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Alumna links coffee, women in international business

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As Vice President of Operations at Equator Coffees & Teas, Maureen McHugh '01, '11 MBA first enrolled at Dominican in 1999 to earn a BA in Human Resource Management in the Adult Degree Completion program. In 2009, she returned to Dominican to earn her MBA in Sustainable Enterprise.

“The Green MBA program absolutely changed me. It gave me a platform to recommit to my professional and personal goals,” she says. “It reignited my passions for social justice and sustainability.”

In the time since graduating from the [Barowsky School of Business](#), Maureen has supervised dynamic growth at [Equator](#), an award-winning coffee roasting company that in 2011 became a certified B Corporation and, in March, was named Small Business of the Year in California by SBA. Equator has grown to a 90-person operation, with a 5,000 square foot roasting facility, three retail cafes, and more in the pipeline.

“Our intention was always to create a company that was aligned with our values,” Maureen says. “We wanted to utilize our business as a way to address social issues.”

It was during her time at Dominican that Maureen gained the skills and expertise to apply sustainability principles in business, integrating the social, environmental, and financial impacts.

One of Maureen’s own impacts has been her involvement in the [International Women’s Coffee Alliance](#) (IWCA), a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women in coffee, which began in 2004 when she joined the group on a tour to Guatemala for women in the coffee industry.

“The IWCA fueled my desire to be of service and address the needs of women in the coffee producing communities,” Maureen says. “IWCA has provided access to resources; from technical training and business education, to microcredit loans for coffee capital development and community improvement.”

Maureen now sits on the Board of Directors of IWCA, which has grown to 19 chapters internationally. Last fall, she attended the fourth international IWCA Conference in Bogota, Colombia.

“It was about creating something that was going to be different than business as we had experienced,” Maureen says.

With her help, Equator has created something unique, a thriving women-owned operation using the power of business to do good in the world.

Like Dominican, Equator is committed to ethical leadership and promoting socially responsible citizenship.

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