

Grad strengthens leadership in clean energy through legal studies

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

Joel Jorgenson is graduating from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University with a Master of Legal Studies, advancing his ability to lead in the rapidly evolving clean-energy sector.

Jorgenson, 60, serves as CEO and president of BWR Innovations LLC, a fast-growing company developing zero-emission electrical generators. As his company expanded, he recognized that the legal, policy and organizational decisions ahead would require deeper expertise than his engineering and leadership background alone had provided.

Now, with his MLS degree and an emphasis in business, Jorgenson feels better equipped to guide his company through the complex intersections of energy policy, federal contracting and business development.

Note: Answers may have been lightly edited for length and/or clarity.

Question: What was your “aha” moment when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

Answer: I am the CEO of a rapidly growing, innovative company that produces electrical generators with zero emissions. As our team brainstormed about our growth and future plans, I realized that the decisions I would need to make are far outside my comfort zone and educational background. I needed to become smarter, or at least less stupid, on the topics of business organization, energy policies and federal contracts to be able to perform to the level I wanted and my company needed.

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

A: I am extremely pleased with the real-world experience of the ASU instructors. Their experience brings perspective, examples and analogies, and insight that exceeds my expectations.

Q: Why did you choose ASU?

A: First of all, ASU has a stellar reputation, and I have a tremendous respect for the faculty, staff, students and graduates I have met from ASU. The program was perfect for my intentions and gave me an opportunity to succeed.

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

A: That's a difficult question. Professor Troy Rule was incredible in Energy Law and Policies, and Professor Catherine Barnard has been amazing in Contracts and in Business Relationships. However, I believe that the most influential professor was Professor Larry Bridgesmith in my Negotiations class. His approach combining engineering, neuroscience and psychology disciplines was extremely influential and impactful. The material in this course assists me daily, professionally and personally.

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

A: Be humble, be curious and be ready to find nuggets of wisdom at any point of your journey.

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: I am continuing in my role as CEO of a company producing zero-emission generators for the federal government, industry and municipalities. We have a great responsibility to provide power to citizens sustainably and without pollution, and our company is addressing the technical challenges, market reluctance and the shifts in policy and public support.

Q: How has this degree helped you in your professional journey?

A: I am better equipped to understand policy issues related to energy, better able to guide our company from startup to sustained to growing and better able to create partnerships and relationships with legal frameworks.

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

A: I would use the \$40 million to create a clean-energy microgrid that would provide zero-emission for the entire Arizona State University campus, integrating renewable energy with hydrogen storage and dispatchable power to provide 100% clean energy for the campus. This microgrid aligns with ASU's sustainability goals, implements proven technologies from STEM backgrounds, builds upon systems currently funded by the Air Force Research Laboratory and the Army Research Laboratory, and is achievable with existing systems, suppliers and within the (overstressed) electrical grid.

Arizona State University aligns with the mission of sustainability and advancing systems to improve society. The technology and systems exist today, and ASU can be the model for the nation and internationally as the clean energy leader.

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Main image



Beus Center for Law and Society, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. ASU photo