



New program distinguishes SBA graduates in job market

Integrating for excellence



Welcome to *SBA Insight* – your standing invitation into OU’s School of Business Administration. Through this newsletter – and the associated *SBA Insight Online* – we welcome you back to your business school.

Here, you’ll read about how the SBA is integrating your input – and the input of other experts – into excellence for our students, curriculum, faculty, partners and alumni.

In this issue alone, you’ll read about how we’re enhancing the curriculum to successfully transition students from campus to careers through ACHIEVE; how our master’s students are leading the way in Michigan’s social entrepreneurship efforts through an internship supporting a first-in-Michigan project undertaken by three local nonprofits; and profiles of important members of the SBA team: an alumni and a generous supporter.

As you can see here, the SBA has much to offer to the global business environment, and through the experience you have gained in the business world, you have much to offer the SBA. I invite your involvement and input into the SBA – the strength of our alumni is a large part of what makes the SBA strong, and your continued involvement will ensure its excellence long into the future.

I hope to see and hear from many of you at events this academic year, and those leading up to the celebration of our 40th anniversary in October 2009. And, I welcome your ideas on how we can continue to support our mission to advance the knowledge and enhance students’ abilities to manage in a global business environment.

Mohan Tanniru
 Dean, School of Business Administration, Oakland University

- ▶ Let the SBA keep you in touch with your business school. We offer many ways for you to connect. Keep track of the 40th anniversary celebration plans by checking the anniversary Web page at www.sba.oakland.edu. Be sure to get invitations to special SBA events and the first issue of *SBA Insight Online*, our new e-newsletter coming out this year, by sharing your latest e-mail address and contact information with us by e-mailing sbadev@oakland.edu.

The SBA is integrating career readiness into its business curriculum to build a bridge between students’ academic success and their ability to apply their learning in the real world.

Introduced this fall, the ACHIEVE program inspires, guides and prepares students for their ideal business career. This mandatory four-year professional development series helps students learn about business careers and their degree, and then equips them with the skills they need to land a job and succeed in their chosen profession.

“The ultimate goal is for students to walk across the stage at commencement already employed in their field,” says Laurie Shano, SBA academic adviser and staff liaison for the ACHIEVE program.

From a business leaders’ perspective, ACHIEVE is set to do just that.

“ACHIEVE will give SBA students a differentiator in the job market,” says Rande Somma, president of Rande Somma and Associates LLC, a leadership coaching and development company that he formed after retiring from Johnson Controls where he served as president of the Automotive Systems Group Worldwide. “ACHIEVE is the bridge that connects the dots between learning and application. As an employer, I say ‘Wow, your experience has primed you to move successfully into the job faster and I don’t have to spend as much time getting you ready to contribute.’ As companies get leaner and leaner, the impression of readiness makes a difference in the hiring decision.”

Starting with freshmen who entered the SBA in fall 2008, ACHIEVE exposes students to industry through networking, job shadowing

ACHIEVE

and internships so students can target their coursework toward their chosen profession. Through the integrated curriculum, they also practice valuable professional skills, such as teamwork, critical thinking and communication. A focus on resume writing and interview skills also gives students a boost up the career ladder.

“We’re giving students tools to make better decisions about their business careers,” says Jim Serocki, chair of the ACHIEVE Oversight Committee and assistant professor of accounting.

“When students enter the job market, their academic achievement is an enabler,” says Somma, who also served as the SBA’s first Executive in Residence. “Once in the work world, the contribution is what matters most. I applaud SBA for going beyond the core of learning and really helping students successfully transition to a career.”

Through ACHIEVE, SBA students will graduate with a wealth of practical knowledge that increases the value of their OU business bachelor’s degree, ultimately giving them even more of the skills employers seek.

ACHIEVE also helps students form a stronger connection to the SBA and to their peers – bonds that will encourage students to complete their degree program and ultimately lead to greater success.

The SBA is looking for alumni interested in participating in networking sessions or in supporting students in other ways through the ACHIEVE program. For information or to participate, contact Shano at ltshano@oakland.edu or call (248) 370-3285. ■

Area executive believes in SBA’s mission

Since he believes in what the school is doing, the decision to support Oakland University’s School of Business Administration (SBA) was an easy one for area business executive Timothy Healy.

“OU’s business school has been aggressive in continuing to get students in real-world business situations,” says Healy, president and chief operating officer of TK Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of automotive safety device manufacturer Takata Corp.

Healy has been helping the SBA achieve its mission for six years as a member of the SBA Board of Visitors. Earlier this year, he took his support a step further by making a gift to the Dean’s Initiative Fund. “I have every reason to want the school to thrive,” he says.

“Oakland University is the local university here,” the Clarkston resident says. “I’ve lived in Oakland County since 1986, and our primary place of business with Takata is Auburn Hills.”

Further, Healy says, he respects the leadership at Oakland University, beginning with President Gary Russi. “Dr. Russi is setting the pace for the school to succeed,” he says.

Healy also has good things to say about SBA Dean Mohan Tanniru, who he met in the early 2000s, when Tanniru was the director of the SBA’s Applied Technology in Business (ATiB) program. Healy was impressed with Tanniru’s efforts to place Oakland business students



Timothy Healy

with area companies, where they completed projects under the guidance of an OU professor.

“When I saw that, I knew it tied into the mission of the school to give students knowledge of the business world on a global basis,” Healy says. “It made sense to me.”

The SBA’s Board of Visitors strives to meet the same objective, he adds. “We’re there so students not only get the benefit of the great professors at Oakland University, but insight from people who already are working in the business world.”

“Support from board members helps us pilot new programs and offer timely learning opportunities for students and faculty,” says Robin Michel, the SBA’s director of development. “Expanding our reach so Oakland business students have global experiences prior to graduation is a high priority for the school.” ■



FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY Since 1959, Oakland University’s School of Business Administration has evolved from a small liberal arts college business program to a Department of Economics to an AACSB-accredited business school offering undergraduate and graduate business programs.

Mark your calendars for the following anniversary festivities: **Thursday, Oct. 8, 2009**, SBA Alumni, Faculty and Friends Golf Outing; **Friday, Oct. 9, 2009**, a business conference celebrating the SBA alumni achievements through the years; and **Saturday, Oct. 10, 2009**, a gala celebration dinner.

Visit the anniversary Web page at www.sba.oakland.edu for more details – and to share your memories. ■

Alumnus relishes challenges of ever-changing business environment

Don Pietrowski, MBA '91, has devoted most of his career to marketing and research, but the President of RDA Group says he finds his field as fascinating today as he did when he entered it more than 25 years ago.

"Things are changing every single day, and you can't do things the same way. Keeping up with that makes it exciting," the Metamora Township resident says.

Bloomfield Hills-based RDA Group conducts research and analysis for a wide variety of industries, including automotive, health care, temporary employment, utility, financial services and construction equipment. Its research professionals show clients how to best gain the voice-of-customer and how to act on it to maximize the appeal of the client's products and services.

Pietrowski joined the privately held company in the mid-1980s after earning his undergraduate degree from Central Michigan University. Several years later, he started graduate courses at Oakland University.

"That's one of the things I've learned: you need to go into the business world before you get your MBA," he

says. "When I was working on my bachelor's degree, my classes seemed theoretical. When I was working days and going to night school, every single class pertained to the real world."

For Pietrowski, it has been a meaningful experience to help shape the company his father, Anthony Pietrowski,



Don Pietrowski

started in 1969. During his years with RDA Group, Pietrowski has been instrumental in developing its extensive analytical and statistical capabilities and research abilities.

Pietrowski was instrumental in growing RDA Group's global research capabilities in response to the automotive industry's globalization efforts in the mid-1990s. During the last decades, he has conducted research projects worldwide, mostly related to new vehicle tracking and buyer behavior to help clients better understand customer wants, needs and priorities in the individual markets.

"Those were some of the most gratifying experiences we've ever had as we could see manufacturers putting our research to use as evidenced by their new products and services," Pietrowski says.

Today, as company president, Pietrowski continues to relish his clients' successes, successes RDA Group helped through its high quality research. ■

SBA MIS research ranked among top in country

The faculty members who make up OU's SBA Decision and Information Sciences department are dedicated to research, and together carry on an outstanding research tradition through exceptional productivity.

Independent organizations that identify and rank research work in the MIS field consistently recognize these contributions. In fact, the wealth of research projects and published findings completed by DIS faculty has led OU to be listed among the Top 100 business schools for MIS research by the University of Texas-Dallas School of Management for more than 15 years.

Thomas Lauer, DIS chair and MIS professor, knew DIS had a strong commitment to research, but it wasn't until he saw the rankings that he realized the breadth and depth of how the DIS department's work impacts OU's rankings as compared to other universities.

"Since the 1980s, a tradition of quality research developed in the department. Now we find good researchers are interested in working here," says Lauer.

In fact this year, *Information Systems Research (ISR)*, one of two premier journals in the MIS area, named Professor Balaji Rajagopalan's research paper, "Competition Among Virtual Communities and User Valuation: The Case of Investing-Related Communities," Best Published Paper.

Another example is Associate Professor Kieren Mathieson's 1991 article which is the fifth-most-cited article in the MIS field. "That is extraordinary," says Lauer.



Balaji Rajagopalan

Also published in *ISR*, Mathieson's article, "Predicting User Intentions: Comparing the Technology Acceptance Model with the Theory of Planned Behavior," has been cited more than 200 times according to a 2007 article "Assessing Leading Institutions, Faculty, and Articles in Premier Information Systems Research Journals"

in *Communications of the Association for Information Systems (AIS)*.

This publication also lists OU as 25th in cumulative citation of articles published. Surprisingly, a number of highly prestigious universities have lower cumulative citations than OU.

OU's significant contribution to MIS research is also highlighted in a 2007 issue of *Information & Management (I&M)*, The International Journal of Information Systems Applications. An article that provides a profile of information systems research published in *I&M* shows that OU is tied for 20th in publications in its

journal for the period of 1992-2005. *I&M* is the oldest MIS journal and is consistently ranked among the top 15 journals in the field, occasionally in the top five.

"Our faculty members have published ten articles in *I&M* during that time period," says Lauer. "This accomplishment is clearly due to the efforts of many in our department."

The article also lists single individuals ranked by institution; however, OU has no one single researcher, confirming Lauer's view that this accomplishment it is truly a departmental effort.

One of the most telling signs of OU's increasing strength in MIS research comes from a clever program offered by the University of Texas-Dallas School of Management.

Its Web site that ranks the Top 100 Business Schools based on research contributions (<http://top100.utdallas.edu>) lists OU as 72nd among North America's more than 500 business schools based on research contributions from 1990-2008 for two prestigious publications, *ISR* and *MIS Quarterly (MISQ)*. OU has consistently appeared in the top 100 since 1990: from 1990-2007, OU ranked 83rd and from 2005-2008, 84th.

"Most schools that rank above OU have a doctoral program in MIS," says Lauer. "This puts us ahead of Big 10 schools like Iowa, Northwestern, Purdue, Wisconsin and Ohio State for example, as well as Wayne State." ■

Inspirational global business leader to receive honorary degree

The business leader frequently described as the Bill Gates of Asia because of the similarities in the story of how he founded a software firm in Bangalore in 1981, Narayana Murthy will receive an honorary degree from the OU School of Business Administration during its December 13 commencement ceremony.

Murthy is founder of Infosys Technologies Limited, a global information technology consulting and software services provider, headquartered in Bangalore, India. His entrepreneurial spirit and determination has resulted in tremendous cost savings for companies across Europe and the United States first by creating, then by setting the standard for, the global outsourcing business process. His business endeavors are also credited with helping lift his native country out of poverty. Murthy served as Infosys CEO for 21 years before retiring in 2002. He then served as the executive chairman of the board and chief mentor until 2006.

As an admired global leader, highly respected business leader and as an Asian hero who has brought about revolutionary changes in Asia, Murthy has a long and varied list of accomplishments.

Named one of *TimeASIA's* 60 Asian Heroes in 2006, the publication credits Murthy and his partners with transforming the way the entire world does business. It also tells the start-up story of Infosys and its similarity to Microsoft: Murthy and six friends met in his bedsit in a Bombay slum, each contributed \$250 to start a software firm, Infosys, in 1981. Ten years later, the company generated annual revenues of \$150 million in 1991, and \$36 billion in 2006. In March 1999, it became the first India-registered company to be listed on an American stock exchange.

Other honors Murthy has received include: being ranked among most-admired and respected business global business leaders in 2005 by *The Economist and Financial Times*, voted World Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst and Young in 2003, named most powerful CEO in 2004, 2005 and 2006 by *Economic Times* and selected as the business process innovator by *The Economist* in 2007. In 2008, he was awarded Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award by the government of India, and named the Officer of the Legion of Honor by the government of France.

For additional information about Murthy's visit, visit the SBA Web site at www.sba.oakland.edu. ■

Narayana Murthy

Services, space at SBA student leadership center to expand, enhance focus on student success

OU's School of Business Administration is taking the lead in enhancing the overall experience of its students by expanding the services available at, and renovating the space dedicated to, its leadership and development center.

Recognizing the success of its students – and ultimately its graduates – lies both within and beyond the classroom experience, the SBA originally opened this comprehensive one-stop shop for academic and career advising, student support, program, leadership development, tutoring and networking to serve the undergraduate business students in 2006. Though the original space was limited, SBA students took advantage of the consolidated services and space frequently.

"Considering the space and success – based on student feedback and usage – of the existing center, it made sense to expand it to further integrate services available to the undergraduate population as well as extend those services to our graduate students," says Tricia Westergaard, coordinator of undergraduate programs.

"This is simply another example of how the SBA is achieving excellence through integration – in this case it's providing student services in a central area, which allows students to take full advantage of them to help them create a successful college experience right within the SBA, which will then lead to success in the workplace after graduation."

When the fall construction is complete, there will be a graduate programs suite, which will offer advising, meeting space and an office for the Executives in Residence. The adjoining undergraduate area will include a new student lounge, space for the Scholars and ACHIEVE programs, a Career Services office and tutoring rooms. A conference room also will be available in the center.

"It's providing student services in a central area, which allows students to take full advantage of them to help them create a successful college experience right within the SBA."

Tricia Westergaard
Coordinator, undergraduate programs

"The renovations will create a student-friendly, comfortable space for students to congregate as well as a place where SBA services can be consolidated, making it easier for the graduate and undergraduate students to utilize the resources we have available to them," says Westergaard.

The suite is located in the lower level of Elliott Hall, across from the auditorium. SBA alumni and friends are invited to stop in and check it out whenever they visit the SBA. ■

Internship project puts students at forefront of movement

Today's economy touches everyone. As individuals and companies scrutinize every dollar spent, the funding nonprofits traditionally rely on is shrinking at the same time economic pressures are increasing the demand for the services these organizations provide.

With the assistance of two SBA graduate students, three local organizations – Oakland Family Services (OFS), Macomb Family Services, and Family Services, Inc. of Detroit and Wayne County – are consolidating resources to form the Family Service Alliance for Southeastern Michigan (Alliance) to better address the behavioral health challenges confronting families and children.

This places SBA students in the midst of the social entrepreneurship movement as the business functions of the Alliance will create new business opportunities, lower management and overhead costs, and make more money available for the organizations to provide direct services to clients.

"We estimate our efforts will achieve ongoing savings in the range of \$300,000 each year, increasing our ability to serve an additional 900 to 1,500 people per year," says Michael Earl, president, CEO, OFS, and managing partner of the Alliance. "This is the first time such an alliance has been created in Michigan and only the second time it has been done in the country."

Under the guidance of SBA Dean Mohan Tanniru, Pallavi Inamdar, a recent MBA graduate, and Dean Przymusinski, a master's student in SBA's Information Technology Management program, analyzed the integration of business practices, including technology, billing, quality assurance, purchasing and more.

"The OU students brought a unique perspective, an incredible energy, and a very professional approach and execution to the analysis," says Earl. "What is most impressive is how they seamlessly integrated with a fast-moving, dynamic management team."

The internship proved invaluable for the students.

"I learned so much through this experience. I got a dual experience of managing the project as well as performing the business process analysis for the project," Inamdar says.

"It was also a great opportunity to talk to experts and learn directly from them," Przymusinski says.

The internship was made possible with support from the Foundation for the Society of Information Management. ■

Pallavi Inamdar



SBA welcomes new board members

The SBA is pleased to welcome two new members to its Board of Visitors: Paul S. Peabody, vice president and CIO, William Beaumont Hospitals, and Tommi White, CEO, ER-One.

"Our active and supportive Board of Visitors helps the SBA carry out its educational mission by providing advice on current and new programs for the SBA," says Mohan Tanniru, SBA dean. "They also serve as ambassadors for the SBA and mentors for our students. We are honored to add Paul and Tommi to this distinguished group."

Peabody brings 28 years experience in information technology, primarily in the area of health care information management, to the SBA. His involvement in the Society for Information Management combined with his experience of OU through his work as an adjunct instructor at the School of Health Sciences adds to the knowledge he contributes to the SBA.

An alum from OU's College of Arts and Sciences, White offers a wealth of experience in information technology as recognized by awards she has received including *Crain's Detroit Business* Most Influential Woman Award in 1998 and 2002, and in the Top 100 Information Technology Leader list published by *Computer World Magazine* in 2000. ■

Professor recognized for lean research



Joseph Schiele

Several recent appointments and grants recognize the significance of Joseph Schiele's research in government purchasing and the application of lean thinking practices in the public sector.

In addition to his role as assistant professor, production operations management, in OU's Decision Information Systems department, Schiele was named Academic Director for OU's Pawley Lean Learning Institute, where he is responsible for the ongoing management of academic programs. The institute is a cross-disciplinary endeavor that melds technology, business and human resources into a dynamic curriculum incorporating tools, techniques and management philosophies to streamline process and eliminate waste while enhancing value.

He was also named a Distinguished Faculty Fellow for the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing for his work in the public procurement field and named charter member of the Board of Directors of the newly formed Michigan Lean Consortium.

A recent research grant from the LES Professional Development Foundation will help advance Schiele's research on the application of lean thinking practices in the public sector, particularly by government purchasing departments. ■

Interdisciplinary, cross-institution project receives support

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently awarded \$115,000 to support an interdisciplinary and cross-institution project that will benefit Oakland University and Cooley Law School students.

Through the Course, Curriculum and Laboratory Improvement program of the NSF, Huirong Fu, computer science professor in OU's School of Engineering and Computer Science, and co-investigators Xiaodong Deng, DIS professor in the SBA, and Patrick Corbett, professor at Cooley Law School, received the award to integrate technological, business and legal topics in Information Assurance and Security into courses across at both institutions. Ultimately, the collaborative effort will result in the update of three courses, one in the SBA, one in SECS and one at Cooley.

After evaluating nearly 900 proposals, this was one of 115 selected by the NSF to support based on the program's goal to provide educational opportunities for undergraduate students. ■

HR Management organization named in top 10

Oakland University's Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) was named a Superior Merit Chapter for the 2007-08 academic year, as well as being honored as one of the top 10 Outstanding Chapters of the year by the national committee.

"We have received the Superior Merit award for eight consecutive years, but this was the first year that we were named in the top ten for our outstanding student chapter. It truly is an honor to receive the award and it dignifies the work our student organization is committed to providing to Oakland University and the surrounding community," said Ally Kelly, president of OU's SHRM chapter, 2007-08.

SHRM is the largest professional association devoted to human resource management. SHRM provides human resource professionals with resources to advance the profession. OU's student chapter of SHRM carries out the mission of the national organization while providing students with the opportunity to learn about human resources as a profession. ■



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SBA challenge gift emphasizes a passion for business education

In a tremendous display of support for the mission of Oakland University's School of Business Administration, Hugh Elliott, a longtime OU supporter, and Craig Stinson (SBA '84) have joined together to give the SBA \$500,000 through a challenge match that began November 1, 2008, and runs through October 31, 2009.

"A gift at any time is important and significant," says Mohan Tanniru, dean of the SBA. "But a gift during the life of this challenge match provides an opportunity for all donors to be part of the school's transformation."

That's exactly what Elliott and Stinson are aiming for. With the SBA's 40th anniversary coming in fall 2009, now is the perfect time to really focus on gaining the support needed to raise the local, national and international awareness and reputation of the school.

"I believe in Dean Tanniru's vision for OU's School of Business Administration and want others to step forward to join in helping us create a new understanding of business student education," says Elliott, "Integrating



Hugh Elliott



Craig Stinson

sound business fundamentals along with a global perspective is critical."

Stinson, who serves as chair for the SBA Board of Visitors and has ties across the OU community, believes that the SBA is on the cusp of transforming into a nationally recognized business school and this support, at this time, is critical to making that leap.

"The SBA at OU is already a great school delivering an outstanding education," Stinson says. "Hugh and I are issuing this challenge now because we want other alumni – and those associated with the school – to recognize and support its transformation to the next level."

"The SBA and the university overall appreciate the tremendous show of belief that Hugh and Craig are demonstrating in the future of the SBA through their gift," says Gary Russi, president, Oakland University. "This gift combined with the gifts from other alumni and friends will further help the SBA make a positive impact on the regional economy as well as continue to educate students to be competitive in the global marketplace."

To take advantage of the Elliott-Stinson match, please contact SBA Development Officer Robin Michel at michel@oakland.edu or by calling (248) 370-2121, or use the envelope included in this issue of *SBA Insight*. ■



Miron Stano

SBA professors co-author leading book on health care economics

There's little room for doubt that students are learning from an expert when the professor teaching the class wrote the leading book on the topic.

Frustration after meeting with many textbook representatives searching for – and not finding – the right book on health care economics led SBA Professor of Economics and Management Miron Stano to collaborate with other experts to write his own.

Now in its fifth edition, *The Economics of Health and Health Care* is considered a leader in its field. Stano

teamed with fellow SBA Professor of Economics Sherman Folland and Allen Goodman, a professor of economics at Wayne State University, in the early 1990s to write the book which was first published in 1993.

"The other books available were not sufficiently rooted in the core of economic theories," Stano says.

The book, published by Pearson Prentice Hall, took a couple of years to come into its own, but it demonstrates how economic theories and concepts are important in the health care industry.

The first revision of the book in 1996 was a major reorganization of the information. After the first revision, the book became popular among educators, health service researchers, government specialists and physicians. It is useful as a reference for health service researchers, government specialists, physicians and others in the health care field.

"It is unequivocally the best seller in its field," Stano says. "We have more than 50 percent of the total market in the United States; editions are also available in other countries." ■