Finding groups that support your ideals and challenge your assumptions is absolutely the most appealing part of this work. The best part of this degree is that we are taught the whole picture of a company. When it became available, it also came with an entire department filled with passionate, driven professors. Entrepreneurship was not available my freshman year, so I started out majoring in management with an entrepreneurship option and hoped the full degree would come soon," Brittney said. "The ability to think outside of the box is essential. Even as a young girl, Brittney Melton understood this fact, and that's why she chose to major in entrepreneurship the instant it was available at Oklahoma State University.

"Entrepreneurship was not available my freshman year, so I started out majoring in management with an entrepreneurship option and hoped the full degree would come soon," Brittney said. "When it became available, it also came with an entire department filled with passionate, driven students and faculty.

"The best part of this degree is that we are taught the whole picture of a company. The professors teach you what everyone else learns about the rules of business, but then they show you how to break outside of those rules in order to create value, however value manifests for you."

For Brittney, value has manifested in the rapidly developing field of sustainability. She is currently working as a sustainability analyst intern for Sustainalytics in Boston. In her position, Brittney is responsible for developing and updating company profiles within Sustainalytics’ index; these profiles analyze a company’s performance on environmental, social and corporate governance issues. Sustainalytics’ clients are socially responsible investment firms, so they use the profiles Brittney creates to better allocate their money.

"The most appealing part of this work is my exposure to over 50 industries’ progress on sustainable development," Brittney said. "To me, entrepreneurship and sustainability are the right things to do, and the combination of the two is even more powerful—if you can do good and make money, you should be doing it."

Brittney said she would encourage new students to get involved in interactive student organizations. Currently, Brittney is the vice president of operations for OSU’s Entrepreneurship Club, and last year she was president of ECO-OSU, the university’s environmental awareness group.

"Finding groups that support your ideals and challenge your assumptions is absolutely imperative in preparing you for professional opportunities," Brittney said. "Your network is your net worth. Get involved, and don’t be scared to push the limits."
Being the CEO of a promising company is something most people can only dream about. Achieving this position before graduating from college is even more unheard of; it’s something most of us would consider only in our wildest dreams. Spears School alumnus Matt Villarreal, however, gets to live this dream every day.

Matt is the CEO and product development lead for CleanNG, an innovator of advanced performance products for natural gas vehicles. In his position, Matt manages his employees and makes decisions regarding company and product strategy. Currently, Matt is working to complete and launch CleanNG’s MagmaCel fuel storage system.

“The challenge of the position is most enjoyable to me, as well as the ability to lead others,” Matt said. “It took three years of concept development for us to get to this point with the company, and we’re really excited to launch our new product.”

Matt said he attributes much of his current success to his education from the Spears School of Business’s School of Entrepreneurship.

“I chose to major in entrepreneurship because the principals and philosophy of entrepreneurship will be applicable no matter what field I may decide to work in,” Matt said. “My professors taught me that if you have a good idea, you can turn it into a reality. All it takes is hard work, persistence and a little luck.”

Not only did Matt’s professors encourage him to work hard in the classroom, they also pushed him to turn his idea for CleanNG into a company and helped him get start up money for his venture. In the 2011 Riata Business Plan Competition, Matt and his team beat out almost 100 other teams to earn second place and $10,000 to help launch CleanNG.

To new students, Matt recommends getting involved on campus as early as possible.

“Join student organizations and clubs, and attend as many events as possible,” Matt said. “Also, internships are very rewarding. They really allow you to see what it is like to work in a given field before actually taking a full time position.”

Finally, Matt said participating in a study abroad program is particularly worthwhile. He spent six weeks in Cape Town, South Africa, helping entrepreneurs in historically disadvantaged areas.

“Too many people stick to their own little local bubbles,” Matt said. “In the information age, those who have a global perspective will prosper.”

Matt certainly seems to be prospering. If you would also like to prosper in a similar career, contact the School of Entrepreneurship today!