

Brit Middleton McClellan
Foster School of Business | University of Washington
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Education

University of Washington | Foster School of Business | Department of Management and Organization | Seattle, WA

Doctoral Candidate in Strategic Management & Technology Entrepreneurship

Expected 2026 Graduation

Dissertation: Dependence Reimagined: Extending and Enriching Conceptualizations of Dependence Between Directors and Their Firm

Committee: Emily Cox Pahnke (Co-Chair), David G. Sirmon (Co-Chair), Alicia DeSantola, & Isabelle Cohen

University of Southern California | Marshall School of Business | Los Angeles, CA

Master of Business Administration

Executive MBA

University of Cincinnati | College Conservatory of Music | Cincinnati, OH

Bachelor of Fine Arts

Dissertation Synopsis

This dissertation reimagines board dependence by moving beyond traditional employment-based definitions to examine how different forms of dependence, such as social and financial, can influence director behaviors. I evaluate primarily how this dependence can alter behavior during key punctuated events such as acquisition premiums. By using acquisition premiums as a governance outcome, this demonstrates that directors who are dependent on their board role may adjust their behavior in negotiations. This work introduces a multi-dimensional framework of dependence that is rooted in behavioral governance literature and shows how personal incentives, future board prospects, and potential demographic traits can shape strategic oversight. Ultimately, this dissertation contributes to governance literature by exploring the empirical inconsistencies found in previous governance research and offering a nuanced and dynamic understanding of how dependence can both compromise and enhance fiduciary duty and traditional monitoring mechanisms.

Research Interests

- Corporate Governance - Boards of Directors
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Entrepreneurship – scalability of organizations, resource mobilization and acquisition
- Technology Entrepreneurship – strategic actions in uncertain conditions
- Business Model Reemergence

Research

Sirmon DG, Hitt MA, McClellan, B. | Resource Orchestration's Role in the Implementation of Mergers and Acquisitions, **accepted at *Organizational Dynamics***

Weiss, T., Rindova, V., McClellan, B. | Constructing Entrepreneurial Engagements Under the Extreme Uncertainty of Societal Grand Challenges | **2st Round R&R at *Academy of Management Journal***

The Imagined Deemed Possible: How Entrepreneurs Shape Possibilities for Addressing Societal Grand Challenges through Entrepreneurial Means | **Reject & Resubmit at *Strategic Management Journal***

Works in Progress

McClellan, B., Sirmon, DG, Cox-Pahnke, E | Boardroom Compensation Tradeoffs: Financial Dependence and Director Behavior in M&A Negotiations | Preparing for Submission

Kotha, S.; McClellan, B; Rindova, V. | Shaping Strategies in the Electric Vehicle Industry | Preparing for Submission

Conferences

Organized Symposiums:

Dependence Reimagined: Extending and Enriching Conceptualizations of Dependence Between Directors and Their Firm | Panel Symposium | Participants: Donald Hambrick, James Westphal, David G. Sirmon, Michael Withers, Sam Garg | **Academy of Management Annual Conference** | Copenhagen, Denmark | July 2025

Moving Forward by Looking Back: Reexamining the Role of Dependence in Board of Directors Literature | Panel Symposium | Participants: David G. Sirmon, Steven Boivie, Christine Shropshire | **Academy of Management Annual Conference** | Boston, MA | August 2023

Paper Presentations:

“Designing For Market Shaping: Lessons from Tesla and Its Early Rivals in the Emerging EV Market” | **Strategic Management Society Annual Conference** | San Francisco, CA | October 2025

“Grand Challenges as Extreme Uncertainties: How Actors Embrace Liminal Experiences” | **Strategic Management Society Annual Conference** | London, UK | September 2022

Participation:

- STR Doctoral Consortium – Academy of Management 2023
- Smith Entrepreneurship Research Conference Doctoral Consortium – University of Maryland, 2023
- West Coast Research Symposium – University of Washington, 2023, University of Oregon, 2024
- Harvard Business School Theoretical Organizational Modeling (TOM) Society Summer School, 2023
- Advanced Causal Inference Workshop – Northwestern University, 2023

Teaching and Research Assistant Experience

Instructor of Record | Foster School of Business – Strategic Management – MGMT 430, Undergraduate Capstone Class

- Combined Median: 4.9/5.0, Winter, 2024

Research Assistant | Foster School of Business – Department of Management and Organization | University of Washington | Seattle, WA

- Dr. David G. Sirmon – Summer 2023
- Dr. Emily Pahnke – Summer 2022
- Dr. Alicia DeSantola – Summer 2022, Summer 2025

Teaching Assistant | Foster School of Business – Department of Management and Organization |
University of Washington | Seattle, WA

- **Entrepreneurship - Grand Challenges for Entrepreneurship** | ENTRE 372 | Dr. Emily Pahnke | Winter 2022 | Spring 2023
- **Entrepreneurial Strategy** | ENTRE 510 | Dr. David Tan | Winter 2022 | Daytime MBA section
- **Introduction to Entrepreneurship** | ENTRE 370 | Dr. Alicia DeSantola | Spring 2022 | 2 Sections | Winter 2023
- **Entrepreneurial Strategy** | ENTRE 510 | Dr. Alicia DeSantola | Winter 2023
- **Corporate & Competitive Strategy** | BA 500 | Full-time MBAs | Dr. David Tan | Autumn 2022
- **Strategic Management** | MGMT 430 | Capstone Strategy Class | Dr. Mana Heshmati | Spring 2023

Professional History

Brightside – The Feel Good Company 2020-2021
Consultant

- Training & Strategy Consultant for new fitness concept startup founded by DryBar

ECOMMUNE, Development Partner of SkinAware Japan 2020-2021
Business Development Consultant

- Research US Market for Japanese company entry
- Planning & Oversight of new market initiatives
- Scaling the business to global operations

Hot 8 Yoga 2013-2020
Vice President of People Operations

- Facilitated successful sale of Company to Private Equity Firm
- Responsible for top leadership development and collaboration inter-departmentally
- Innovation Research & Development Coordinator
- Responsible for company personnel and organizational chart of 450+ employees company-wide

Volunteer Activities

Doctoral Business Student Association Management & Organization Representative 2024
PhD Student Foster Graduate Diversity Representative 2022- Present
Department of Children & Family Services – Los Angeles 2016-2019