

2019-2020 Oxford Seed Fund Team

Tom McQuillen – Chair, Managing Director



Tom is a leader with extensive startup, technology and consulting experience. Prior to commencing the MBA, Tom supported Prolific's successful application to YCombinator and established the Growth team there.

He started his career as a consultant at PwC and Grant Thornton in Australia, before spending a year running an environmental-tourism social enterprise in Nicaragua.

Upon returning to Melbourne, Tom joined food-waste startup Yume as the first employee. He developed the initial version of the marketplace and managed an oversubscribed \$2.6m capital raise before transitioning into the Head of Product role.

He graduated from Monash University with a Bachelor's degree in Business Information Systems and is passionate about the role business has to play in a more environmentally sustainable future.

Caroline Howard – Deputy Managing Director, Sourcing



Caroline’s experience encompasses both technology and entrepreneurship. She spent nearly four years with Index Exchange, a high-growth advertising technology start-up, where she was responsible for client relationship development and market expansion.

More recently, Caroline teamed up with her husband and two friends to fund and co-found Walker Brothers Beverage Co., a Nashville-based alcoholic kombucha business. Caroline served as the company’s interim CEO prior to starting her MBA at Oxford Saïd, and she remains an active advisor to the management team.

Outside of work, Caroline is a keen skier and New York Times crossword enthusiast. Caroline graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN with a degree in Communication Studies.

Praneeth Dantanarayana – Deputy Managing Director, Portfolio Management & Due Diligence



Praneeth brings a varied background in strategy, operations and corporate finance, with experience working with early-stage growth companies and large, complex organisations.

His corporate experience started at Deloitte Private, where he was seconded into part-time CFO positions for a range of mid-market private companies. He later moved to Deloitte's Strategy & Operations Consulting team, where he supported a range of multinational corporations and public sector organisations to navigate their most pressing strategic opportunities and threats.

During this time, he also worked with a number of technology start-ups. He joined one particular venture as their first non-technical hire where he conducted new market assessments, developed a go-to-market strategy to pivot into a new sector, scaled into new geographies, and raised a \$5.5m Series A round.

Praneeth holds a Bachelor of Commerce from Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand and is a member of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand.

In his spare time, Praneeth enjoys playing sports (football, tennis and golf), learning new instruments (piano and guitar), and reading.

Nkanyezi (Khwezi) Zikalala – Director



Khwezi is a qualified CA (SA) and finance professional with more than five years' experience in private equity and banking in Johannesburg, South Africa.

For the last three years she was an investment professional at Metier Private Equity (“Metier”), which had a sub-Saharan Africa mandate. Investments were focused on providing growth capital and partnering with entrepreneurial businesses.

Her skills and expertise include deal evaluation, execution, portfolio management and due diligence. She believes strongly in the value of private capital as a catalyst for economic development and social impact. At Metier, she was also responsible for a social investment vehicle and broader corporate social responsibility programmes.

Prior to Metier, she spent three years at Nedbank, one of South Africa's big four banks, rotating across divisions, to gain core competencies that would enable her to qualify as a chartered accountant. Her rotations included, Executive Assistant to the Group CFO, IFRS Advisory, Nedbank Capital London: Central Funding Desk, Internal Audit and the Motor Finance Company.

Khwezi graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg with a Bachelor's degree in Accounting Sciences. She is passionate about education and empowering young women and has led, co-ordinated and volunteered for organisations and initiatives with these themes at the core of their operations.

Stuart Hillen – Director



Stuart spent over four years in Strategy and Operations consulting at Deloitte, before discovering a passion for energy, sustainability, technology and investing. A stint as an energy economist, coupled with a specialist Master's degree in Energy Systems, led Stuart to the energy investment space and a role at EnergyAustralia, one of Australia's largest vertically integrated energy utilities.

Prior to starting his MBA, Stuart worked in a commercial and business development role where he helped identify and execute investment opportunities across the energy ecosystem. His most recent projects include developing two of Australia's largest utility scale batteries, launching an integrated residential solar and battery energy plan and executing a first-of-a-kind electricity supply contract with a large scale Hydrogen Electrolyser.

Stuart grew up in Sydney where he completed undergraduate studies in Civil Engineering and Science (Mathematics) at The University of Sydney. Stuart is attending Oxford on a Saïd Business School Foundation Scholarship. He enjoys running, sailing, squash, travelling and good food.

Francheska Loza – Director



Francheska is passionate about building partnerships across sectors, particularly between tech and public service organizations, to take innovative approaches to address problems such as, corruption and gender-based violence in Latin America and the United States.

She spent the years leading up to her MBA working in the fields of international law and human rights. Most recently, she was part of the Disruption Strategies team at Polaris, an international anti-human trafficking non-profit, where she led initiatives that identified, engaged, and equipped key stakeholder populations to facilitate the effective and systemic eradication of the different types of trafficking.

Before that, Francheska spent two years in the International Litigation and Arbitration Department of Foley Hoag LLP, as part of a team that represented sovereign states in Latin America, Africa and Asia. During that time she also worked on Pro Bono asylum cases involving victims of domestic and gang-related violence from Latin America.

Francheska grew up in Mexico and holds a B.A. in Government with a minor in French from Harvard University. In her leisure time she enjoys photography, dancing, and trying out new restaurants and coffee shops.

Yi You – Director



Yi's experience and specialty sit at the intersection of strategy consulting, venture capital and entrepreneurship.

Prior to the MBA at Oxford, Yi worked in Bain & Company for 3 years and has accumulated deep experience in strategy planning, operation improvement and commercial due diligence for different industries, including consumer goods, TMT (Technology, Media and Telecommunications), automobile, F&B (Food and Beverages) and agriculture. He has worked with the senior management team from the world's leading companies to make critical business decisions.

Prior to Bain, Yi interned in leading Venture Capital firms including SIG China and Blue Lake Capital, in both Beijing and San Francisco. Here he acquired good knowledge on conducting sector scan, industry analysis and business assessment. In addition to occupying an advisor's seat, Yi also co-founded a startup, during his college years, which improved the campus experience for 40,000 students.

Yi holds a double major degree in B.A. Economics and B.A. Statistics from the University of California, Berkeley. Outside of work, Yi is a passionate landscape and wildlife photographer and has 20+ years of experience in Chinese painting and calligraphy.



Deanna Shen – Director



Deanna is a Bay Area native with more than five years of experience in marketing and business development within the high-tech industry. She is passionate about understanding how media influences human behavior and is committed to a career at the intersection of technology and social impact.

Most recently, Deanna drove the marketing strategy and execution of global programs, product launches, and campaigns for the Enterprise and Commercial segments at Cisco Meraki. She also served as the Sponsorship Chair on the Associate Board of 826 Valencia, an education non-profit in San Francisco, where she led fundraising through corporate grants and donations.

Prior to pursuing an MBA at Oxford, Deanna has studied all over the world, including New York, Florence, and Paris. She received a B.S. from NYU with a double major in Media, Culture, and Communications and Psychology. In her spare time, she is a contributing writer for Impakter, an online magazine focused on Social Good, an avid traveler and scuba diver.

Samuel Darko – Director



Samuel Darko is a serial entrepreneur, traveler and philanthropist who is deeply passionate about Africa. He has visited more than 20 African countries and spent a large part of his career working on some of the continent's biggest challenges.

Before Oxford, he spent the last 5 years as a member of the inaugural management team of the African Leadership University (ALU). As ALU's Director of Outreach and Student Recruitment, Samuel served as chief evangelist and led the effort to enroll 1,500+ of Africa's brightest minds from 35 countries.

Since 2015, Samuel has been a mentor and judge for the annual \$1m African Entrepreneurship Award. He has also invested in and continues to advise several African start-ups in e-commerce, urban transportation, logistics, and e-payments. In the last ten years, he has led community service initiatives that have raised nearly \$200,000 for philanthropic projects in education and healthcare.

Post-MBA, Samuel looks forward to applying his expertise in marketing, sales, and business development to advise and support global organisations looking to increase their footprint and impact in Africa.

Nuo Shi – Director



Nuo is passionate about deep tech, identifying trends and evolution of consumer behaviors, and bringing dreams into reality by providing capital and advice to the most promising entrepreneurs.

Prior to pursuing an MBA at Oxford, Nuo worked at SAIC Capital in Silicon Valley – the venture capital arm of Shanghai Motors, the biggest auto OEM in China. She evaluated, executed, and managed early-stage investments for SAIC's \$100m fund focused on the automotive sector, including autonomous driving, shared economy, and electrification.

Nuo brings extensive experience in deal sourcing, due diligence, negotiations and accelerating portfolio company growth through strategic business development, recruiting, and follow-on financing.

Nuo graduated from Johns Hopkins University with a major in natural science and minors in math and finance. In her leisure time, she enjoys traveling and hiking. She is also a member of the Oxford University Ladies Golf Club.

Carlo Bonini – Director



Carlo is passionate about moonshot ventures and their ambitious potential. He has gained expertise in helping companies seize growth opportunities and execute transformational journeys, most recently within the financial technology sector.

Prior to joining the Oxford Seed fund and the Saïd MBA, he spent five years as a consultant within Accenture, advising tier one banks in southern Europe at the intersection of tech and strategy in the open banking global unit.

Most recently, he was responsible for sourcing and analyzing the most recent trends in the sector and engaging B2B fintechs to work alongside banks on developing retail products.

Previously, Carlo worked in China for FCA (Fiat Chrysler Automobiles) in the engineering department, benchmarking the competitor's landscape on a wide range of variables that include fuel-to-weight consumption.

As with every Oxonian, he enjoys attending Oxford Union debates and wandering around Oxford looking for Harry Potter's heritage.