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Welcome class of 2021! I hope each of you are excited as I was when I started the EMBA program last year. Let me first start with what I was expecting when I started this program and I will end with what I've experienced thus far. Many, if not all of you, have an internal fear of failing and not making the cut in this rigorous program. When our class was asked what our biggest fear was in coming back to school, most answered failure or looking stupid. The amazing part of this program is that the faculty does a great job selecting applicants who they know can understand and contribute to the class. Just look around you on your first day of orientation. The crazy part is that everyone feels the same way you do. It will take some time to get over the anxiety, but each of you will find a way.

As for me, I have worked in the ambulance industry for over 20 years. I am currently the Managing Director of a new start up ambulance company in San Diego called LIFEwest Southern California. Right now, my job requires me to travel to San Diego nearly every week and come home on weekends to be with my family and go to school. Although this lifestyle is extremely busy, there is enough time to manage school, family, and work.

Part of the reason I chose the ASU EMBA program was for the healthcare track and for the faculty which I have the opportunity to learn from. An additional reason I chose this program is for the opportunity to learn from my cohort. These programs require participation from the students and the value of learning from your classmates is amazing. I have already learned of new ways to solve some of my organizational problems from people outside of my industry.

I am excited about the healthcare track and the opportunity to understand it on a much larger scale. You will find that over the next few months you will be introduced to new concepts in finance, accounting, statistics, economics, management, and marketing. As you go through each of these courses, you will be able to apply these new concepts to your current work environment and learn from other in your class.

Each of your professors and faculty will go out of their way to ensure that you gain and understand the concepts to in their courses. The professors will put on extra class days, set aside office hours, and answer all their e-mails all to ensure your success in the program. Not to mention, that Erica Lizarraga and Shannon Krohn will make sure that you don't miss a step as you progress through the next two years. Finally, student services offers a career counselor and a finance manager to help with new career opportunities and student loans.

I know the workload may seem scary and often overwhelming; however, you will find that it is often all in your head and when challenged, we tend to rise to that task. There are a few things that you can do to better help prepare for your coursework. First, understand that success in the program is not measured by a passing grade, rather it is measured by the understanding of the concepts and the ability to apply these concepts in your life and at work. Second, work on managing your time. You will need to determine what your priorities are and you will need to

set aside enough time for you to complete your course work and readings. Third, understand that some of these classes will take more time to study and you should prepare for this. For me, it was managerial accounting. I needed to give myself several additional hours a week to better understand costing and allocations. For others in my class, they needed more time with statistics or economics. Fourth, take risks, they payoff. You may not always know the answer but be first in raising your hand and sharing ideas. You tend to learn faster, and you will help others in the class. Fifth, read your syllabus and be prepared. The more you come prepared to the class, the more you will have to offer. Not only will this reflect in your grade, but your cohort will appreciate the value you bring to the class.

I know that starting an EMBA program is exciting and scary at the same time, but the value that this will bring you will far outweighs the sacrifice you are investing now. For me, I already have a better understanding of business and I have already applied many of the concepts to my new business. As you enter this new class year, I want to leave you with this, network with each of your classmates and build a strong and supportive cohort. The class of 2020 has built great friendships already and each of us believe that if one person fails, we all fail. Don't focus on the competition but learn as a group. I wish you the best of luck and just know, all of us in the 2020 class are here to help you through this transition