

ALEX ZVIBLEMAN

– UMSL’s first entrepreneurship graduate – eyes investment in university area

By Sara Bell

Alex Zvibleman didn’t intend to be at the University of Missouri–St. Louis for long.

He assumed the local institution would be a one-semester stop as he spent time with his ailing grandfather. But three years later, Zvibleman’s still networking in the Millennium Student Center, scheduling meetings with university administrators and captivating UMSL audiences with his entrepreneurial ideas.

“I just couldn’t leave,” Zvibleman says with a smile. “I was going to go to Tulane University, but this place is just so cool, and there is so much potential here. You can really be a big fish in a small pond. What you put into it, you’ll get out.”

The potential Zvibleman originally saw in UMSL will keep him in the area a little longer.

He plans to open a coffee shop later this summer about a block from campus down Natural Bridge Road. The business’ name – Seize the Bean – and concept center around Zvibleman’s desire to foster a community of fellowship and drive social development among UMSL’s commuter population. He says patrons can expect a quality cup of their favorite caffeinated beverage and to be greeted at the door with reminders to seize the opportunities around them.

“I wanted to create a space in the area that’s for UMSL,” he says. “I realized that the community here is my passion. I wanted to focus on our students because I knew I could do better for UMSL. We’ll be the environment that students need and help further the culture that UMSL deserves.”



As he prepares for the venture, Zvibleman hopes to adopt the skills and networks he’s created as UMSL’s first entrepreneurship graduate – a business degree emphasis formally approved by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education this spring.

During his undergraduate years, he’s run the gamut of UMSL’s entrepreneurial offerings. He served as an officer for the Entrepreneur Club, secured a competitive internship in the inaugural Ameren Accelerator and won \$10,000 as a finalist in UMSL’s first Entrepreneur Quest Student Accelerator.

He says these experiences, paired with a traditional education, focused his ambitions and provided pathways to explore the array of skills necessary to be a successful entrepreneur.

“UMSL has elevated me to a point where I can admire and appreciate my past but can also see where I could go in the future,” he says. “Since coming here, I’ve become much more grounded. The education I received is key because I knew what I wanted and needed for my business ideas, but I didn’t know how to get those things. My education has helped me learn to seize opportunities, and I hope to pass that on to others as well.”