

# Outstanding grad takes health care leadership to the next level

By Renee Joseph, ASU News  
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**Editor's note:** *This story is part of a series of profiles of notable spring 2025 graduates.*

For nearly 20 years, Dr. Anikar Chhabra built a career rooted in precision, care and clinical excellence in orthopedic surgery and sports medicine.

But it wasn't until he found himself sitting in high-level administrative meetings that he realized something was missing. To drive systemic change in health care, he needed more than medical expertise — he needed an MBA.

At Arizona State University, Dr. Chhabra has played a vital role in advancing athletic performance and medical care. Since 2007, he has served as the head orthopedic surgeon for Sun Devil Athletics and became the program's medical director in 2022. His clinical leadership has been instrumental in supporting ASU's top-tier athletic programs.

Now, as a student in the W. P. Carey School of Business executive MBA program, Dr. Chhabra is deepening his leadership skills, driven by the realization that "to truly impact the system, to grow our orthopedic practice, improve care delivery and influence health care innovation, I needed to speak the language of business."

ASU's executive MBA program turned out to be a natural fit for Dr. Chhabra, a spring 2025 Outstanding Graduate. "It was built for leaders already making an impact, especially in health care, for people like me who were ready to scale that impact," he said.

With its strong ties to the community and deep understanding of real-world health care challenges, the program offered the exact intersection of business and health care leadership he was looking for. Its flexible format also made it possible to balance the demands of his career, his role as a father to two teenagers, and his commitment to lifelong learning.

From memorable classroom moments to big-picture insights, Dr. Chhabra reflects on his time in the executive MBA program — and shares how his education will continue to shape his career and beyond.

**Question:** What's something you learned while at ASU — in the classroom or otherwise — that surprised you or changed your perspective?

**Answer:** What surprised me most was that the answer wasn't always about having the "right" solution — it was about understanding perspectives. In health care, we often focus on data and outcomes. But the MBA program helped me see the importance of exploring the "why" behind decisions, especially in leadership and strategy. A turning point for me was during the perspectives and ethics modules. That experience helped shape me into a more thoughtful leader who now considers stakeholder values as much as efficiency and results.

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

**A:** Every professor taught me something different. A few who stood out were [Phil Drake](#), clinical professor of accountancy and director of the Master of Taxation and Data Analytics and [Master of Accountancy and Data Analytics](#) program; [Steve Hillegeist](#), associate professor of accountancy; [Hina Arora](#), clinical associate professor of information systems; and Ned Wellman, associate professor of management and entrepreneurship.

Each challenged me to rethink how I assess organizational dynamics and external environments, especially when navigating complex systems like academic medicine. They emphasized clarity, stakeholder alignment and the courage to act under uncertainty.

**Q: What's the best piece of advice you'd give to those still in school?**

**A:** Don't just focus on grades or frameworks — focus on relationships and listening. The greatest value in an MBA comes from learning how to collaborate with people who think differently from you. The conversations that happen outside the classroom are just as important as the ones inside, and I can honestly say I've learned more from my classmates than from any single course. They've become lifelong friends and colleagues.

**Q: How will your ASU education continue to support your career in medicine after graduation?**

**A:** This degree has already transformed how I approach leadership. From operations and supply chain innovation to finance and communication, I now feel equipped to lead well beyond the operating room.

Whether it's launching a lung transplant program, managing multidisciplinary sports medicine teams, or building platforms to improve orthopedic supply chains, I'm bringing an integrated, business-minded approach to every challenge. Most importantly, I am not just searching for answers; I have learned how to ask the right questions.

**Q: If someone gave you \$40 million to solve one problem on our planet, what would you tackle?**

**A:** I would address inequity in health care access, particularly in musculoskeletal medicine. Too many communities, especially minorities and underserved populations, don't receive timely or appropriate orthopedic care. I'd fund a hybrid care model combining telemedicine, AI triage tools, and mobile clinics powered by a diverse pipeline of orthopedic leaders to modernize how and who we treat. Improving our medical system is critical to providing these communities with affordable, high-quality care.

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