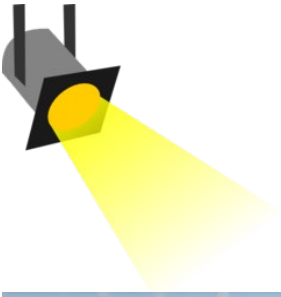


ECON SPOTLIGHT: TRACY HEILMAN



Meet Tracy Heilman '88! Tracy graduated from Williams with a degree in Economics and Psychology, and then she went on to earn her MBA from Northwestern University in 1995. Currently based out of Chicago, IL, Tracy is self-employed, doing independent consulting and advising. Most of her career has been spent in product strategy and development leadership roles, primarily in small companies and lean startups. Tracy credits her “liberal arts background in general, and the particular discipline of economics thinking” as the keys to her success in these varied environments and roles. She believes the ability to think critically, challenge assumptions, and communicate effectively has been invaluable. She said, “Having the skills to assess the situation, be resourceful, and develop creative solutions is far more important than having

specific ‘domain expertise.’” According to Tracy, such critical thinking skills are what allows one to be successful from situation to situation, or environment to environment...and it is exactly what the Williams liberal arts education provides.

Tracy also spends a lot of time on board and committee work for several nonprofit organizations (including Williams!). She noticed that “it is not vastly different from the for-profit world. The challenges are often similar, and therefore, so are the ways of approaching issues. The added benefit is the potential to work on something for the ‘greater good.’” If you are interested in nonprofit work, remember that (like Tracy) you can also be involved on a volunteer basis.

If you find yourself unsure how to enter the professional world, Tracy advises: “Don’t hesitate to tap into the alumni network – Williams alums genuinely want to help and mentor!” Having gotten her first job through a Williams alum, she was set on the course for her career and has never looked back. Tracy said, “I continue to be amazed by the power and generosity of the Williams network. It is an important thread throughout my life – both personally and professionally – and I continue to use it and promote it.”