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Professor reflects on marketing program's growth

By Flori Meeks

Ravi Parameswaran is quick to extol the strengths of each of the programs Oakland University's Department of Management and Marketing offers.

But Parameswaran can take a special sense of pride in his department's marketing program. He helped create it.

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



The momentum that brought Parameswaran 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 marketing professors, 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 says.

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

One of the marketing program's key assets is its faculty, Parameswaran says. "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 says, 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 says.

Parameswaran has expertise and interest in three areas: 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 says. "I find that extremely rewarding."

SUMMARY

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