For more information you are encouraged to view my website [here](#).

Teaching

a) Active, team-based Learning

I thrive on pushing myself to be current and constantly improving. I *enjoy* teaching. I like to have *fun* in the classroom. I find it unnerving when I look out into the classroom and see a student who is not engaging in the material. It is for this reason I gravitate to active learning pedagogies where, by definition, students are required to engage in the material. I employ team-based learning techniques, case study analysis and community-based research where students work with a for-profit or non-profit client organizations. For example, in my marketing class, students work in teams to develop strategic marketing plans for local for-profit and nonprofit organizations. In the last two decades around two hundred and fifty organizations have benefited from this free consulting service, which builds positive relationships between the college and the community and gives students valuable hands-on experience.

I have also always included Alumni speakers in most of my classes (around 15 per year). These executives are carefully selected so that their expertise can support and reinforce class topics through sharing their business experiences and wisdom. Students routinely share that this is a major asset of my classes and reinforces the importance of networking. For example, in my capstone Management Policy and Strategy class, student teams are provided a real case by an Alumni senior executive and have one week to research the industry and provide a solution.

I am also an early adopter to new technologies and continue to introduce these new tools in my classroom. For example, this year my classes used artificial intelligence as a brainstorming technique.

Since my last review I have developed three new classes:

- *Design Thinking & Entrepreneurship* where students acquire entrepreneurial skills through using the Design Thinking Process. Design Thinking is a human-centered approach that uses an empathetic approach to understand customer's needs and then building a product or service through an iterative prototyping process.
- *Organizational Storytelling* where students explore the craft of storytelling and study a variety of media (analogue and digital) on which the narrative can be most effectively delivered.
- *Innovation in New Zealand* (see below) where, during a January study abroad program, students explore the unique innovation eco-systems that have developed to support entrepreneurship and economic development in New Zealand.

These new classes had strong enrollments. They all include major experiential assignments that challenge the students to creatively solve problems and think of new ways to provide economic and/or social value.

b) Vocational Discernment

I am committed to helping our students discern their vocational skills and interests in my roles as an educator and a mentor. I consistently work with students beyond the classroom in a variety of capacities. I will typically supervise a CIS major and/or other independent studies most years where students are searching for deeper immersion in a particular topic area. For example, this semester I am working with two students pursuing individual majors. One is working on "Strategic Management and Sports Marketing" and the other "BioDesign and Marketing Strategies". I also very much enjoy working with my academic advisees as they navigate their college career and watch them develop over the four years they are here. I spend a great deal of time helping them to discern their goals and developing plans on how they will successfully accomplish them. I typically have the maximum number of advisees or more.

The Collaborative Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (CURI) program has allowed me to delve into topics of interest with my students and to collaborate with peers. Collaboration with student researchers is particularly rewarding to me. I have had the opportunity to complete the following CURI projects in collaboration with student researchers, and in the first two instances with my colleagues, as part of this program:

- "Economic Impact of the Arts in Northfield" in collaboration with Prof. Paul Niemisto (Music) (2011-12) where we assessed the economic impact of the Vintage Band Festival held in the region.
- "Ecotourism in Japan" in collaboration with Prof. Katherine Tegtmeier Pak (Asian Studies/Political Science) with support from the Luce/LIASE grant (2015-16) where we spent two weeks traveling in rural Japan with five St. Olaf Students. We then spent six weeks completing recommendations and building a website for our Japanese partners.
- "Developing entrepreneurial skills in students to enhance study abroad and internship experiences" (2017-2020) – please see more information that I include below

These diverse topics represent my broad interest in researching systems that have both economic and social impact at the local and international level.

It has also been important for me to build and maintain a close relationship with the Piper Center. Throughout the years, I have been heavily involved in supervising and attending the following programs and events:

- Mayo Innovation Scholars, Social Entrepreneurship Scholars (summers 2012-2020).
- Ole Biz and Ole Cup events.
- Promoting relevant internship/job opportunities for students.
- Mentoring ten internships in a typical year.

c) Local, national, and international perspectives

I have traveled widely both personally and professionally, and I revel in the opportunity to explore new cultures and experiences. I grew up in New Zealand, and although I have lived in the United States since 2000, my Kiwi origins do provide me with some understanding of being an immigrant. I am fortunate to have avoided difficulties that other immigrants can often suffer; being white and English speaking but nonetheless, I still assess the local and national practices from an “outsider’s” perspective. This double identity has been a benefit in the classroom, where I can challenge norms and practices and ask students to consider other viewpoints. For example, in analysis of on-line advertising and target audiences, I often lead students beyond their comfort zone on issues ranging from gun control to health care.

In my time at St. Olaf, I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to travel on a number of international study abroad programs. In 2011-12, I co-supervised Global Semester. This program took twenty-seven students to seven countries over five months: Switzerland, Germany, Egypt, India, Thailand, Hong Kong/China and South Korea. It was an enlightening experience in countless ways. I learned with, and from, our students and students and colleagues at host institutions, as well as café cooks and servers, bus and rickshaw drivers, tour guides and local monks and priests. I immersed myself in a broad range of cultures, religions and practices. For example, we arrived in Egypt, only months after President Mubarak had been ousted and the country was rejoicing in the power of the people. It was a defining moment in the history of that country that I felt privileged to share in, and I know I, and my students, will never stop watching the news coming out of Egypt or all the corners of the world that have educated us.

My experience on Global Semester motivated me to propose my January term class in New Zealand entitled “Innovation in New Zealand”. I intended to offer the class every two years and did so in 2017 and 2019. COVID temporarily halted international travel, but I will be offering the class again this January, 2024. This course examines how innovation creates economic and social value for New Zealand, a country recognized as being one of the most entrepreneurial in the world. The twenty-four students on this month-long January program travel the length of the country and explore the factors that contribute to this unique entrepreneurial culture. In order to provide students with the opportunity to investigate the innovation eco-systems that have been developed to support entrepreneurs, I have forged partnerships with New Zealand based universities, innovation councils, government agencies, incubators, venture capitalists and local entrepreneurs. The course is one of the few study abroad opportunities that typically attracts more male participants than female.

I was also the Assistant Field Supervisor for our *Environmental Science in New Zealand & Australia* program in Spring, 2018. This physically demanding program offers students the opportunity to compare and contrast the environmental policies and the geographical and biological diversity between the two countries while learning about the histories of the indigenous cultures. The five months of travel included so many forms of immersive learning from active pursuits like hiking, swimming, snorkeling to classroom lectures and field experiments. I might add that it was on this program that I was uncharacteristically sea sick traveling from Gladstone to Heron Island in rough seas while attempting to look after the students. Obviously, I take all teaching duties seriously!

All of these experiences enrich my teaching by providing me with multiple international and cultural experiences to draw upon. International education, in turn, has promoted my research interest into how students might use and develop entrepreneurial skills to enhance study abroad and internship experiences. Reflective practices are crucial for learning and they are especially important in the experiential learning environment (Perry, 2012), such as internships and study abroad. I have conducted two CURI research projects with student researchers that included literature reviews, surveys of study abroad participants, and personal observations. Our research found that entrepreneurial thinking complements reflective thinking (Kubberod, 2017; Yamazaka, 2004; Neck et al., 2014). That is, entrepreneurial thinking is the next step to reflection on off-campus study programs. I plan to pilot build on these findings through including relevant activities in my Innovation in New Zealand course this January.

In the last three years I have been teaching an Internship Reflection seminar for our international students. The college offers this course free of charge so that the students are in compliance with their visa requirements. I have enjoyed developing a curriculum designed to acquaint students with the cultural norms and practices of the U.S. working world and offer a space for them to meaningfully reflect on their experiences and evaluate where their skills, interests, and values best fit with their future professional endeavors. This summer, I co-taught the virtual class with a colleague, Prof. Kelsey Baumann (Business and Management Studies). We developed a two-tier set of reflective exercises based in our classroom management system designed to effectively meet the different experience level of the class population: students who have not completed the seminar in the past and those that had.

To date, my experiences have helped me to be open and excited by new and different perspectives. I am sensitive to, and respectful of, cultural differences and have had the opportunity to develop my own international competencies. I believe I have also built the capacity to facilitate students', professor's, and administrators' intercultural learning. I am delighted that I will be able to expand on this capacity as I have been accepted to the Fulbright Specialist Roster and intend to complete a project abroad during my professional leave in spring 2025.

Leadership, Collaboration & Service

I enjoy critically evaluating curriculum to ensure student needs are met effectively. As the Director for the Business and Management Studies program, I have made changes in our overall

curriculum to support diversity and access and to improve student outcomes. The management studies program has grown considerably since its inception in 1998 and is now at a transitional point due to pending retirements and the needs of students who have survived a time of constant and challenging change. The global pandemic taught academe that we need to continually innovate in order to prepare our students for their uncertain future. As the primary author of our 2021-22 self-study, a key goal was to assess how best to build a robust business curriculum that will prepare our students to be ethical leaders and changemakers. As a result, I have already implemented two important programmatic changes this past year. I developed and proposed a Fundamentals of Business class as a prerequisite for our concentration in Business and Management. Research into our former pre-requisite, Principles of Economics, indicated a significant barrier with some of the highest levels of failing grades and withdrawals in the college. The new course removes that barrier, ensures comprehensive coverage of all the program's stated intended learning outcomes and scaffolds our required senior capstone experience through introducing the requirements in the first class. I also changed the program name from Management Studies to Business and Management to better reflect the courses offered and growing interest in business from prospective students.

Because my managerial, marketing and entrepreneurial skills can be helpful in a variety of spheres I have provided assistance where appropriate. For example, when we needed to pivot quickly to online classes due to COVID I organized a virtual Coffee/Happy Hour panel on best practices for remote learning so we could quickly disseminate ideas on what was working and where there were challenges. I subsequently co-presented a CILA workshop on "Building Community in an Online Environment"

I have enjoyed engaging in learning communities with my peers and actively seek out relevant opportunities. I participated in the ACM FaCE grant, Making the Most of Immersion workshop (2019) and the Critical Global Learning Community of Practice organized by the Smith Center for Global Engagement (2021). More recently, I have signed up for the CILA learning community on artificial intelligence.

Another recent collaboration was in 2019, where Professor Alden Adolph and I provided three design thinking workshops for our two classes: Alden's Introduction to Engineering Design course and my Design Thinking class. This novel opportunity modeled and developed a truly interdisciplinary experience in the study of innovation. The student course evaluations revealed that, not only did the students enjoy working closely with their peers, they also benefited greatly from hearing a variety of perspectives on their process and final project. In fact, the collaboration worked so well that we presented at the Center for Innovation in the Liberal Arts (CILA) to share our findings. Alden and I again collaborated in spring semester, 2022 and intend to continue into the future.

My leadership at the college and my collaborations demonstrate the investment and role I play in the college's future. As a result, I have regularly asked to present workshops for our faculty through our CILA program. The topics have included community-based research, infusing creativity in the classroom, organizational storytelling, and design thinking.

Finally, I have served on a wide variety of campus committees: Faculty Life Committee, Media Studies Advisory Committee, Academic Civic Engagement Advisory Committee, Marketing and Communications Editorial Advisory Board, the Institute for Freedom and Community Director's Council, and the Curriculum Committee

Goals for the Future

I have greatly enjoyed working at St. Olaf for the last nineteen years. I will continue to make a difference in the lives of my students and for the institution, and adapt to the changing educational and vocational needs they both may have. My future plans are:

1. To continue to introduce new supportive techniques and technologies into the classroom;
2. To continue to work on ways to better meet the needs of students and clients in community-based research assignments;
3. To develop more meaningful individual assessments in my classes;
4. To complete a project as a Fulbright Specialist (location yet to be determined) to witness alternative educational models and procedures that can be translated to our liberal arts context;
5. To continue my close relationship as a faculty champion of the Piper Center programs;
6. To continue to pursue my passion for infusing creativity and innovation into the curriculum and to work with college partners to develop related interdisciplinary programs;
7. To continue to provide leadership for the Business & Management Studies Program.