

Thunderbird at ASU grad champions health care innovation across borders

By Mary Hess, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2025 graduates](#).

Daniel Chaves has always been steadfast in his belief that health care can — and should — drive equity and build bridges across cultures.

This conviction, which is rooted in personal experiences as a Quito, Ecuador, native and a desire to create accessible solutions, led him to the [Thunderbird School of Global Management](#) at Arizona State University, where he will graduate from this spring with a [Master of Global Management](#) (MGM) with a concentration in health care innovation.

“Coming from Ecuador, I have a unique perspective on global health care delivery, and coming to Thunderbird, I was eager to explore the ways that we can innovate and make health care more accessible,” Chaves said.

During his time at Thunderbird, Chaves founded the T-Meds, the school's first student club focused on exploring the future of health on a global scale.

“We've organized workshops like basic life support training and hosted esteemed speakers such as Vanessa Farsadaki, a U.S. astronaut and global leader in precision health, and Adrijana Kekic, who is an entrepreneur and distinguished expert at [Mayo Clinic](#),” Chaves added.

He was also selected as a graduate research scholar within [MedTech Accelerator](#), a flagship program of the Mayo Clinic and Arizona State University Alliance for Health Care. The program provides early-stage medical device and health care technology companies with an entrepreneurial curriculum and personalized business development plans to accelerate go-to-market and investment possibilities.

As he looks ahead, Chaves intends to keep pushing the boundaries of health care by leading projects that merge health care and technology, and continuing with his role as an associate professor at the Universidad de Las Américas (UDLA), where he remotely teaches courses in

biomechanics and medicine.

“No matter what, I will continue my career with the belief that every person, no matter where they live, deserves access to high-quality health care,” he said.

Read on to learn more about Chaves' Thunderbird journey at ASU.

Question: What advice would you give to a student just starting a program at Thunderbird?

Answer: My advice would be to embrace the diversity of thought and experience at Thunderbird. Engage actively in class discussions, network with peers from around the world, and don't be afraid to take risks with your ideas. The more you immerse yourself in the Thunderbird community, the more you'll learn, grow and shape your own path toward global leadership.

Q: For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

A: I am most grateful for my family, who have made everything possible and provided me with unwavering support. I am especially thankful for my beloved wife, whose encouragement and partnership have been vital in my journey. I am also deeply appreciative of the opportunities I've had to learn and grow through my diverse experiences. The support of my mentors, the trust of the people I work with, and the chance to contribute to meaningful health care projects have been invaluable.

Additionally, I am profoundly grateful to the generous donors whose contributions, through programs like the [SHARE Fellowship](#), have made it possible for me to attend Thunderbird and pursue my dreams.

Above all, I am grateful for the strong sense of community that has guided me, particularly during my time at Thunderbird, where I've been fortunate to connect with inspiring individuals who share a vision for global impact.

Q: What has your experience at Thunderbird been like?

A: My experience at Thunderbird has been nothing short of life-changing. It has allowed me to expand my knowledge beyond medicine and into the realms of business, innovation and leadership. I've had the opportunity to work on groundbreaking health care projects, collaborate with brilliant minds, and develop skills that will be essential in my future endeavors. Thunderbird has truly been a launchpad for my career.

Q: Which professor taught you the most important lesson while at Thunderbird?

A: I have had the privilege of learning from several extraordinary professors at Thunderbird. Professor [Denis Leclerc](#) stands out for his exceptional ability to teach critical thinking through intercultural diplomacy. His classes foster a deep understanding of global complexities, and he consistently inspired me to pursue my dreams. Personally, he played a pivotal role in supporting me with founding T-Meds, offering invaluable guidance and encouragement throughout the process.

Professor [Euvin Naidoo](#)'s classes were marked by constant innovation, particularly through his AI initiatives. By bringing cutting-edge global resources into the classroom, he ensured that we were

exposed to the most current advancements in technology and business, which greatly enriched my academic and professional development.

Professor [Kannan Ramaswamy](#) provided profound insights into strategic management, particularly at the intersection of business and health care. His approach to understanding global health care systems and the strategic frameworks that underpin successful health care innovations helped shape my approach to solving complex, real-world challenges.

Finally, Professor [Aram Chavez](#) introduced me to the importance of dynamic thinking, adaptability and emotional intelligence in navigating both business and global markets. His ability to blend market experience with a keen understanding of human behavior and decision-making has reshaped the way I approach complex problems, making me more attuned to the nuances of both organizational dynamics and global trends.

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Main image



Daniel Chaves. Photo courtesy of Thunderbird School of Global Management/ASU