

# Thunderbird at ASU grad uses global perspective to find a lifelong community

## Tate Mulligan will graduate this fall with a Master of Global Management

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

When Tate Mulligan arrived at [Thunderbird School of Global Management](#), she was searching for a place where a global mindset was truly engrained in the atmosphere. She found that in Thunderbird's unique community, where classmates debate cultural systems as easily as they switch languages mid-conversation, and where global experiences are valued as highly as business strategy.

"For me, Thunderbird offered the best of both worlds, providing the intimacy of a small, tight-knit academic community and the reach of a top-tier university," she said. "It mirrors the world we're preparing to lead in."

As she moved through the [Master of Global Management](#) program, Mulligan experienced a period of deep reflection, shaped by conversations with classmates from Lima, Peru; Mumbai, India; Berlin and beyond.

"Hearing how classmates from completely different lives approached the same problem pushed me far more than any single assignment could," she said.

Her academic experience became even more grounded through hands-on work, including a yearlong engagement with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The project taught her the power of consistency, hospitality and vulnerability in building trust across cultures, creating lessons that reshaped how she thinks about leadership.

Outside the classroom, she said the Thunderbird community offered something just as meaningful. Mulligan built friendships, found mentors and even met her partner. She describes T-birds as people who are “sharp, globally minded and relentlessly curious,” but who also know how to laugh, dance at the Pub at Thunderbird and make the intense pace of graduate study feel joyful.

She said Thunderbird gave her moments she’ll never forget, like hosting what she thought would be a small Thanksgiving potluck, only to watch it transform into a gathering of more than 100 people, each bringing food from their home country.

Now, as she prepares for life after graduation, Mulligan is exploring roles at the intersection of global strategy, economic development and international business. She hopes to channel everything she learned into work that helps organizations navigate complex global landscapes with clarity and purpose.

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

**Answer:** One of the biggest shifts for me at Thunderbird was letting go of the question, “Which political or economic system is the best?” and instead asking, “What are the advantages of each system, and what can we learn from one another?” Being surrounded by classmates who come from completely different political traditions, cultural norms and spiritual belief systems pushed me to see how deeply those forces shape society.

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

**A:** The most important lessons I learned at Thunderbird came through working with Professor [Doug Guthrie](#) and Associate Professor [Sophal Ear](#), who served together as faculty advisors to the Thunderbird Foreign Policy Initiative, the student organization I helped found and lead. They shaped how I think about power, context and responsibility in global business. I came to Thunderbird with a strong foundation in international affairs and history from Rhodes College, so I already knew that politics, culture and economics are intertwined. Doug and Sophal reinforced that truth in a way that made my questions come to life.

Through our events, they encouraged us to bring in diplomats, business leaders and scholars and to have serious, honest conversations about how foreign policy decisions ripple through trade, investment and everyday lives.

**Q: What advice would you give a student just starting a program at Thunderbird?**

**A:** I would borrow from what Maya Angelou describes in her “rainbows in my clouds” speech. She talks about bringing everyone who has ever been kind to her with her when she steps onto a stage or into a classroom. That idea has stayed with me.

My advice is to do the same at Thunderbird. Bring the people who have poured into you, your family, teachers, mentors and friends with you in spirit. Then be intentional about the new people you allow into that circle.

**Q: What motivates or inspires you?**

**A:** My family motivates me. They are the grounding force that shapes my choices and remind me to take life one day at a time.

What inspires me are the things that bring the world to life: color, art, music, good food and brilliant company. Those moments keep me curious, grateful and awake to the world.

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

**A:** Every day when I write my gratitude list, the same things rise to the top: the people I love most, my health, a safe place to call home and the fact that I get to live a life oriented toward service. I am grateful that my work and relationships allow me to show up for others and that I get to move through the world with purpose, clarity and people who keep me honest and whole.

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



Tate Mulligan (with the red shawl) attends the 2024 Diplomatic Corps of Arizona gala.

**Text image(s)**



Tate Mulligan during her internship with ASML Holding.



Tate Mulligan (right) advocating on Capitol Hill with the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition.



Tate Mulligan during her final presentation to executive leadership this summer.

## Gallery



Tate Mulligan with friends at a Global Ties Lunar New Year event.



Mulligan at a U.S. Global Leadership Coalition Conversation with Rep. Greg Stanton and Ambassador Jeff Flake, pictured with the Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations board of directors and staff.



Mulligan collaborates during her Global Challenge Lab in Lima, Peru, with Corporación Rey.



A Foreign Policy Initiative — a student club Mulligan helped found — event with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.



Mulligan with friends during a Regional Night Celebration at Thunderbird — a hallmark event celebrating the culture of a certain region of the world.



A Foreign Policy Initiative event called "Waging Peace in the Middle East."