

Friday, April 9, 2010

CIBRE Education -- Experiential Learning & Innovation Program

Businesses throughout the region are tapping into the advanced skills of top graduate students who are available to work on company-sponsored projects through CIBRE's **Experiential Learning and Innovation (ELI) program** at Oakland University's School of Business Administration.

The program provides businesses the opportunity to add resources to projects to make decisions and solve problems while also giving students the chance to integrate their coursework with real-time learning – all while supporting economic growth in Michigan and beyond.

In sponsoring an ELI project, businesses will receive a full solution to their defined business project. The students work in teams, as appropriate, under the coordination of faculty adviser(s) and in direct consultation with a project mentor. Sponsors define project parameters, including the estimated number of hours for completion.

Past projects point to the value ELI students contribute to their sponsoring organizations.

- **Market Strategy Research and Analysis:** Wingspan Capital Managing Member Ray Gunn, (SBA '79), recently enlisted two ELI students to help conduct market strategy research, which will provide the company with the necessary information for industry-specific decision making.
- **Business Process Analysis:** With the assistance of two SBA ELI students, three local organizations – Oakland Family Services, Macomb Family Services, and Wayne County Family Services and Family Services of Detroit, consolidated resources to form the Family Service Alliance for Southeastern Michigan to better address the clients' behavioral health challenges. Providing business process and analysis support, the ELI students helped the organizations reach an anticipated annual savings of \$300,000, increasing the organizations abilities to serve more people per year.
- **Market Research for Expansion:** Under supervision of SBA faculty, an ELI student conducted market research and participated in strategy development meetings to help a local real estate development company make an informed decision about whether or not to expand into the health care/medical field. The project, which involved intensive market research and analysis, provided the necessary information for the sponsor to develop and launch a solid expansion strategy and plan.
- **Business Plan Development for Product Launch:** In a project for an energy-conservation company, an ELI student, supervised by SBA faculty, completed a market research project to determine market readiness of a new product and assisted in the development of its business and financial plans which led the company to obtain start-up capital and launch the product.
- **Developing Web-Based Applications, St. Joseph Mercy at Oakland:** ELI student Dean Pryzmusinski is working with St Joseph Mercy Hospital-Oakland to develop an ASP.NET, database-driven web application for tracking gifts and benefits provided to physicians. The project has provided the student to work in all stages of the systems development life cycle and to practically apply a wide range of skills he acquired from the MSITM program.
- **Physician's Health Care Network, Port Huron:** This project requires analyzing company's operational data to support strategic decisions. Build monthly/quarterly business reports, business metrics scorecards to the Senior Management to support decision making. Technologies: SQL Server 2005, Excel VBA, Crystal Reports & VB.NET.

Businesses can take advantage of this unique model and gain high-level attention and results from top graduate students on planned projects. In exchange for their work, participating companies provide assistance to the ELI student in terms of a set financial contribution based on the level of support the sponsored project requires. Sponsoring organizations help define the parameters of a project and estimate the number of hours needed to complete it.

The competitive program admits only select graduate students from OU's EMBA, MBA, MAcc and MSITM programs, and is dependent on project sponsorship. Graduate students in the program are matched to projects based on the project/sponsor needs, and the student's talents, suitability, passion and course requirements.

For more information about the program or to sponsor a project, contact Associate Dean Balaji Rajagopalan at (248) 370-4958 or rajagopa@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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