

excellence *through* integration

SUMMER 2010

i insight

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY



The business of economic
development and education

inside this issue

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Supporting business growth, building a vibrant economy

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Here at the SBA we are helping build a vibrant economy — in Michigan and across the globe — by sharing our vast network of knowledge, resources, skills and processes with people who can make a difference. From business leaders and practitioners to students

and displaced workers, we're building on our long history of partnering with businesses small and large to address key challenges.

We're doing this in a myriad of ways — through research and faculty partnerships, classroom projects and discussions, and by assisting businesses with the support they need to launch, sustain and grow.

This issue of *SBA Insight* features examples of how the SBA is supporting economic development while giving students intense, hands-on experience in the real world of business. Here you'll read about how SBA students are gaining valuable on-the-job experience through sponsored projects and internships. Many of these projects move beyond assistance by providing a business with the support it needs to develop new business approaches, launch new product or product lines, diversify its customer base, or take other action to survive and thrive in a changing economic landscape.

By integrating the experiential learning component into the SBA's solid curricular foundation and strengthening the link between business and education, we are helping organizations and ensuring that our students are fully and uniquely prepared to hit the ground running their first day on the job.

Mohan Tanniru
Dean, School of Business Administration
Oakland University

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insight

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Companies mean business when they partner with SBA

Whether it's a start-up venture or new product launch, good economic times or bad, the SBA and its students have a long history of helping organizations achieve their goals. Through partnerships, internships, sponsored projects and an array of other opportunities, the SBA supports business development while giving students valuable hands-on experience.

"Business schools' goals always include educating students to better prepare them for the marketplace," says Mohan Tanniru, dean, SBA. "Today's marketplace is pretty rough, so we make sure our students have the skills to succeed."

A FRONT ROW SEAT TO WORLD OF STARTUP

Within the last year, a health care startup organization launched a partnership with the SBA's Applied Technology in Business (ATiB) program. The initial collaboration involved helping OptimizeRx — an online marketing company that offers patients and physicians central access to a wide array of prescription savings information to manage rising medical costs — analyze market research to better understand consumer needs.

"It's a great relationship," says OptimizeRx CEO David Lester, adding that students from OU's SBA and School of Engineering and Computer Science are instrumental in supporting new initiatives, such as SampleMD, a prescription-sample desktop application, increasing e-traffic, and learning how to build more communities to leverage effectively.

"The students help OptimizeRx better evaluate, analyze and position," says Lester, who hopes to double OptimizeRx's employee count by year end. "It's valuable input for us."

For Vince Asmar, a senior accounting major, monitoring and improving OptimizeRx's traffic and offering suggestions for search engine optimizations is an incredible experience.

"I got exposure to a wide array of business aspects," Asmar explains. "Getting the hands-on experience is definitely a great advantage."

That's an advantage Asmar will carry with him when he enters the job market.

"It's a great two-way relationship," says Lester, pointing out that a development-phase company is able to watch expenses, while "students get the practical experience to take everything they've learned and apply it to an actual work environment."

HELPING BUSINESSES EVOLVE, GROW

For Troy-based Entertainment Publications, makers of the Entertainment Books, OU covers a market they'd like to tap: young adults.

"We are looking to bring a discount and promotion product into the university market," says Erin Clark, senior product manager, Entertainment.

Entertainment went straight to the source, partnering with the SBA's student chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA) to study and pilot a college-based program. Getting OU students' insight is invaluable, says Clark.

"We can dream all day about what [college students are] looking for, but unless you're really talking and working with them, how do you know?" asks Clark.

"The project spans three semesters, and each semester the AMA is focusing on a different piece that will lead to a product launch," says Steve St. Germain, senior marketing major and president of the SBA's AMA chapter. "Last fall, we completed market research and wrote a marketing plan."

An OU-focused discount and promotion product is slated to launch this fall. If successful, Entertainment hopes to take it to other universities, says St. Germain.

"Starting from the business plan and marketing plan and moving all the way through the whole sales cycle is a pretty big feat," says Clark. "It's a great resume builder, and it is more cost-effective for us. It's also a great opportunity because we might be able to find great new salespeople or employees in the process."

GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

These projects provide companies with the support they need to develop new business approaches, launch new products or product lines, diversify their customer base, or do whatever it takes to survive — and even thrive — in a challenging economic landscape. That's a win-win scenario for everyone involved.

"Students want to do this to help improve their own career opportunities, but also to help local companies," Tanniru says.

Accomplishing two goals with one effort is just good business. ■

By Cara Catallo

ATiB senior Vince Asmar (left) worked on monitoring and improving Web traffic for OptimizeRx. Asmar is pictured with OptimizeRx CEO David Lester.



CIBRE Conversations help new aerospace company take flight



When Jim Davis began attending the SBA's informal CIBRE (Center for Integrated Business Research and Education) Conversations, he had no idea where networking with other professionals could take him. He certainly didn't imagine it would lead to the creation of an aircraft company from the ground up.

But it's exactly what SBA Dean Mohan Tanniru envisioned — bringing professionals together to network and move the Michigan economy forward.

Tanniru knows Michigan possesses something just as valuable as its natural resources — a plethora of talented, experienced and knowledgeable professionals who, because of today's economy, are unemployed or seeking new opportunities.

With 30 years' experience in computer systems, product development applications and processes, Davis fit this profile perfectly after he lost his job

as a program manager on the Ford account at Dassault Systemes in 2009.

After learning about CIBRE Conversations, Davis made the hour-long trip from Brighton to check it out. "I had no idea what I was getting into, but I thought 'why not?'" he says.

This step sparked the knowledge sharing and networking that led to the creation of WAVE Aircraft Company, which plans to produce a new category of high performance aircraft. The planes could serve as an air taxi, charter or corporate plane.

Through discussions about the aerospace industry, Tanniru connected Davis to CIBRE member Maria McKendrick of ArtCraft Pattern Works, who was researching bringing light jet business to Michigan. McKendrick, in turn, introduced Davis to Perry DiClemente.

"Perry and I had a long discussion about aircraft and design," recalls Davis. "We had a common view of things, and the net of it was that Perry had designed several aircraft. We decided to combine his design experience and vision with my background in marketing, strategy and sales to launch a new company."

When up and running, WAVE has the potential to affect the employment of more than 1,500 people, including automotive employees who have skills that can easily transfer to this emerging industry.

With the business plan complete, the company is searching for financing.

"Our intention is to build the plane here. We know there's all kind of talent, tooling,

"CIBRE Conversations started this cascading series of consequences, that has worked out to start an airplane company in southeast Michigan."

Jim Davis

manufacturing, testing and analysis right here," Davis says. "We can create the entire aircraft in southeastern Michigan."

Once the funding is secured, Davis expects it will take another four to five years for design, certification, prototype build, flight test and production — a lead time similar to the medical and pharmaceutical device industries.

"One of the things CIBRE Conversations started was this cascading series of consequences that has worked out to start an airplane company in southeast Michigan," says Davis.

Retooling and rebuilding Michigan by tapping the state's vast talent pool — exactly what CIBRE Conversations are all about. ■

By Dawn Pauli, CAS '88



Expanding business relies on SBA graduates for success

OU SBA graduates are playing a central role in a small business success story unfolding in Oakland County. Rapidly expanding over the past 17 months, Improvement Path Systems (IPS) has hired five employees — all SBA graduates — and is moving from a home-based office to its first permanent office space in Bingham Farms this summer.

President and CEO Steve Littig and a partner launched IPS in 1992 as a consultant to private sector hospital clients, including Beaumont Hospitals, Henry Ford Health System and University of Michigan Health System. IPS offers targeted services including advanced data analysis, modeling and software development.

Leveraging its experience, technology expertise and success, IPS expanded into consulting Navy medical centers in January 2009. There are now four projects ongoing at Navy hospitals from coast-to-coast.

DELIVERING VALUE

While growing his business, Littig has relied on the support and expertise available from the SBA, including its Applied Technology in Business (ATiB) program. Whether partnering on research grants, working with students or hiring its graduates, Littig appreciates the value the SBA offers businesses — and the local economy.

“OU SBA students have a great blend of technical competency with real-world application,” explains Littig. “The ATiB graduates especially can hit the ground running, which is imperative for a small growing business such as ours. A strength of OU’s program is a curriculum and mindset that students must learn the theoretical foundations of subject matter — but in a way that is focused on real-world application.”

Through ATiB, students earn a minor while participating in a program that blends rigorous coursework and sponsor projects focused on learning effective business problem-solving skills and project management. Although IPS doesn’t participate as an ATiB sponsor, Littig likes to hire graduates from the program.

IPS and the SBA began working together on a National Science Foundation and Small Business Innovation Research grant a few years ago, which included funding two OU graduate students. Littig was impressed with the caliber of work the students delivered. Since then, Littig has made it a practice to hire SBA graduates.

“A business of seven needs people ready to jump in and ‘do’ from day one and I’ve had great success finding those types of people in the SBA.”

Steve Littig, president and CEO,
Improvement Path Systems

Littig and his team of SBA graduates are now immersed in helping the Navy improve all aspects of its health care system, including the areas of access to care, quality of care and cost.

REVITALIZING THE ECONOMY

“IPS is working with Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab to fulfill these objectives,” says Littig. “Right at this moment stored in the databases of every hospital in the country is a wealth of data and information that could help improve the care of patients and the efficiency of care delivery. The challenge is building tools and technologies to transform this raw data into knowledge.”

This kind of small business growth is vital to Michigan’s economic turnaround.

“IPS is a great example of the type of niche small companies that we need to grow in Michigan and the fact that it’s primarily staffed with OU SBA folks is a testament to both our program and Steve’s confidence in our students,” says Mark Isken, associate professor of MIS, who partners with IPS on research and development projects.

Littig estimates he will add more staff by the end of the year. Given his past success with SBA graduates, he plans to recruit at OU again.

“A business of seven needs people ready to jump in and ‘do’ from day one and I’ve had great success finding those types of people in the SBA,” he says. ■

By Dawn Pauli, CAS ‘88



SBA and IPS: A winning combination

- **Wes Arnold**, MIS '07, joined IPS in 2010 after working for the SBA's ATiB program
- **Brian Robotnik**, MIS '06, joined IPS after working at IBM
- **Jerrad Wolfrum**, ACC '07, currently completing his MS in IS from DePaul University
- **Joe Zuchora**, POM '09, joined IPS right after graduation
- **Sowmya Venugopal**, MBA '07, was the first SBA graduate IPS hired and worked for IPS from the beginning of 2009 through October 2009

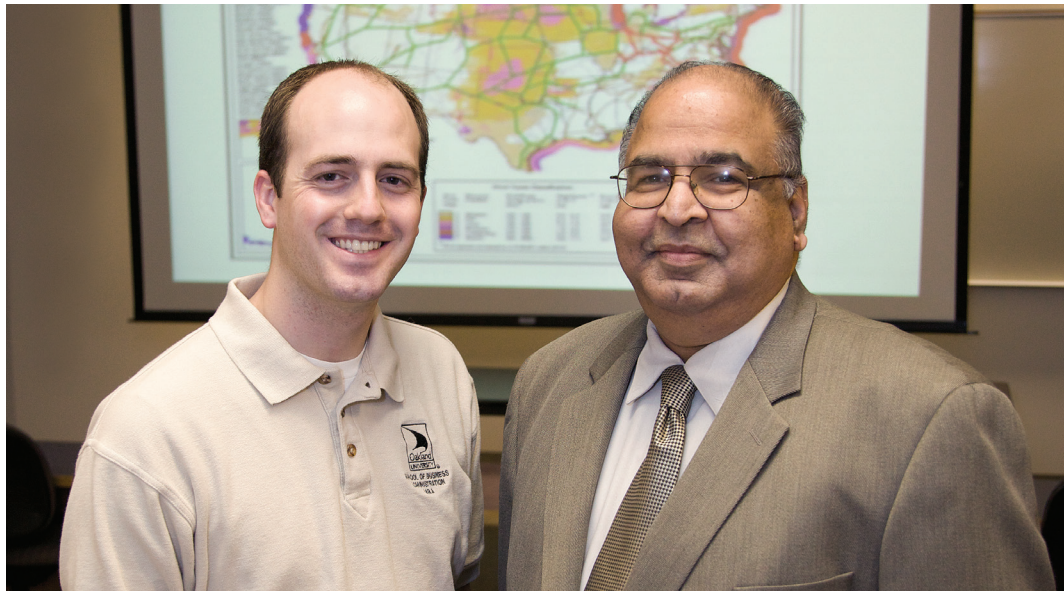
Going Green: SBA helps Michigan's drive for a clean energy economy

From President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address to the United Nations' Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen this year, clean energy and sustainability are hot topics around the world.

So it is in the SBA at OU. Courses throughout the school are helping prepare students to be a part of the drive for a clean energy economy.

The global push is creating well-paying jobs nationally. Between 1998 and 2007, jobs in the clean energy economy grew at a national rate of 9.1 percent, while traditional jobs grew by only 3.7 percent.

These jobs are not just for engineers and scientists, but for business professionals in the field of energy. The SBA is training them as business and energy management authorities so they can take on the role of energy efficiency or greenhouse gas mitigation strategists. The goal is to help firms along the "energy journey" toward a cleaner environment.



MBA student Matthew Guinn (left) started his master's program with Professor Ravi Parameswaran's global marketing course in fall 2009.

"OU is more in touch with its community and what's going on in the world than other universities."

Joseph Hodges, Hammerhead

POISED AND READY

Michigan, particularly Oakland County, is poised to be an important part of this goal, explains Ravi Parameswaran, professor, marketing. His fall 2009 International Marketing class (MKT 650) put the microscope on the global marketing implications of Oakland County focusing on the renewable energy sector.

"Broadly speaking, where we have our best bets are in the transferring of automobile-related competitive advantages that can seamlessly be applied to new emerging industries, our vast reservoir of engineering and technology related expertise, and our superiority in designing complex mechanisms," he says.

Parameswaran believes OU is the perfect place to dive into the energy arena. "Given our location

and human resources, OU has the potential to be a great source of skilled technical, entrepreneurial and managerial professionals," he explains.

So, too, does MBA student Matthew Guinn, who started his master's classes with Parameswaran's course. Guinn's dream job is to be the CEO of an industry-leading green technology organization. He's already applying what he's learned to his current position at a Birmingham, Mich.-based auto supplier, where he oversees the international accounts.

"While studying the alternative energy sector, it gave me a new perspective on how to approach energy efficiency problems in the workplace," he says. "Changing work schedules to optimize daylight utilization, for example."

He's in the midst of putting together a business plan for his company that will reduce energy costs and maximize energy savings.

Students could follow up Parameswaran's class with Strategic Marketing (MKT 608) in winter 2010, which focused on the solar energy sector. It included a virtual collaboration between SBA students and students from the T.A. PI Management Institute in India.

CONSERVING ENERGY, SAVING MONEY

In another class, Operations Management (POM 521) four students collaborated on a semester-long green/energy project in winter 2010. They analyzed King Pharmaceuticals, a \$1.78 billion dollar company with a penicillin manufacturing plant in Rochester, to identify specific operations management issues or problems, and implement viable solutions. The company is spending millions of dollars annually on energy costs, which is

expected to increase 6 to 8 percent in the coming year, says Assistant Professor Joseph Schiele.

The group discovered that developing a process to identify areas of the plant where energy consumption can be improved, rather than just a change in fixtures and equipment, could result in a potential cost savings in the tens of thousands of dollars — if not more — at the Rochester facility alone.

The process may be applied to all five of the company's manufacturing facilities, multiplying the savings.

Group member Sarah Greb, who works for King and proposed her employer for the project, is eager to present their findings.

"My boss keeps asking how the project is going, so I know the information will be well-received," she says. "Our corporate office put out a challenge on how to help our company become more energy friendly, and I know they like to hear, 'I know how to save you some money.'"

A GOLD MINE OF GREEN

The SBA at OU knows how to recognize a potential gold mine, like clean energy, notes Joseph Hodges, board member of Hammerhead, one of the first companies to enroll in the SBA's Experiential Learning and Innovation program based in the SBA's Center for Integrated Business Research and Education. (See story, facing page.)

"OU is more in touch with its community and what's going on in the world than other universities," Hodges says. ■

By Rene Wisely

Formula Hybrid vehicle revs up SBA, encourages learning across disciplines

A team of students from OU is one of the first in Michigan — and one of a select few in the nation — to develop a fuel-efficient Formula Hybrid vehicle in a competition that promotes drive train innovation and the use of alternative energy. Surprisingly, this competition isn't just for aspiring engineers. It's for business students too.

OU engineering students are designing, building and racing a high-performance, plug-in hybrid vehicle in the Formula Hybrid International Competition at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in May 2011. SBA students are responsible for business planning, accounting, finance, graphic arts and public relations.

"The students learn how to work across disciplines and gain real-world business experience," says Mohan Tanniru, SBA dean. "We are proud to support such an effort of excellence through integrative thinking and hard work. These are the types of leaders needed to transform this region."



Accounting major Steve Manduzzi, SBA '09, joined the team to fulfill an internship requirement. It didn't take long to recognize the value of the experience. Although his internship ended last summer, Manduzzi stayed.

"It's an eye-opening experience to work with different mindsets in different disciplines," says Manduzzi. "We have constructive debates to better understand each other's positions and, ultimately, further our common goal."

This sentiment is echoed by others on the team. Kirk McGuire, project president/CEO and an

electrical engineering student, says, "The business guys didn't always understand where we were coming from. But fair being fair, we didn't always appreciate their concerns."

This cross-disciplinary approach is vital to learning about working in the real world. It's also essential to turn out a superior product.

"Engineers would much rather design and build a car than create a business plan, oversee legal requirements or secure financing," says McGuire. "Having business students on the team meant the engineers could focus on what they do best, without worrying about the business details."

Team sponsors include OU's SECS, the SBA's Center for Integrated Business Research and Education (CIBRE) and Magna Electronics. ■

By Kathy Pomaville Pate, CAS '90

Plugged In: SBA helps startup energy conservation company

A simple device that could be the "next big thing" in energy conservation got its humble start when an OU alumnus called the SBA three years ago.

Thomas Lasky, CAS '80, and one of the partners of Bingham Farms-based Hammerhead International, turned to his alma mater to transform Hammerhead's LogicPlug from an entrepreneurial idea to reality.

LogicPlug captures "phantom" energy — the electricity used to power TVs, computers and other electronics when they are turned off. LogicPlug saves energy by dramatically reducing electricity to an appliance when it is off but ensuring power is full when needed.

Hammerhead was one of the first companies to enroll in the SBA's Experiential Learning and Innovation (ELI) program based in the SBA's Center for Integrated Business Research and Education (CIBRE). The program gave Hammerhead access to then-graduate student Shannon Dougherty, who conducted research and analysis and wrote a business plan for Hammerhead's LogicPlug, under the guidance of her ELI adviser Wayne Blizman, director, SBA's Entrepreneurship Institute.

That plan helped Hammerhead introduce the product to investors, who quickly put up \$1 million in financing, explains Joseph Hodges, the Hammerhead board member who had the original idea for the plug.

"The SBA at OU has been terrific. The business plan was important because it gave us a target to start with and a workable process to follow," explains Hodges.

While the company awaits its patent, Hodges is demonstrating the product and showcasing it to potential buyers. Hodges proved to the University of Michigan that using LogicPlug on all of its computers could save nearly \$1 million a year. Similarly, an upscale hotel in Las Vegas is interested in the plug because the energy savings on TVs alone would be tremendous. At OU, Sri Sharma, associate professor, MIS, is conducting a study evaluating retrofit technology, including the LogicPlug, to help OU conserve energy and save money.

Hodges points out that one plasma television can consume more than \$125 a year in energy when turned off. "Do you know how many TVs there are in Vegas?" Hodges asks. "That could be a huge savings for them."

"I think we're really on to something, and OU has always been there to help," he adds. ■

By Rene Wisely

Joseph Hodges (left), Hammerhead board member, and Thomas Lasky, CAS '80, Hammerhead partner, demonstrate LogicPlug, which saves phantom energy and money.



Learning by Doing

Experiential learning equips students for success from day one

When Andrew Cloutier started college, he took his studies one day at a time.

Since joining the SBA's Applied Technology in Business (ATiB) program, Cloutier has devoted thought and planning to today, tomorrow and the months to come.

"In the professional world, you have to make sure you meet deadlines, and you're on time and organized," says Cloutier, who worked on a project sponsored by Ancor Information Management Services. "I can tell I've really matured."

"The biggest thing we're seeing with employees coming out of college is it takes a little time to grasp real-world expectations," says Ronald McGlinch, IT business manager for the Troy-based

company. "In a classroom atmosphere, they're learning theory. We get to mentor students before they graduate to give them a leg up on the competition."

LESSONS FROM THE REAL WORLD

That's exactly what the SBA works to accomplish by integrating experiential learning opportunities into the business curriculum, ensuring graduates are prepared to succeed on the job from day one.

The ATiB program, a hallmark of the SBA since 1997, is just one way the SBA ensures students gain these valuable skills.

"The SBA's partnerships with sponsoring organizations allow students and organizations to gain value from experiential learning opportunities over time — systemizing the experience, the impact and the results," explains Mohan Tanniru, dean, SBA, who founded ATiB.

Since he started his internship last fall, Cloutier has been part of a team that is redesigning a payment tracking system for online use. Though he found it daunting initially to juggle the internship with classes, Cloutier says he has become more confident and organized since then.

"I underestimated how much this would help me," he says.

"I learned a lot more than I would have just taking classes," agrees Eric Mohan, MIS '10, who worked for Personal Design Systems (PDS), an independent entrepreneurial organization. "Now I realize I'm a lot better at programming than I am at network management."

TEAM EFFORTS

SBA students have other options for gaining experience as well.

Through a unique summer internship program first introduced in 2009, students participate in a collective learning experience. The program groups students into small teams, along with a

ATiB students Andrew Cloutier and Danielle Waltz work with Ron McGlinch at Ancor.

New certificate program provides knowledge and experience

A new certificate program offered by OU's SBA, in partnership with Altair Engineering Inc., goes a step beyond standard certificate programs by incorporating a key principle of the SBA — experiential learning — into the curriculum.

Integrating hands-on learning through a required on-site internship means professional education students, just like SBA undergraduate and graduate students, have the opportunity to apply the new skills they're learning in the classroom

in the real world. At press, internship placements were in progress to support advertising, alternative energy and finance projects.

The new Business Intelligence and Data Mining Certificate program offers students practical, marketable skills in this growing area providing them a skill set that is useful in multiple industries, including emerging sectors such as health care and information technology.

"By the end of the program, students will know how to turn research into a valuable resource," says Charbel Saleh, an Altair employee and co-instructor. "They'll have the necessary knowledge and tools to sort, analyze and identify emerging trends, which a company can use to profit in a cost-effective, time- and resource-efficient manner."

The program is a first for OU and, quite possibly, the first of its kind on any college campus.



ATiB students, like Andrew Cloutier and Danielle Waltz, get hands-on experience working on sponsored projects.

graduate student mentor, then connects them with a partner organization to work on a business project. The students work on their projects, then the full group meets on Saturdays to share their knowledge and learn from other students.

This group approach benefits the organization as it puts numerous minds on the task while allowing students to apply much-needed collaborative/teaming skills.

"This cumulative impact allows a team to make a deeper impact in a shorter period of time," notes Tanniru.

THE COMMUNITY AS A CLASSROOM

Through the SBA's CIBRE education programs, students gain real-world experience through more traditional internships and community projects.

SBA Senior Joseph Conigliaro screened and prepared low-income clients' tax returns for the Accounting Aid Society through a community

project. "I provided a service to people who were unable to afford to pay a professional to prepare their returns," Conigliaro says.

"The SBA's partnerships with sponsoring organizations allow students and organizations to gain value from experiential learning opportunities."

Mohan Tanniru, dean, SBA

As a marketing intern for Crittenton Hospital Medical Center, OU senior George Boulos developed a proposal to extend the hospital into the social marketing arena, putting the research, communication, presentation and implementation skills he learned in the classroom to work in the real world.

The Crittenton internship complemented the experience he gained as an intern with Oakland University athletics, Boulos says. "Athletics had a more relaxed and fun environment, while Crittenton offered a corporate experience," he says. "It also gave me a sense of how different products and services are marketed based on the industry. Both internships gave me experience in working with a team, working individually, meeting deadlines and making formal presentations."

EVERYONE GAINS

Ultimately, SBA classroom principles — the importance of integrative thinking, experiential learning, and global understanding — help bolster companies while students gain valuable real-world experience through sponsored projects and internship experiences.

"Companies are struggling to be competitive; Reduce cost, reposition themselves, diversify their base, launch new lines or simply go paperless," says Tanniru. "We can help."

Ancor's McGlinch says these projects benefit all parties involved. "I've grown through Ancor's partnership with the SBA. It's not all about us mentoring the students," he says. "They taught me a few things. They taught me to get back to my core experience."

Interacting with the interns allowed McGlinch to sharpen his analytical and mentoring skills. "It's been an all-around positive experience." ■

By Flori Meeks, CAS '88

"OU stood out as a leader in this area," says Chris Elkins (CAS '86, SBA Accounting/Finance '96), a student in the course. He researched numerous colleges and discovered no one offered anything like it.

"The fact I'm earning certification through this program and not merely taking a class gives it credibility. The internship proves to potential employers that I can put my knowledge into practice." ■

By Kathy Pomaville Pate, CAS '90



Chris Elkins, CAS '86, SBA Accounting/Finance '96 and current BI student, believes OU stands out as a leader in business intelligence/data mining. He is pictured with Altair employee and program co-instructor Charbel Saleh.

Black & Gold leading the Blue

Two OU SBA graduates have created healthy careers as two top executives at Blue Care Network (BCN), the largest health maintenance organization in Michigan.

While three years between graduation dates separate Sue Kluge, SBA Management '79, senior vice president and chief financial officer, and Laurie Westfall, SBA Management '76, senior vice president and chief operating officer, they are now only a few steps away from each other at their Southfield-based headquarters.

They are joined on a mission to promote health and peace of mind through high-quality health care and service.

"I'm doing my dream job now," Westfall says. "This allows me to do what I do best by focusing on our customers and by leveraging people, processes and technology to offer cost-effective solutions and products."

A SHARED APPRECIATION

Westfall says her OU background helped her form an immediate connection with Kluge when interviewing with BCN three years ago. Kluge joined the company in 1998. "I remember sharing our fondness for our student years at OU," Westfall adds.

They both credit John E. Tower, professor emeritus and former SBA assistant dean, for helping shape who they are today.

"He created a great learning environment and was always very encouraging," notes Westfall, who often dropped by his office for advice. "He helped me hone a vision for what I wanted to do."

"It's always nice to hear that you touched someone's life," Tower says. "I like that they remain loyal to OU."

Kluge felt one of the most valuable lessons she picked up at OU was working on group case studies.

"Working on a team helps to translate how you really work day to day. You have to perform in different roles and work with individuals who have different talents and skill sets," she says.

Sue Kluge (left) and
Laurie Westfall (right)

Living in the residence halls was also an education. Kluge says it exposed her to many diverse individuals. Different upbringings, backgrounds and personalities came together in that community, preparing her for the workplace.

"You work with all types of people, and you need to be willing to learn from others," she adds.

As a thank-you for their education, both are active at OU. Kluge is a member of the SBA's Accounting and Finance Advisory Board and the OU Alumni Association. Several times, Kluge has presented to the accounting and finance student associations.

So, too, is Westfall, who spoke at OU's Executive MBA (EMBA) graduation in April. She may have been speaking to her future colleagues, too. The EMBA program is the only one in Michigan to offer two different but complementary concentrations in health care management and information systems leadership.

A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

Neither Westfall nor Kluge intended a career in health care.

Westfall cut her business teeth at an architectural firm, a position she found through OU's Career Services. From there, she joined Uniroyal Tire Co., then the telecommunications industry, including MCI, where she started a department from scratch. She later submerged herself in the automotive marketing industry, and in the late 90s she met a consultant who helped her

transition her years of operational skills and customer service to health care. She joined Care Choices HMO where she quickly rose to chief operating officer. She joined BCN in 2006.

Westfall and her husband, John, met at OU during her last semester. Their daughter, Brittney, is now following in their footsteps as an OU undergraduate.

Kluge had hopes of being a high school Spanish teacher. After her sophomore year, she helped her church start a day care/nursery school. She handled the accounting and dealt with the government to obtain nonprofit status. "I discovered I had an aptitude for accounting and finance," she explains.

After graduation, a neighbor tipped her off about an opening in the accounting department at Henry Ford Hospital in Troy, where she worked until 1985. After that, she climbed the corporate ladder at SelectCare Inc. for 13 years, and then joined BCN.

"Being a CFO was a wonderful dream and it came true," adds Kluge. "When you talk about achieving your dream job, a lot of it has to do with leveraging your strengths, having fun with what you do and being passionate about contributing and having an influence." ■

By Rene Wisely

Editor's Note: As this issue went to press, the SVP, Chief Operating Officer position was eliminated in cost-cutting moves at Blue Care Network.



Planned Giving — An opportunity to make an impact

By Robin Michel, development director, School of Business Administration



Robin Michel

"How can I show my appreciation to OU for providing me with the skills and tools to launch and navigate my career?"

I recently received that question from an alumna who graduated in 1971. Through her ability to constantly

grow, change, adapt and learn, she succeeded in her life pursuits.

She credits the strong education and mentoring by OU SBA faculty as a large part of the reason she could do this. In short, through her experience she said she had the knowledge and critical thinking skills to make many sound life and business decisions.

Now she is considering a gift to the SBA. However, she is concerned her income could erode in this era of economic uncertainties. So, we discussed a charitable deferred gift annuity — a planned gift where she would receive a fixed income when she retired and impact students and faculty at the same time. First, I directed her to OU's planned

giving Web site, oakland.giftlegacy.com to learn more so her passion and business acumen could guide her decision.

This type of gift can benefit both the giver and the receiver. If you're looking to make an impact on the future of the SBA while balancing your need for security in your retirement years, a planned gift could be the right option for you. To discuss this idea further, contact me at michel@oakland.edu or call (248) 370-2121. ■

Econ Department welcomes two new board members

The Economics Department in OU's SBA recently welcomed Paul Swanson, SBA Economics '73, vice president, Trinity Health, and Dennis Janowski, SBA Economics '72, senior vice president, deputy manager, foreign exchange and derivatives groups, and manager of North American foreign exchange risk, to its Advisory Board.

The board includes experts from a variety of industries and includes notable OU alumni. It supports the work of the department to further the understanding and impact of economic issues in the global society. This also helps students develop critical thinking skills so as business professionals they have a framework for understanding their organization and making solid business decisions.

"The members provide invaluable feedback and insight that help us mold the future of our



Paul Swanson



Dennis Janowski

program," says Anandi Sahu, chair, economics. "They also strengthen the SBA's knowledge in key fields, such as health care economics."

Swanson, who received his BA in Economics from OU, brings more than 30 years of health care human resource experience to the board. He earned his Master of Labor Relations from

Michigan State University in 1975. He joined Trinity Health, the fourth largest Catholic health care system with 44 hospitals and 33 long-term care facilities and more than 50,000 associates across seven states, in 1979. Most recently, his focus has been on benefits and retirement programs.

Janowski offers extensive knowledge from the banking industry to the board. Shortly after graduating from OU, he joined Detroit Bank and Trust Co., which later became Comerica. His prior positions included manager of the Comerica foreign exchange affiliate marketing and business development unit, and manager of government and municipal bond trading units. He earned his MA in management/finance from Central Michigan University in 1980. ■

news briefs

OU AMA recognized at national conference

Oakland University's student chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA) won awards for outstanding fundraising and outstanding communications at the 32nd National Collegiate Conference this spring in New Orleans. ■

SHRM organization recognized

SBA's chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) received the 2009-10 Student Chapter Superior Merit Award recognizing outstanding achievements in chapter operations and a commitment to providing meaningful programs and services to members. The chapter has earned the Merit or Superior Merit award every year since 1992-93. ■

SBA senior honored with prestigious Wilson Award

Waseem Samaan, an accounting and finance major who graduated this spring, was awarded one of OU's most prestigious honors, the Matilda R. Wilson Award. Since 1965, this award has been presented to students based on their contributions as scholars, leaders and responsible citizens of the university.

Maintaining a 3.87 GPA in his accounting and finance studies, Samaan was involved with several organizations such as Beta Alpha Psi, Beta Gamma Sigma, National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants and Oakland Accounting Students Information Society. ■

SBA restructures hallmark ATiB program

Founded in 1997, the Applied Technology in Business (ATiB) program has become the SBA's signature program, providing students 56 credit hours of tuition stipend while providing them the opportunity to work on corporate-sponsored projects.

Due to current economic conditions, the SBA restructured the program for Fall 2010 to retain experiential learning for students and project assistance for sponsors.

Associate Professor, MIS, Kieran Mathieson was named director of the ATiB program, effective May 1. ■



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upcoming programs



June 28–July 1

Advanced Placement Institute I

July 9

Project Management Certificate Program

July 12–16

Business Management/Entrepreneurship Summer Workshop for High School Students

July 19–22

Advanced Placement Institute II

August 5

Professional Education Open House

September 13

Paralegal Certificate Program

September 20

Certified Financial Planner Program

Check www.sba.oakland.edu/ce for details.

Graduate Business Programs

New cohort for the SBA's Executive MBA in Health Care Management and Information Systems Leadership begins fall 2010. emba.oakland.edu

Now enrolling for business graduate programs. Come back to the SBA for your MBA, MAcc or MSITM. www.sba.oakland.edu/grad

save the date

September 14

SBA New York City Alumni Gathering

September 22

Woodcock Legacy Seminar Series

September 23

Scholarship Donor Breakfast

October 22

Business Conference

Check the SBA Web site at
www.sba.oakland.edu for
details as they are available.