

Inside the ‘Bloomberg room’: An ASU lab is preparing the next generation of finance professionals

By Marshall Terrill , ASU News
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On a recent weekday afternoon inside Arizona State University's McCord Hall, glowing market data scrolls across screens as students lean forward in their chairs, eyes fixed on real-time movements in global equities, currencies and funds.

This is not a research or trading desk on Wall Street, but it feels close.

The [Financial Access and Research Lab](#), also known as the FAR Lab, is one of the newest experiential learning spaces at the [W. P. Carey School of Business](#), and it has quickly become one of its most consequential.

Launched in 2024 with support from the Charles Schwab Foundation, the FAR Lab gives students access to Bloomberg Terminals and other institutional-grade financial tools typically reserved for major banks and asset managers.

“One of the benefits of having a devoted, visible space is that it sparks the curiosity of students who might not have previous exposure to opportunities in finance,” says Associate Professor [Laura Lindsey](#), chair of the finance department. “We’ve had a few Bloomberg Terminals for years, but they were hidden away and use was confined to a small number of graduate projects and student investment teams. We couldn’t operate at the scale that we needed.”

The goal of the lab is straightforward but ambitious: Reduce barriers to financial knowledge and prepare students for careers across corporate finance, banking, asset management and other financial service roles.

Facilitating the lab’s operations is Associate Teaching Professor [Gary Tsarsis](#), a veteran of the global financial markets who now serves as both educator and steward of the space. Tsarsis

brings decades of experience to a room filled with students who are often encountering these tools for the first time, and his approach reflects a belief that finance education must be hands-on to be meaningful.

“Each one of these machines is embedded with Bloomberg, which is a standard industry tool for research and modeling,” Tsarsis said. “Without special pricing, the licenses would be about a half a million dollars annually. We’re very grateful for both the educational discounts that Bloomberg provides and the significant expansion made possible by Schwab.”

In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Tsarsis serves as director of the lab. In this role, he walks students through the fundamentals of Bloomberg several times a semester, explaining not just how the interface works but how professionals use it.

While the ticker tape and rows of terminals make an impression on visitors and campus tours, Tsarsis is quick to emphasize that the lab’s value runs much deeper than aesthetics.

“Most top-tier business schools have rooms like this,” he said. “Some of it is cosmetic. But the real value is teaching students how to answer questions using data, not opinions.”

That philosophy guides how Bloomberg is introduced.

Tsarsis demonstrates how students can move from headline-level market awareness to disciplined analysis. With a few keystrokes, a global index becomes a sector breakdown, a single stock becomes a multi-year performance chart, and risk metrics reveal how a stock’s movements compare to the broader market.

“As an example, if you invest in Tesla, you are taking significantly more risk than if you bought the market as a whole. Thus, asking the question: Are you being rewarded for the risk you are undertaking?” Tsarsis said.

“That is the kind of insight students need to understand before they make decisions with real money.”

This emphasis on disciplined investing is rooted in Tsarsis’ career. He began on Wall Street in the 1990s at Drexel Burnham Lambert as a corporate bond trader before moving into the international equities markets, eventually trading globally for more than two decades and visiting 47 countries. After years in the industry, he transitioned into teaching, including time as an adjunct at his alma mater, New York University.

“I see teaching as giving back,” Tsarsis said. “If I can help students succeed, that is incredibly rewarding.”

In the FAR Lab, that success is measured not by grades but by fluency. Bloomberg certifications, which are administered directly by Bloomberg rather than by faculty, allow students to earn credentials in areas such as market concepts and ESG analysis. Because the company itself issues the certifications, Tsarsis sees them as especially powerful signals to employers.

“The important part is that Bloomberg is certifying the student, not me,” he said. “That makes it very valuable on a resume.”

While Tsarsis provides strategic direction and industry perspective, much of the lab's day-to-day student engagement is handled by Nicolas Gonzalez, an undergraduate teaching aide who works closely with Tsarsis and has played a key role in expanding interest in the lab.

"I help him in the FAR Lab, especially with undergraduate involvement," said Gonzalez, a third-year finance and accountancy student. "I spearheaded the effort to bring the [2025 Bloomberg Global Trading Challenge](#) to undergraduate students."

The challenge, which ran from October to November, drew about 50 undergraduate participants. Students competed against more than 1,000 teams worldwide, representing universities from North America, Europe, Asia and beyond.

"We placed in the top 2% globally," Gonzalez said, "and around top 20 in North America. Elite universities were competing, and it showed that students at a public university like ASU can absolutely perform at a high level."

For Gonzalez, the challenge highlighted one of the FAR Lab's most important functions: democratization.

"All the big banks use Bloomberg," Gonzalez said. "Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs. The FAR Lab brings institutional-level tools to students who otherwise could not access them."

That access changes students' trajectories early in their academic careers. Rather than learning Bloomberg on the job after graduation, students can arrive at interviews already fluent, with tangible projects and reports to discuss.

"Bloomberg makes it easy to demonstrate skills," Gonzalez said. "Students can build reports, models and even publish work as undergraduates. That is a huge differentiator in a competitive job market."

The lab is not a standalone course but a supplement to coursework across disciplines. Master's students automatically receive access, while undergraduate access is granted through specific programs, clubs and projects approved by faculty. In all, about 250 W. P. Carey students have access to the lab at any given time, both from finance and other disciplines.

Ritik Bansal, a fourth-year student in finance and philosophy, said the lab has been a critical bridge between theory and practice. Bansal, who has accepted a full-time investment banking role at MUFG Bank Ltd., credits early involvement and mentorship for his success.

"Banking is a career where you get started early," Bansal said. "Being able to use Bloomberg supplements learning tenfold. What might take 10 hours to research elsewhere can take one hour here."

First-year student Bobby Hebert echoed that sentiment from a different vantage point. As a finance student, Hebert has already used the lab to prepare for national stock-pitch competitions.

"Being able to use the same tool that industry professionals use allows me to see the same news and data they see," Hebert said. "It helps develop a more technical view of markets instead of just reading headlines."

Fourth-year student Parker Guindon, who studies finance and data science, uses Bloomberg to manage portfolio strategies in the Student Investment Management Fund, where multiple student teams each manage over \$1 million in assets. He entered the lab with no prior exposure to the software and now sees it as essential preparation for his goal of becoming a portfolio manager.

“Everything portfolio managers do is within Bloomberg,” Guindon said. “It gives you up-to-date information to make strategic decisions.”

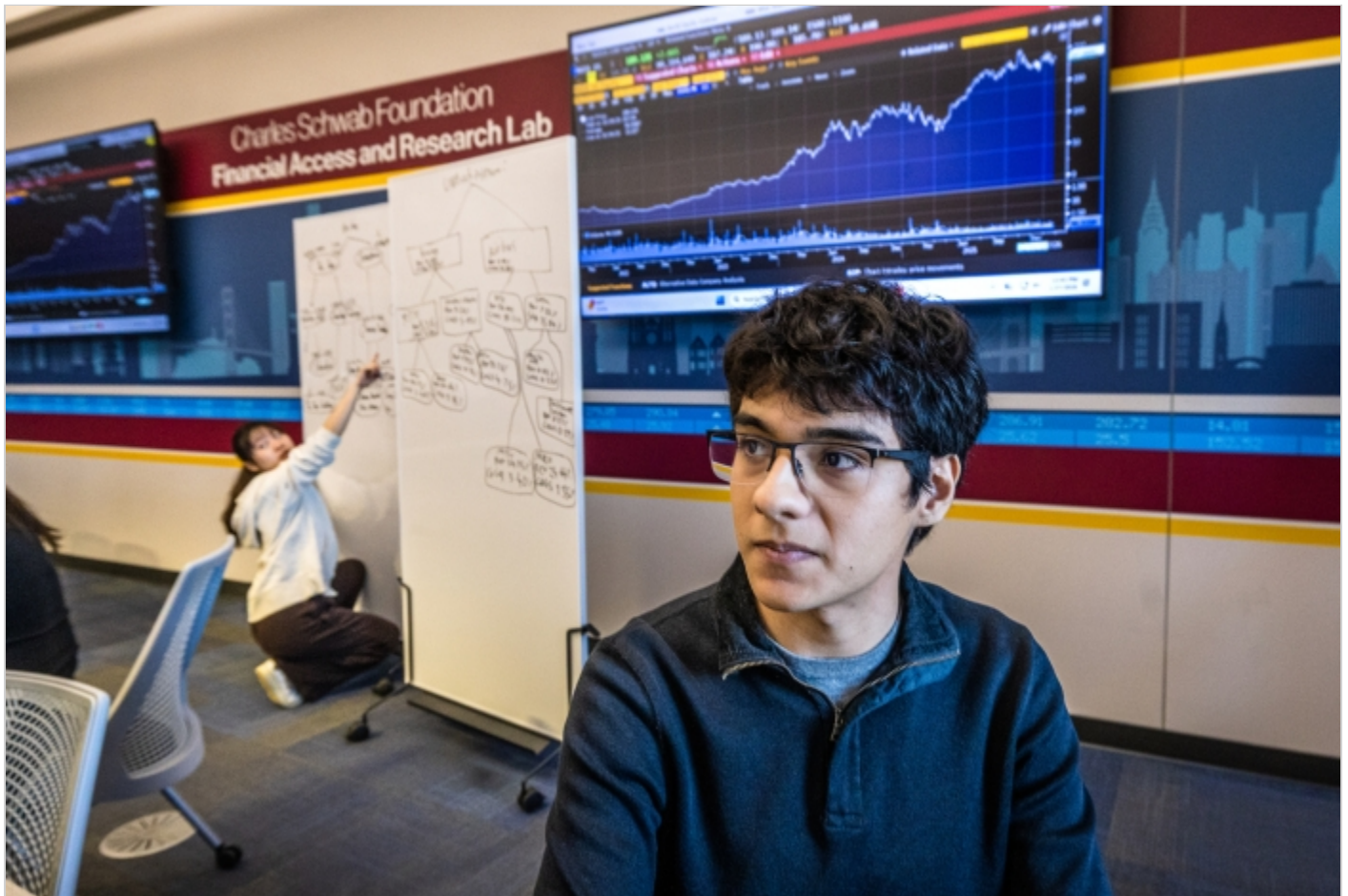
[Dale Rogers](#), ON Semiconductor Professor of Business in the [NASPO Department of Supply Chain Management](#), said that while the Bloomberg Terminal is primarily seen as a Wall Street tool, its vast repository of real-time data also makes it an indispensable asset for graduate-level supply chain professionals.

“Supply chain professionals utilize the terminal for visibility in supply chain tiers, both upstream and downstream, and revenue and cost exposure, where supply chain professionals can see how reliant a supplier or buyer firm is on their customer or supplier,” Rogers said.

“It is an amazing tool.”

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

Main image



Teaching assistant and third-year accounting and finance student Nick Gonzalez looks up financial data for a company in the Charles Schwab Foundation Financial Access and Research, or FAR, Lab, on Tuesday, Jan. 27, at McCord Hall on the Tempe campus. The lab provides access to advanced financial tools and educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate business students. Photo by Charlie Leight/ASU News

Text image(s)



Assistant Teaching Professor Gary Tsarsis, director of the FAR Lab, chats with his teaching assistant, Nick Gonzalez, a third-year accounting and finance student, on Tuesday, Jan. 27, at McCord Hall on the Tempe campus. Photo by Charlie Leight/ASU News



Students in the FAR Lab learn to analyze top-tier datasets and market information via Bloomberg Terminals. The terminals have accurate information on the U.S. markets with a 20-minute delay and no trading capabilities. Photo by Charlie Leight/ASU News