

SARAH ZIMMERMAN THORNHILL

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PROFILE

Flexible, hard-working, and helpful problem solver with 20+ years in education, business strategy, and custom training. Significant market-driven change management: innovation, team buy-in to higher standards, internal training, rebranding, and conflict management. Effective influencer at all levels, with PR/media experience. Overseas experience and published research on how cross-cultural communication affects business and diplomacy.

EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN: large top-tier research university; Ann Arbor, Michigan **2013 - present**

Faculty, Ross Executive Education (#1 ranked US provider): Communication & Cultural Competency (2015+)

Faculty, Business Administration, Ross School of Business (2022+)

- Co-taught in first-year experience core course (2022-24) and in specialized pre-pathway program (2022+)
- Co-taught in PhD how-to-teach courses (2025+) and OMBA cross-function Investor Relations residency (2026+)
- Special projects: faculty observation and teaching feedback for second-year core-course faculty

Faculty, Business Communication, Ross School of Business (September 2013 - present)

- Nominated for Golden Apple full-campus teaching award (2017) and for BBA, MBA & MM top-faculty awards
- Develops and leads BBA, MBA, Masters in Management (MM), and OMBA courses
- Mentor: Collegiate DECA Faculty Advisor (4 years), MAP coach for graduate-student consulting teams (11 years)

Area Chair, Business Communication, Ross School of Business (July 2019 – June 2021)

- Oversaw ~12 faculty, ~85 class sections/year, ~120 MAP projects/year, ~3 Communication Lab staff, assessment of writing & speaking skills for ~600 graduate students/year pre-matriculation to build individualized learning
- Change management focused on motivating and empowering peers vs. mandating updates: union-compatible, resulting in faculty buy-in for increased teaching standards and harmonized grading/class management
 - market-driven course development: created 3 personally; supported launch of 3 other new courses
 - faculty-friendly innovation: introduced faculty training/bonding program (2-3 training events per year), introduced paid large-format student workshop model (WMBA, MBAn, MM, MAcc), created several paid leadership roles for faculty, created paid 'faculty cover' structures used by rest of the school during COVID
 - standardized rubrics across core class sections (~90% faculty opt-in), ran industry-standard performance reviews, mentored faculty for improved teaching performance, improved department hiring process
 - marketing: community outreach with school academic centers, staff units (Career Services, admins), and student clubs; planned media-savvy student events (eg: Podcasting, Corporate Messaging during CSR)
- COVID19 leadership: scenario planning, tech-tools research and faculty preparation 3 months prior to the university transition to virtual learning was announced and 6 weeks prior to chair-level Ross planning. Students reported that BCOM classes were the "best" of early transition, and BCOM defined early school-wide practice.

FIVE LAKES GLOBAL: economic development supporting State of Ohio; Toledo, Ohio and Shenzhen, China

2012

Vice President, North America

- Strategic planning, then implementation/operation for 15-person US-China economic development start-up
- Managed North American Events, Trade Center, Travel and Executive Training divisions
- Extensive collaboration/diplomacy with global stakeholders to facilitate company objectives, including creation of a multi-day conference for 150 Chinese investors and 200 US business partners in September 2012
- Significant Public Relations to effectively foster positive local opinion of Chinese investment into Ohio 'rustbelt': targeted grassroots effort; collaborative PR for free favorable coverage in local, national and international media

STAUTZENBERGER COLLEGE: occupational higher education; branches across Midwest & Florida

2010 - 2011

Dean of Academics, main campus (Maumee, Ohio)

- Directed \$3M budget, 6 program directors, Associate Dean, library, support staff and 120 faculty for 900+ students
- Managed accreditation for medical, nursing, veterinary, legal, technology, business, and wellness programs at State, ACICS, and Department of Education for compliance and best practice; co-led our team for ACICS review
- Audited 25 occupation-driven programs, leading revision with faculty on 24; graduates' external industry certification exam pass rates increased in all updated programs, surpassing national pass-rate averages
- Curriculum development: market research, project management and collaboration with faculty teams to create 5 new degree, diploma or certificate programs and 11 new professional-training courses (2 fully online)
- Faculty development: led quarterly in-services, end-of-term evaluations, staff mentoring and discipline, faculty Continuing Education plans, built successful project-ownership plans for full-time academic staff
- Instrumental part of the 6-campus executive team that built up 2 new campuses, the shared online learning environment (eCollege LMS), and significant policies/procedures to comply with sweeping new federal legislation
- Industry relationship-building to increase articulation agreements for our Associate-holding graduates
- Developed student retention strategies in an increasingly competitive market, bringing quarterly retention from 85% to 93% within the year (CampusVue metric: quarterly Week-2 active attendance by program)
- Change management toward modern and appropriate adult-student Academics CRM, re-designed student feedback mechanisms to improve quality of feedback, integrated dedicated Student Services Counselor
- Vendor relations for academic resources, focusing on innovation and technology to drive improved learning
- Partnered with Career Services, achieving 62.5+% job placement for graduates across programs: jobs in-field, held 5+ months, confirmed with employer (strong result for vocational schools)
- Led successful push to institute budgetary planning across 5 campuses/brands to better manage overall spending

AL SHOHUB SCHOOL (inner-circle royal family): Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

2006 - 2010

Development (2007-2010)

- Functioned as second in command at British-curriculum school for 39 faculty/staff and 500+ high-profile students
- Championed significant change management to increase tuition, add admissions standards, and still double enrollment in four years
- Mapped project, negotiated funding and vendors, and managed implementation of rapid school-wide IT upgrade
- Created and managed Teacher Development program built on needs assessment, empowerment, & recognition
- Created Extracurricular Program: women's speaker series, volunteer activities, after-school clubs, events, trips
- Represented school in developing pan-MENA English-language online course for Business Studies (www.iKids.ae)
- Rebranded school by developing online and print marketing & constructing media and community relationships
- Taught IGCSE/A-Level Business Studies following the National Curriculum of England/Wales, Cambridge exams
- Integrated in and worked jointly with new headmistress on all school issues, blending the rigidity of the British curriculum with the needs of elite Arabic families to create a prestigious EAL learning environment
- Supported Assessment for Learning school-wide along pre-2014 National Curriculum and Ofsted review standards

Head of Primary (2006-2007)

- Managed 26 international staff and 211 primary students
- Championed a fast-growth development phase with Board of Governors: new year groups and sections opened
- Rooted the (UK) National Curriculum into the entire primary school (students ages 3-11), implementing support systems allowing students to pass entrance exams and transition smoothly into a British secondary school
- Managed the difficulties involved in migrating from an old school system into a stricter one: staff training and culture/conflict management, parents' concerns, student discipline, purchasing, and PR/community involvement

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO: public research university; Toledo, Ohio

2002 - 2006

Visiting Faculty, Marketing and International Business (2004-2006) & Sales (2005-06)

- Named the College of Business 'Outstanding Visiting Faculty' for 2005-06

Center for International Business, Graduate Assistant (2002-2004)

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- NOTABLE PAST EMPLOYMENT & SEMI-CURRENT SIDE HUSTLES:** global locations, virtual or in-person **1998 - present**
- Executive coach: strategic communication, executive presence, pitching, conflict conversations (2012+)
 - Consulting for creatives and start-ups: strategy & innovation, marketing, operations, strategic comms (2004+)
 - Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation REALITY Fellow: top-50 US Storyteller “influencer” (2017)
 - Accenture: contract advisory on cross cultural market research techniques for optimal data (2003)
 - USIA (now US State Dept.) Coordinator for citizen exchange from Bosnia i Herzegovina to Ohio (1999-2000)
 - Council of the Americas, Washington D.C.: Governmental Affairs Analyst for pro-business lobby group (1999)
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EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor, Michigan

- 25+ faculty trainings: course strategies, technology (AI+), DEI, academic leadership (advised faculty and PhDs/GSIs)

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO, Toledo, Ohio

- **Master of Business Administration** (honors), Marketing and Management (2004)
- **Bachelor of Business Administration** (honors), International Business and Business Law (2000)

THE WASHINGTON CENTER, Washington DC

- Honors program on trade policy and diplomacy, 10 students selected from each NAFTA country (1999)
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PUBLISHED ACADEMIC WORK

Zimmerman, Sarah and Jonathon Chatfield. “Turkey’s Accession into the European Union: United in Diversity?” Journal of Midwest International Business Research. Volume 21, 2007. *(Presented at the MBAA/M-AIB Conference in March 2007).*

Zimmerman, Sarah and Anthony Koh. “Perspectives on Offshore Outsourcing and Responses in the United States to Blunt the Outsourcing Impact” Journal of Midwest International Business Research. Volume 20, 2006. *(Presented at MBAA/M-AIB, 2006).*

Koh, Anthony and Sarah Zimmerman. “Prescribing Culturally Sensitive Lenses: Conducting Consumer Marketing Research in Southeast Asia.” Journal of Midwest International Business Research. Volume 19, 2005. *(Presented at MBAA/M-AIB, 2005).*

TECHNOLOGY

Generative AI (UMGPT) ▪ Microsoft Suite (Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Publisher) ▪ Google Suite (Drive, programs, plugins) Canvas ▪ Qualtrics ▪ Blackboard ▪ eCollege ▪ Promethean ▪ Smartboard ▪ Moodle ▪ Zoom/Meet/videoconferencing

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & COMMUNITY SERVICE

- MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION** member: small invite-only global association **2018 – present**
- ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION** member: large global association **2016 – present**
- GOLDEN KEY INTERNATIONAL HONOUR SOCIETY** speaker/member: University of Michigan chapter **2014 – present**
- ROSS SCHOOL** judge, mentor, speaker for 20+ student competitions: Crisis Challenge, ZLI, student clubs **2014 – present**
- OHIO VIRTUAL ACADEMY (OHVA):** Trustee for K-12 virtual school with 850+ staff & 24,000+ students **2013 – 2021**
- Academic Committee Chair (2017 - 2021)
 - Vice President of the Board of Trustees (2016 - 2019)
- Journal of Midwestern International Business Research** peer reviewer for niche academic journal **2006 – 2008**

