

Meet the Venture Fellows

20 WG22 Venture Fellows

10% of VFs* have **0 to 3**
days of camping experience

1:1 male-to-female ratio

Countries represented: *Canada, China, Colombia, Ireland, Singapore, UK, US*

Industries represented: *Consulting, Finance, Healthcare, Military, Education*

* 10% across the VF Class of 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022

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Juliana Rivera

Hometown: Bogotá, Colombia



Why did you apply to be a VF?

I was attracted to the model of servant leadership which focuses on serving the community and helping others achieve their definition of success. I wanted to engage in experiential learning during my MBA. The outdoors are a unique opportunity because it is much more challenging to test yourself, learn from others, and see how you react when you're cold, tired, and hungry.

What makes a good VF in your opinion?

Someone who is willing to observe, empathize, listen, facilitate, help others see things that may not be as evident to themselves, and be there for the team. It's hard because we're used to telling people what to do, but as VF your role is to support others in the process of self-discovery, allowing them to grow.

What was your biggest fear or a misconception?

That you need a lot of outdoor experience and physical training. Before this, I had only been camping once for one night.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of being a VF?

Finding my own voice and learning what works for me personally as a leader. I also feel more empowered to explore the outdoors and was pleasantly surprised to find that I enjoy being outdoors.

Genevieve Weikert

Hometown: Spring City, PA



Why did you apply to be a VF?

I wanted to build my resilience and confidence, especially in stressful and uncomfortable situations. The VF program is an unmatched structured opportunity to develop as a leader.

What makes a good VF in your opinion?

Someone who leans into the multi-faceted, ambiguous nature of the role. The role involves a lot of coordination with participants, other VF's, your committee, the McNulty team, etc. A great VF is someone committed to developing themselves through engagement with an awesome community!

What was your biggest fear?

My biggest fear was surviving August training! I am very into sailing but had limited camping experience. I had no idea what to expect physically or mentally (intentional ambiguity!!), and was not in the best shape coming off my summer internship. While the week was certainly challenging, it was incredibly rewarding.

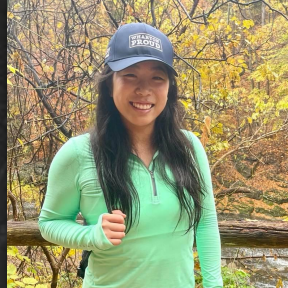
What is something you've learned about yourself as a VF?

Knowing when to speak up and when to listen is incredibly important. In certain situations I need to interject less or differently. This is something I learned about myself as a VF on the Navarino venture, and I am continuing to work on.

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Yiyi Chen

Hometown: Irvine, CA



Why did you apply to be a VF?

I heartedly believe that being a VF is the best leadership development opportunity at Wharton because it is the safest way to learn to be a leader in raw, high stress and uncertain environments where there is little that you can control other than your own actions as a teammate and a leader.

What makes a good VF in your opinion?

Embracing uncertainty in all settings, exercising patience and empathy in leading others, and endurance to push through physically, mentally, and emotionally

What are some common misconceptions about the program?

That you need prior camping experience! No experience required, but being open/willing to learn and push yourself to develop outdoors skills is important. I had zero days of camping experience prior to being a VF!

What has been the most rewarding experience thus far?

My most rewarding experience is always hearing about others' debriefs post-venture. Ventures are stretch experiences physically, mentally, and/or emotionally so hearing how much participants have learned about themselves is the best feeling.

Winston Wu

Hometown: Singapore



Why did you apply to be a VF?

I applied to be a VF for three reasons - (i) to stretch myself, (ii) to foster deeper relationships with the Wharton community, and (iii) to give back. WLV's mission is "to develop leaders who excel in stressful and ambiguous environments". To facilitate a group under such conditions would be a new experience for me, and I wanted to utilize the opportunity to acquire new leadership skills.

What makes a good VF in your opinion?

I would say a good VF is someone who has a strong desire to help others grow, possesses practical skills and leadership experience, and has a unique personality / trait.

What was your biggest fear about the program?

Heights and bugs.

What have you learned about yourself as a VF?

I've learnt that my sense of humor has a bigger than expected positive impact on others. And that I learn the most about leadership through failure.

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Samad Wahid

Hometown: London, U.K.



Why did you apply to be a VF?

There's a lot of leadership opportunities at Wharton but I saw this and continue to see this as the best one. I'd had a couple of amazing yet somewhat dangerous experiences in the outdoors before where the importance of team-working and leadership really struck me.

What are some common misconceptions about the program?

Needing to be as fit as Cliff Foreman, aka Captain America - it probably doesn't hurt tbh.

What makes a good VF in your opinion?

Someone who is not afraid of being challenged mentally, physically and emotionally but rather looking to be challenged. Someone eager to develop and open to feedback about their shortcomings. Someone who is just as eager to support others in their growth.

What has been the most rewarding experience thus far?

It was August training for me. Spending a week in some forest in the middle of nowhere with the other VFs: getting to know one another; getting lost together (several times); spending hours setting up bear hangs with some; eating far too much dessert at camp with others.

Cliff Foreman

Hometown: Washington D.C.



Why did you apply to be a VF?

I was excited to continue to develop my own leadership style outside of the military and to learn about leadership through others with experiences different from my own.

What makes a good VF in your opinion?

Grit to persevere through difficulty, discomfort, and uncertainty. Selflessness to put team goals and others' concerns ahead of your own. Humility to constantly be looking to learn from all those around you and never think you've got all the answers.

What was your most rewarding experience as a VF?

Being the Intensives VF for Quantico. It was incredibly rewarding to see classmates persevere through military training and quickly grasp how it could be applied to their roles as business leaders. I was inspired and blown-away by my peers' insights at the end.

What have you learned about yourself as a VF?

I've recognized that it's easy for me to get hyper-focused on completing a mission, sometimes to the detriment of holistic, longer-term learnings and development. I now appreciate that the learning and introspection that occurs en route to the objective is often more important than what's at the objective!