



**Raul Martinez**

**Hometown:** Los Angeles, CA

**Venture:** Small Crew Sailing

**Why did you decide to apply to be a VF:** I think it's a great way to continue to develop leadership and I enjoy physical activity.

**Biggest fear when applying to be a VF:** I think being a VF is a great way to conquer fear. When I was a kid my kayak flipped over at sea about a mile away from shore. It was December and the current was too strong to outswim it. I lost my ore and got dragged out at sea for about an hour, couldn't see anything but water. Got lucky and got rescued by a fisherman named Keith. So my biggest fear when applying was doing something water intensive. I'm now leading small crew sailing, no better way to conquer fear than to spend 7 days with it, so what's good Poseidon?!?!

**The most rewarding part of VF experience so far:** The one-week training with all the VFs this past fall – talk about bonding!



**Mariet Kenkovova**

**Hometown:** Banska Bystrica, Slovakia

**Venture:** Andes (Winter)

**Why did you decide to apply to be a VF?** My good friend Shady was a VF (Class of 2016; you can see his picture by the printers in Forum) and he said serving as a VF was his most rewarding experience at Wharton. I can attest to that; the VF program is amazing and provided me with the most applicable leadership training.

**Biggest fear when applying to be a VF:** I was not an outdoorsy person; I never really camped, or hiked for more than a couple of hours, and I was terrified of pooping outside.

**The most rewarding part of VF experience so far:** Observing my teams engaging in deep and honest feedback and pushing each other to become better members and leaders every day of the venture. And of course, bonding with my VF partner Minwoo – we became very close.



**Mike Lowhorn**

**Hometown:** St. Louis, MO

**Venture:** Utah Canyoneering

**Why did you decide to apply to be a VF:** As a venture participant I saw what a fun and challenging opportunity it was to be a VF. I wanted to join their ranks and experience the peer-to-peer leadership from a truly exceptional group of people both at the VF level and the classmates we will lead on the venture.

**Biggest fear when applying to be a VF:** Comparing the VF experience to my experience in the military.

**The most rewarding part of VF experience so far:** The support from the McNulty Center and the commitment from the VFs to build their leadership skill set is inspiring.



**Nellie Tan**

**Hometown:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Venture:** Tall Ships Sailing

**Why did you decide to apply to be a VF?** Developing myself as a more well-rounded leader was a priority when I came to Wharton. I thought the VF program was a great opportunity to push myself mentally and physically, to train myself to be more resilient under various circumstances. The program has without a doubt exceeded my expectations.

**Biggest fear when applying to be a VF:** Most of my friends would not consider me an outdoorsy person (instead, you'd probably get uproarious laughter if you told them I signed up to do this). I was nervous about being compared to ex-military / triathlete / mountain god / other crazy physical archetypes.

**The most rewarding part of VF experience so far:** So many – but honestly VF training sits up there. Sleeping under tarps with insects crawling next to your face, after not having showered for a week, does wonders for bonding.



**Raley White**

**Hometown:** Durham, NC

**Venture:** Antarctica

**Why did you decide to apply to be a VF?** One of my goals for my Wharton experience was to develop my coaching skills and gain greater understanding of group formation processes. I found the VF experience to be the perfect match combining my interest in the outdoors with the opportunity to learn from the leadership development methodology. Furthermore, I wanted to connect with a new group of Wharton classmates that had similar development interests.

**Biggest fear when applying to be a VF:** I would say my biggest concern was living up to the expectations of participants during the venture in terms of being an effective coach and guide through the leadership development process.

**The most rewarding part of VF experience so far:** The new VF friends that I have made and being a part of the awesome community at Wharton!



**Shannon Irish**

**Hometown:** Staten Island, New York

**Venture:** Andes (Spring)

**Why did you decide to apply to be a VF?** There are 2 main reasons I wanted to be a VF: The first is that I wanted to personally challenge myself not only physically but also mentally to lead in a very different capacity than what I was used to (corporate management); the second reason was that I wanted to make an impact on my peers' leadership growth journey, and I could not think of a more exciting way to do so.

**Biggest fear when applying to be a VF:** Although I have outdoors experience from camping with my family, I was not confident that I would be physically fit enough to meet the challenges of my venture and was not sure how my body would handle the high altitude.

**The most rewarding part of VF experience so far:** I personally have become more confident in my abilities as a leader and an adventurer. I have also loved getting to know my fellow VFs and program participants, from whom I have learned a great deal. My venture experiences have been the most impactful that I have had at Wharton.