

# HIGHLIGHTING ENDOWMENTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## Wholesale Bagel Business Booming with Help from UW Students

A tour of AJ Ghambari's Seattle Bagel Bakery operation in Tukwila doesn't start with the bagel dough, or even the hair net. It begins with a greeting from his mom, who's behind the deli counter by 6:30 every weekday morning.

As AJ's website says, "It's all about relationships." The gregarious 2007 University of Washington grad is a natural at marketing and networking—skills he acquired working alongside his extended family of Iranian-American retail entrepreneurs.

But when it comes to wholesale budgeting and finance? "It was a brand-new ballgame," says AJ. After two-plus years at the helm of the bagel venture, he turned to the UW's Consulting and Business Development Center for some help.

Co-founded by Professor Emeritus of Marketing Thaddeus Spratlen and funded by the endowment he established with his late wife Lois

(herself a UW professor), the center sends teams of student consultants to bolster both minority-owned businesses and companies situated in under-served communities.

After a deep dive into his spreadsheets, AJ's student consultants cranked out cost analyses for everything from wheat buying to shipping. "Their work helped me to be more disciplined," says AJ. In a bakery that produces up to 15,000 bagels daily, he learned, every sesame seed counts.

The decision to call on the Consulting and Business Development Center came easily. As an undergrad at the Foster School of Business, AJ sat on the other side of the table, serving as a marketing consultant for the Garlic Garden specialty shop in Seattle's Pike Place Market. "It was one of my most memorable experiences at the UW," he says.

In July, AJ opened a second retail location in Seattle. With business in the black, 200 wholesale customers and a new gluten-free line in the works, he's optimistic: "All our bases are covered, and we're ready to step up our game."



AJ Ghambari ('07), pictured with wife Monica Loera-Sanchez, recently tapped the UW's Center for Business Consulting and Development for tips on managing his Seattle Bagel Bakery operation.

**3,982**

*endowed funds*

**1 in 8**

*students benefit from  
endowed support*

**435**

*endowed faculty  
funds\**

\*chairs, professorships, deanships and faculty fellowships