

Thursday, February 5, 2009

Marketing professor reflects on program's growth

By Flori Meeks, contributing writer

Ravi Parameswaran is quick to extol the strengths of each of the programs that Oakland University's Department of Management and Marketing offers. And he can take a special sense of pride in the marketing program. He helped create it.

"We've gone from no marketing concentrators at all to as many as 140 declared majors a year, said Parameswaran, the Department of Management and Marketing chairman.

Momentum that brought the marketing professor to OU's School of Business Administration began in the late 1970s, when business students started requesting a marketing concentration. In 1980, the SBA hired Parameswaran and Theresa Spinelli, who no longer teaches at OU. They created a marketing curriculum and recruited additional marketing instructors.

Today, SBA undergraduates have the option of a major or minor in marketing, and marketing is available as a concentration for master of business administration and post master's certificate candidates.

For Parameswaran, teaching for the SBA has been a consistently rewarding experience. "It's a beautiful campus, my colleagues are great and the students are very bright and very interested," he said.

He also has gotten to see marketing program graduates move on to positions of significant responsibility with area employers that include Gongos Research, Campbell-Ewald (advertising) and the RDA Group (market research), among others.

One of the marketing program's key assets is its faculty, Parameswaran said. "Luckily, we've been able to recruit strong faculty who publish in good journals," he says.

The marketing program also benefits from a strong relationship with area businesses. "Because we are in an industrially rich neighborhood, we have an extremely talented marketing board," Parameswaran said, citing participants from Chrysler LLC, General Motors, Conde Nast Publications and Pulte Homes.

In fact, the marketing program recently held a marketing issues forum, "It's Not Easy Being Green," featuring representatives from the business community. "It was extremely successful. It was the result of good relations between practitioners and professors," Parameswaran said.

Parameswaran has expertise and interest in marketing, international business and management information systems. "The School of Business Administration is strong in all of these areas and, to a certain extent, I've played a role in that," Parameswaran said. "I find that extremely rewarding."

SUMMARY

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Created by David Groves (groves@oakland.edu) on Thursday, February 5, 2009
Modified by David Groves (groves@oakland.edu) on Thursday, February 5, 2009
Article Start Date: Thursday, February 5, 2009