

Friday, January 30, 2009

Executive volunteers give SBA new perspective

By Flori Meeks, contributing writer

Oakland University's School of Business Administration is joining forces with experienced business leaders who want to give students and faculty the benefit of their experience.

Five business leaders are participating in the SBA's Executive in Residence (EIR) program, now in its third year. The program is yet another way the SBA is integrating real-world experience into teaching and learning frameworks.

Program volunteers – mostly retirees – maintain regular office hours on campus and serve the SBA where they're most needed.

"They're available to teach and work on projects for the school," said Linda Bowers, EIR coordinator and special projects manager.

New this year is Executive Affiliates, an offshoot of EIR that refers university representatives to business leaders willing to accept speaking engagements. The program soon will have a Web site that links users to speakers in particular areas of expertise.

The EIR program is a resource that everyone in the SBA can tap into. "The executives bring a perspective after spending decades in the corporate world that students don't get in the classroom," Bowers said. "They also bring a level of expertise that's helpful and relevant to our mission."

Volunteer Dave Rooney is new to the EIR program, but the retired marketing executive has served as a guest lecturer in the SBA for several years. "That's always very rewarding and stimulating," Rooney said. "The Executive in Residence program is a natural extension of that.

"One of the strengths of OU's business school is the interaction, the dialogue and the debates that take place in the classroom," he added. "Having an EIR adds a new dimension to those discussions."

Rooney is looking forward to more classroom time, along with one-on-one interaction with students and providing advice on class projects, career pursuits and the interview process.

During the course of his 30-plus year career, Rooney has worked in the marketing departments of Ford and Chrysler. His experience includes brand management, advertising, pricing, research, public relations and product development.

Other EIR volunteers include Van Jolissaint, a retired corporate economist from DaimlerChrysler who also serves as an advisory member for the SBA Economics Department; Don Kaegi, a former field operations manager for Ford, now working with the SBA to provide career assistance and guidance; Ken McCarter, a retired group vice president in union relations for Chrysler, whose expertise includes collective bargaining and the labor contract administration process; and Rande Somma, a retired executive from Johnson Controls and current president of Rande Somma and Associates, which specializes in leadership coaching and development.

"With the EIR program, we are bringing a variety of real-world business experience to the school and adding an important perspective," Rooney said.

SUMMARY

The Executive in Residence program, now in its third year, allows business leaders to help integrate real-world experience into teaching and learning frameworks.

Created by David Groves (groves@oakland.edu) on Friday, January 30, 2009

Modified by David Groves (groves@oakland.edu) on Friday, January 30, 2009

Article Start Date: Friday, January 30, 2009