

WINTER 2011

insight

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY



Transforming Spaces, Transforming Lives

SBA introduces new Stinson Student Advancement Center

inside this issue

A look at how SBA faculty experts solve today's business problems and prepare for tomorrow's challenges through applied research projects



Transforming lives through experience

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



The OU School of Business Administration's commitment to providing hands-on experience to our students has remained steady over the course of our 40-year history. Using participation in active student organizations, teamwork in class projects, and engagement in community and business internships, the SBA has integrated hands-on experiences with strong curricular foundations to deliver an outstanding business education.

As you read through this issue of *Insight*, you will see how these experiences are valuable to students and alumni in all the programs we offer — from the undergraduate through the Executive MBA.

Over the last few years, the SBA has expanded the experiential learning opportunities available to students with the introduction of several niche programs, including ATiB (Applied Technology in Business), ACHIEVE (career introduction and preparation), Experiential Learning and Innovation (fostering critical thinking and problem solving), CIBRE internships (supporting experiential learning and economic development), SAIFE (offering investment experience), i2B (entrepreneurial experience), and undergraduate and graduate business leadership opportunities (in research, virtual collaboration, business interactions and more).

What was missing, however, was a student-centered environment that enriches these experiences by bringing students to a common place so they could be a part of the SBA community of faculty, alumni and business partners.

The new Stinson Student Advancement Center that opened in December, combined with other student labs in Elliott Hall, now fosters a student-centered environment that is critical to fulfilling the SBA's objective of educating and preparing students for success in life. The Stinson Student Advancement Center offers both technological and collaborative opportunities to expose students to diverse learning opportunities, and distinctive learning, networking and social experiences that will prepare them for a competitive workplace.

We could not deliver on this without the outstanding contributions of the SBA faculty and staff, and the dedicated — and transformational — support from our longtime friends Craig and Ann Stinson, and R. Hugh and Nancy Elliott. In the Stinson's honor, the student center is named Stinson Student Advancement Center. These contributions and those of others — such as Marsha and Tim Healy (Healy's Café) — are helping transform the SBA's home in Elliott Hall into a community, which we believe will transform students' lives.

I invite you to learn more about the Stinson Student Advancement Center by reading the story on page 6, visiting it online oakland.edu/stinsoncenter, or dropping by to take a tour while connecting with SBA faculty, staff and students.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Tanniru'.

Mohan Tanniru
Dean, School of Business Administration
Oakland University

insight

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SBA faculty experts advance knowledge, enhance learning and influence business

Inside this issue of *Insight* you'll find several articles highlighting the research activity of our faculty. These articles put a spotlight on the contributions our faculty members make in their fields, and offer a sense of the breadth, depth and significance of work underway.

Through the exemplary research insights from our faculty experts, you can get a perspective of how faculty research advances knowledge in their disciplines and the value derived from their work in enhancing classroom learning, and contributing to discussions on important business issues.

In the last five years, with more than 168 published articles in journals of national and international repute, the research productivity of SBA faculty is impressive (see sidebar). Faculty members from all four departments in the SBA have published in premier journals in their field. Others are taking note. For example, the ranking (1990-2011)



Balaji Rajagopalan

compiled by the University of Texas-Dallas School of Management has included OU's SBA among the Top 100 business schools based on the research contributions in the two premier information systems journals.

This research activity makes a difference for our students. Thanks to the low student-faculty ratio at OU, business students have the exceptional opportunity to learn in one-on-one and small group sessions from this group of exceptional teacher-scholars.

I hope you enjoy reading these insightful research articles. With such an impressive record of research activity, our faculty enhance not only the visibility and reputation of the SBA and OU, but also learning in the classroom by sharing the latest advances in their discipline with students.

The featured articles represent only a small subset of many exceptional ongoing research projects. Watch for future issues of *Insight* to read more about research activities in the SBA. ■

Balaji Rajagopalan
Associate Dean, School of Business Administration
Professor, Management Information Systems
Oakland University

Faculty Research Published in Premier Journals*

Academy of Management Journal
Academy of Management Review
Decision Sciences
Information Systems Research
Journal of Consumer Research
Journal of Financial Economics
Journal of International Business Studies
Journal of Marketing Research
Journal of Operations Management
Journal of Political Economy
MIS Quarterly
Strategic Management Journal
The Accounting Review
The Journal of Business Ethics

*Represents a partial list

Fostering economic prosperity: Research encourages innovation in high-growth fields

A research partnership within the SBA is casting new light on the critical role innovation and entrepreneurship plays in strengthening a region's economic health.

After several years studying this, Professor of Economics Jonathan Silberman and Associate Professor of Economics Nivedita Mukherji are sharing their findings and recommendations to help jump start Michigan's struggling economy.

New ideas in the business world are important, the professors say, but regions that guide innovations in the right direction will reap the greatest benefits. Regional economic prosperity increasingly depends on a region's capacity to command the production of ideas and create new products and services.

The link between innovation and economic health is strong. In fact, the federal government recently created the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship to foster entrepreneurship and identify new ways to take ideas from the lab to the marketplace.

"America's innovation engine is not as efficient or as effective as it needs to be, and we are not creating as many jobs as we should," U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke stated. "We must get better at connecting the great ideas to the great company builders."

This is especially relevant for Michigan, as much of the technology derived from the automobile industry has not yet resulted in an entrepreneurial culture that converts new knowledge to economic growth.

That's what Silberman and Mukherji hope to change for Michigan.

THE MICHIGAN PARADOX

Silberman and Mukherji have been exploring why Michigan's economy has been less than healthy despite Michigan's significant investments in research and development and the high number of patents granted.

Describing what they call the "Michigan paradox," Mukherji says, "Michigan is second only to California in research and development, and ranks first if you account for the size difference in the economies of Michigan and California. If innovation is important to economic growth, and Michigan ranks high in innovation, why does it experience low economic growth?"

As they've researched this, they have published findings in research journals. They've presented at

conferences and meetings focused on innovation and technology.

Not only are they working to better understand the role of innovation in economic growth, they're focused on solutions.

DIAGNOSING THE SYMPTOMS

The duo now maintains that Michigan is experiencing a sluggish economy because it limits itself to technology in slow-growing fields; it has low absorptive capacity and doesn't demonstrate an ability to use external knowledge.

"We find that a state's ability to specialize in technologies that are expanding faster than the national average increases economic performance," Silberman says. These technologies include communications equipment, computer hardware and software, computer peripherals, information storage and semiconductor devices.

States that focus on fast-growing technologies are concentrated mostly along the West Coast, with California driving much of the action. Michigan ranked 48th because it is directing most of its resources toward low growth sectors, and it is sluggish progressing toward new, promising technologies.

"States that are unable to innovate in new technologies will lose ground to others, resulting in low economic growth," Silberman says.

The pair says another key factor influencing innovation productivity lies in examining how a metropolitan area leverages external knowledge — knowledge developed outside a region. Their results suggest that external knowledge exerts a strong impact on the innovative quantity and quality of a region.

"But it is not sufficient to be merely exposed to outside knowledge — a region must have the ability to recognize, assimilate and commercialize such knowledge," Mukherji says.

When this takes place, the professors' research shows, regions become more innovative. The professors found a high absorptive capacity can increase innovative productivity by up to 24 percent.



Associate Professor of Economics Nivedita Mukherji and Economics Professor Jonathan Silberman study how entrepreneurial cultures convert knowledge into economic growth.

Currently, of the five Michigan metropolitan areas studied, only Grand Rapids shows a positive absorption impact.

PRESCRIBING SOLUTIONS

The study also factored in local economic conditions, which carry important policy implications that can support a region's innovation and overall economic success.

"Regions with a strong and vibrant entrepreneurial environment with high rates of business births and deaths are more absorptive. So are regions with a diverse economic environment," Silberman says.

Based on their findings, the professors are confident the approaches below will help regions — like those in Michigan — thrive in today's knowledge-based economy. ■

By Flori Meeks

Practical Advice to Improve Economic Development:

- Retain and attract new graduates and immigrants attuned to the latest scientific advances.
- Develop linkages across universities, private sector research organizations, successful entrepreneurs, and venture and angel investors.
- Diversify the industrial structure and technology base.
- Increase openness to international trade and immigration.
- Reduce barriers to flexibility, the ability to recognize new opportunities and move resources to those areas.

Seeing the possibilities: HR professors advocate inclusion for workers with disabilities

A pair of Oakland University SBA professors known for their research in human resources is influencing future employees and employers alike.

Professor of Management Lizabeth Barclay and Associate Professor of Management and Director of Business Programs and Strategic Initiatives Karen Markel put the spotlight on workers with disabilities. In doing so, they are encouraging employers to tap an underutilized resource and remind them of the value of every employee.

"There are case studies that show an employee with a disability is often more committed and loyal to an organization," Barclay explains. "Hiring a worker with a disability can be a competitive advantage."

CONSIDERING THE WHOLE PICTURE

By sharing what they have learned with the profession and with their students, the professors hope to develop a model for a more effective and welcoming workplace. In their work, Barclay and Markel generated questions organizations should consider as both a matter of social responsibility and as a chance to reduce the underemployment of those with disabilities. Of the 33 million people with disabilities aged 16 to 64, only 18.5 million are employed, the 2000 U.S. Census indicates.

Their research is pertinent even to those without disabilities. According to the Social Security Administration, a 20-year-old worker has a three in 10 chance of becoming impaired or disabled before retirement. Furthermore, about one in five U.S. residents — 19 percent — reported some level of disability in 2005.



Professor of Management Lizabeth Barclay and Associate Professor of Management and Director of Business Programs and Strategic Initiatives Karen Markel began teaming on research in 2001.

Markel admits getting businesses to open their eyes to the potential of employees with disabilities isn't always easy. "When the labor market is tighter, organizations feel like they shouldn't have to make accommodations for any employee because competition is so fierce for jobs," she says. Markel is quick to point out that costs of any accommodation tends to be minimal, if any, at all.

MOLDING THE FUTURE

The work the professors are doing is important, says Nancy A. Woolever, director of academic initiatives for the Virginia-based Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), a global human resources professional organization. "It's critical for professors to do research, to influence practice by creating the science behind it, and get it in the hands of those who can put it to practice," she adds.

Markel's involvement in SHRM committees helps her coordinate the SBA's HRM curriculum, ensuring it's at the forefront of the industry. Both professors also are certified as senior professionals of human resources. This involvement helps their graduates walk out into a career ready to work from day one, and that reflects well on the university, and the breadth and depth of its curriculum in HR, Woolever explains.

MEETING OF MINDS

Barclay and Markel, who have successful research endeavors individually, began working as a team in 2001. "We found we had overlapping interests, so we started working together," Markel says. "We discovered we had a compatible research process, too." The pair often travels to conferences to share their work.

Their courses also are valuable for non-HRM students within the SBA. "People working for any organization need to know what their benefits mean and how their compensation package works, including their 401ks," Barclay adds. "It's an important life lesson."

And they want to teach it. ■

By Rene Wisely

Lizabeth Barclay (right) together with research partner Karen Markel (left) are working to open doors for employees with disabilities.

Questions Employers Should Consider

Are you compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act?

- Do you make sure that persons with disabilities are fully engaged in your organization? For example, are your career development procedures inclusive of all employees?
- Are your recruitment and selection methods accessible? For example, can your website be read by a screen reader?
- Are persons with disabilities represented on all levels of the organization?
- Have you considered whether technological change can support more effective accommodations that benefit all employees?



Auto Drive: Marketing professor's expertise helps students, businesses succeed

John Henke Jr., professor of marketing in the School of Business Administration at Oakland University, has witnessed the fruits of his labor, perhaps poetically, in the produce aisle of his neighborhood grocery store.

A former student recently approached him by the apples to thank him for the impact he had on her. As a working professional, she expressed her gratitude for the practical knowledge she learned in his classroom.

Henke, who has worked at OU for 25 years, knows what it takes to thrive in business because he spent 15 years in sales and marketing before joining the academic community. He held managerial jobs at General Automation and IBM Corp., where he was a member of its elite 100 Percent Club, the top group of sales executives who exceed their sales goals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Today he wears two hats — as a college professor and a business owner. As president of Birmingham, Mich.-based Planning Perspectives Inc. (PPI), a management consulting firm, he is considered one of the nation's top authorities on buyer-supplier working relations.

His firm's annual automotive industry survey dissects the relationships between each of the six major North American car companies, including General Motors, Nissan and Toyota, and their Tier 1 production suppliers. Henke is often sought out by the media, as well as car companies and suppliers, because of this expertise. His reputation in the auto world reflects positively on OU, says Jay Baron, president of the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor, Mich. Furthermore, Henke's research is invaluable to the car community, Baron states.

"John's work in supply chain is critical during this era in globalization and rationalization of our automotive OEMs (original equipment manufacturers)," he says. "Auto companies are dependent more than ever on their suppliers, where two-thirds of each new vehicle comes from. Having an effective supply chain is strategically important, and John's work is at the heart of these relationships."

Henke's students benefit from these relationships as well. Executives from Honda, Toyota and Ford, among others, regularly speak at his relations graduate course, serving as a bridge to realities of the work world. "It's opened a lot of doors for my students," he says.



John Henke Jr. shares his valuable insight and experience with SBA students as well as businesses.

RESEARCHER, TEACHER

Henke is quick to share what he's learned, too. One of the key points he stresses to his students is that even in a big corporation, they are valuable employees. "As I've studied purchasing activities in large corporations, I've learned that one individual can have a profound impact on a company," he explains. "I want these students to realize they are not just a cog in a wheel."

Taking this to heart is Bob Socia, SBA (Management) '76, vice president of Global Purchasing and Supply Chain at General Motors Co., a PPI client and an OU alumnus. "John helped us understand the findings of his survey, which we are using to improve the relationship with our supply base," Socia says. "We've made great strides over the past 12 months and appreciate his help very much."

Former student Richard Burks, now president of R&R International, an importer and distributor of automotive aftermarket components in Rochester Hills, Mich., first encountered Henke as an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, where Henke worked for nine years before coming to OU. Burks followed Henke to OU for graduate classes, taking about five of his courses. They now dine together once or twice each year.

"John Henke teaches a brain buster of a class," Burks recalls. "I remember getting one of his syllabuses and seeing a new case study on there every week. John told us that, 'In my class, you will be forced to learn time management,' because of the intense workload."

"John's work in supply chain is critical during this era in globalization and rationalization of OEMs."

Jay Baron
President, Center for Automotive Research

RECOGNIZED, RENOWNED

Burks believes he is a better entrepreneur because of Henke's intensity. "Before I pitch a client, I have a mock presentation where I come up with any possible question that might be asked and have an answer ready for it," he explains. "John taught me to prepare and how to prepare well."

Henke continues the brain busting schedule for himself, working up to 80-hour weeks. He's won more than 25 awards and receives multiple invitations to speak throughout the world. He recently received another "job well done," but this time in the Big Apple, not the grocery store.

"They put up our 2010 annual supplier study results on the big screen in Times Square," he proudly remarks.

It felt like yet another apple for the teacher. ■

By Rene Wisely

Watching Wall Street: Professor's research explores finance complexities, their impacts

In an era when the health of Wall Street has taken on increasingly greater significance to the world economy, an SBA professor is shedding light on the dynamics that influence it.

Hong Qian, assistant professor, finance, researches securities issuance and analyst forecasts. Her findings offer valuable insight to Wall Street leaders into the complexity of financial markets and the dynamics of corporate decision making.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEADLINES

In her latest project, Qian examines how the release of industry rivals' earnings news during the initial public offering book-building period affects a firm's process of going public.

"We showed that the news contains valuable information for both the issuer and investors to value the IPO," says Qian, who co-authored the paper with Tony Ruan, assistant professor, finance, Xiamen University in the Fujian Province of China.

A typical IPO firm is small and unknown to the public. It is usually susceptible to competition from other companies in the industry. While GM was not a typical IPO, it is a fitting example based on intense local interest.

"In GM's case, suppose Ford made an earnings announcement when GM was on the road show, and it beat the analyst forecasts. What would that tell about GM? Investors might think Ford is doing so well that it could imply that GM's sales may be negatively affected," Qian explains. "So GM might have had to lower the offer price, and investors may not have reacted as enthusiastically as they did on GM's IPO."

ANALYZING THE ANALYSTS

Qian has long been intrigued by factors that influence financial relationships. Her studies reflect that interest while focusing on the complex dynamics of the financial world. She has studied and published papers on the relationship between financial analysts and investors, the impact of corporate research and development on equity issuance, and the difference in liquidity changes between public offerings and private placements of stock.

"Financial analysts play an important role in disseminating information to investors through their forecasts," Qian says. "It was interesting to see whether financial analysts do a good job in their forecasts, particularly how analyst forecasts are affected by investor perception, and whether or not investors listen to the forecasts."

Hong Qian, assistant professor, finance, researches securities issuance and analyst forecasts. Her findings offer valuable insight to Wall Street leaders.

Before 1999 forecasts were generally optimistic, or higher than the company's actual earnings. In contrast, today, companies aim to beat the forecasts because investors pay more attention to them.

"If companies miss the forecasts, they will be punished by investors, and their stock prices will be hit hard," Qian says. "We call this analyst optimism. It measures how much analyst forecasts deviate from actual earnings. It is analyst pessimism if forecasts are lower than actual earnings."

Qian learned the level of analyst optimism has varied over time. Surprisingly, the health of the economy does not have a significant impact on analyst optimism. But investor sentiment plays a considerable part in shaping the analysts' viewpoint.

"When investor sentiments were high, analysts were more optimistic, and vice versa," Qian says.

In a collaborative project with SBA colleagues Qian took another look at market forecasts, further solidifying the tie between investors and analysts.

The group — comprised of Qian; Joe Callaghan, professor of accounting; Austin Murphy, professor of finance; and Mohinder Parkash, professor of accounting and chair, Department of Accounting and Finance — evaluated the market's ability to incorporate accurate forecasts into stock prices.

"We found that even though analyst forecasts were not very accurate, they did affect stock prices, which means that investors did listen to analysts' opinions," Qian says.

EXPLORING EQUITY ISSUANCE

In another study, she focused on companies' practice of issuing securities to raise external capital by studying the interaction between corporate equity issuance decisions and financial markets.

In a paper slated for the February, 2011 *Financial Review*, she studied liquidity changes to a publicly traded company's stock around public offerings and

private placements. Unlike what happens to public offering issuers, issuers that resort to the private equity market are not expected to experience substantial improvement in liquidity of their stocks.

"I found that with a public offering, typically more analysts would start to cover the company's stock. Analysts played an important role in disseminating the information and raising investor attention to facilitate trading and lower transaction costs," Qian notes.

In a collaborative project with colleagues from other institutions, Qian explores how a company's investments in R&D influences investors' reaction to its equity issuance.

"We found investors favor high-tech companies that invested a lot in R&D right before the equity issuance announcements, but not for low-tech companies that chose to do so. It seems that the market believes high-tech's R&D is more valuable," says Qian, who co-authored the study with Ke Zhong, assistant professor, accounting, Central Washington University, and Zhaodong (Ken) Zhong, assistant professor, finance, Rutgers.

DRIVEN TO EXPLORE

Qian is not slowing the steady pace of research, writing and presenting she has set since joining the SBA in 2006. She has several more papers in the works. Her collaborations with others have allowed her not only to delve into more ambitious projects, but also to bring the vast research efforts of the SBA to a broader audience. ■

By Flori Meeks



STINSON STUDENT ADVANCEMENT CENTER



SBA celebrates opening of new student-oriented center

The School of Business Administration welcomed the new Stinson Student Advancement Center to campus last December with a grand opening celebration.

More than 125 SBA faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends joined the SBA to celebrate the center, which is located in Elliott Hall and illustrates the way the SBA is transforming its spaces to create a student community.

"The SBA's new center represents a tangible example of OU's dedication to supporting our students in and out of the classroom," said Virinder Moudgil, senior vice president for Academic Affairs and provost.

The new center shows how the SBA is focused on putting student needs first. Delivering support and services to complement the high quality instruction students receive enables them to succeed in work and in other areas of their lives.

"The convenience of the new Stinson Center is a luxury for SBA students. Words cannot describe my relief that I can attend classes, grab a real lunch, meet with my student organization, seek curricular guidance, and collaborate globally with professionals from all over the world in one central location — the Stinson Student Advancement Center," said Bridney Perry, marketing senior and vice president of OU's collegiate chapter of the American Marketing Association, who spoke at the event.

"On behalf of the student body here in the SBA, allow me to express my gratitude to our donors for this new student center and cafe," she said.

The addition of the Stinson Student Advancement Center is a significant example of the student-centered environment the SBA has been consciously building.

It's also a step in the evolution of the SBA, which began with evaluating the benefits of the school's hallmark Applied Technology in Business (ATiB) program. The ATiB program offers students a wealth of experiences to enhance their education and work experience, as well as their connection to the SBA through a built-in community of peers.

"The single most important contributing factor in my educational background is the real world experience I received by working with the many business partners of the SBA," said Razzaaq McConner, SBA '99, commodity manager, metallic purchasing group, Chrysler, who spoke at the event. "Experiences of this magnitude provided me with a competitive advantage ... and were key in launching my career with Chrysler."

The Stinson Student Center brings services to students, creates a home for students in Elliott Hall, and provides countless opportunities for interaction between expert faculty, business leaders and students in formal and informal settings.

"Building on the success of how ATiB enabled the creation of a community, our faculty members created distinct experiential learning programs to broaden the formation of more student communities," said Mohan Tanniru, dean, SBA. "As those communities grew, it became clear that what was missing was physical space for these communities to gather — and for others to form."

Craig and Ann Stinson both value the experience they gained at OU's SBA. As students — Craig graduated in 1984, Ann in 1983 — they worked hard on and off campus to complete the education that provided the foundation for their success today.

"The business school is so pivotal to OU. My wife and I are so proud to be able to give something back to the faculty and students," Craig said. "We feel blessed to be able to do this. This was what we needed to do to move this place forward. Vision is a nice thing to have. Bringing it to reality is better." ■



Ann Stinson cuts the ribbon of the SBA's new Stinson Student Advancement Center. From left: OU President Gary Russi, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Virinder Moudgil, Craig Stinson, Ann Stinson, R. Hugh Elliott and SBA Dean Mohan Tanniru.

Renovation facts

- **Services available:** Advising, mentoring and career development
- **Supports collaborative work:** State-of-the-art collaboration space featuring flexible design to allow easy reconfiguration for multiple education, conference, lecture and other uses separately or concurrently to enable formal and informal collaboration among faculty, students, alumni and the business community, including Healy's Café serving sandwiches and coffee
- **Advances student learning:** Technology to support innovations in teaching and learning through action-based learning in a new Network Security Lab
- **Facilitates global interactions:** Leading edge technology that supports virtual global experiences and connectivity to international business centers around the world
- **Environmentally conscious:** Renovated using natural and sustainable materials with high recycled content



Craig Stinson, SBA '84, tells guests at the grand opening that he and his wife, Ann, believe the SBA is pivotal to OU.



The flexible learning wall pictured here has two 46-inch interconnected LCD monitors with recessed quad display, recessed roll-down projection screen and an interactive marker board. The furniture can be easily rearranged to accommodate various learning and meeting needs.



Bridney Perry, OU marketing senior and vice president of OU's chapter of the American Marketing Association, served as mistress of ceremonies at the celebration.



Craig Stinson and Balaji Rajagopalan, associate dean, SBA, in the flexible learning room of the new center.



Alumni speaker Razzaaq McConner, ATiB '99, commodity manager, Metallic Purchasing Group, Chrysler.



Executive MBA and Professional Education rooms offer space for lectures, classes and meetings, as well as leading edge technology that supports virtual global experiences and connectivity to international business centers around the world.



Staff, students and guests gather in the flexible learning room of the new Stinson Student Advancement Center at the grand opening.

SurPriSe: Collaboration influences new research, enhances career

MIS Professor Thomas Lauer has been interested in privacy and security practices for years. But it wasn't until a conversation with colleague Jay Meehan, sociology professor and chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology in OU's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), that he realized how greatly one's chosen field shapes one's perspectives of these areas.

"I came at it from a technology standpoint," says Lauer, who is also the DIS chair. "I've taught classes on privacy and security since the mid 1990s, and I talk about surveillance in the context of both privacy and security. But people in sociology think surveillance is even more important because it enables sorting people into social groups. The groups can then be treated differently."

The professors agreed that privacy and surveillance, coupled with security, deserved a closer look.

"We decided we would organize a truly multi-disciplinary group of people," says Lauer, who helped recruit about 25 OU faculty from such fields as philosophy, engineering and health science, in addition to business disciplines and sociology. The result was the SurPriSe Learning Community, which explores surveillance, privacy and security.

Together with Jay Meehan (left), sociology professor in OU's College of Arts and Sciences, Tom Lauer (right), SBA professor of management information systems, created an informal cross-campus multidisciplinary committee focused on the many different aspects of surveillance, privacy and security.

CROSS-CAMPUS SUPPORT

Lauer knew they were on to something unique. Developing the idea for the group was one thing; implementing it was another. "It's unusual to get faculty from across the disciplines talking to each other," Lauer says. But shared interest in the topics has served as a rallying point.

"In conversations, we discovered how much our disciplines provided a lens for looking at these topics even to the extent that we differed in our understandings of these basic three terms," Lauer says.

Last year, the committee received a Faculty Learning Community designation from the university to further explore the issue.

The committee has expanded its reach beyond its members and is sharing its observations across campus through a variety of events.

In November 2010, the committee hosted "Between Homeland Security and Facebook: Surveillance Studies Today" by Professor David Lyon, research chair in sociology and director of the Surveillance Studies Centre and the New Transparency Project at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. Lyon is one of the world's leading experts on surveillance studies.

"The approach is brilliant ... timely and necessary (and) reflects advanced thinking."

Ken Janke
SBA MBA '85
Senior Vice President, Aflac

This event was sponsored by the SBA's Center for Integrated Business Research and Education (CIBRE) and CAS' Frontiers and Borders program.

Another SurPriSe presentation last fall, "The Clash between Individual Rights and National Security in Border Crossings," featured panelists Patrick Corbett, professor of criminal law, Thomas M. Cooley Law School, and Shelli Weisberg, legislative director, Michigan ACLU, along with Professor Meehan. Julie Walters, assistant professor, political science, served as moderator.

Lauer envisions future panel discussions on identity technology and more talk on border crossings. He hopes more students, faculty and community members will weigh in on the discussions and explore these issues for themselves.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY INTEREST

"You can't really understand these areas from only one discipline. We're able to shed more light on it and bring it forward in a new way through dialogue," says Lauer.

Business leaders who learn about the collaborative approach agree; this type of collaboration is laying the groundwork for projects that could have an immediate impact on today's business world.

"Personally, I think the approach is brilliant," says Ken Janke, SBA MBA '85, senior vice president, Aflac. "Before now, I had not spent any time thinking just how closely the topics are interrelated and, more likely, in potential conflict. This integrated approach is not only timely and necessary, but reflects very advanced thinking and will be critical in the future." ■

By Flori Meeks





Successful attorney launched education at OU

Ask Kevin Gleeson, SBA '73 (Economics), what makes him a successful trial attorney and he'll mention discipline, competitiveness and a solid knowledge of statistics. He credits his Oakland University undergraduate business education for setting him on the right path. It's no surprise he's an accomplished attorney, most recently named to the 2011 edition of *Best Lawyers in America*.

As a trial lawyer standing in front of a jury, it's common for Gleeson to challenge statistical evidence presented by expert witnesses, citing a resource from an SBA statistics course.

"I received a booklet from an OU professor called, 'How to Lie with Statistics'," he explains. "I still have it and hold it up in front of the jury. The statistics classes I had at OU were fascinating, and helped me as a trial lawyer, because many expert witnesses in the commercial litigation area rely on statistical data. How they collect, evaluate and analyze it, is how you challenge it."

Gleeson, a managing partner at the Southfield firm of Sullivan, Ward, Asher & Patton, P.C., not only appreciates the knowledge he gained in classes, but the high expectations of his instructors, citing the positive influence professors John Tower, Sid Mittra and others had on his educational experience.

"I was inspired by my micro and macro economics courses, and thoroughly enjoyed the monetary and theory policy class," he adds.

DEMANDS DEVELOP DISCIPLINE

"The professors demanded a great deal, and I had to be very disciplined in carrying out my studies. That helped develop me as a lawyer," he says. "To be a good trial lawyer you have to be very disciplined. The other thing I found interesting, that despite the fact they demanded a lot from us, they always wanted students to be free thinking and were always asking for our ideas."

After graduating from OU, Gleeson attended Thomas M. Cooley Law School, graduating in 1979. Soon after, he joined Sullivan, Ward, Asher & Patton, P.C., specializing in construction, architectural and engineering litigation, and professional liability defense for accountants and lawyers.

Gleeson has received many accolades throughout his legal career. He was named in 2008 as a "Top Lawyer," which recognizes attorneys for their performance, as well as their integrity and ethics. He has been named in "Super Lawyers" since 2006, and selected as one of the top 100 attorneys in the state of Michigan. And, he has made *Best Lawyers in America* annually since 2008.

Gleeson was also recently inducted in the American College of Trial Lawyers.

Kevin Gleeson has received many accolades throughout his legal career. Most recently, he was named in the 2011 *Best Lawyers in America* and inducted in the American College of Trial Lawyers

"This is an honor because you don't join, they pick you," he says. "I'm totally shocked every time I get one of these."

COMPETITIVE WAY OF LIFE

Gleeson is just as competitive out of the courtroom as he is in the courtroom. A former swimmer, he turned to running and has raced in 26 marathons throughout the U.S., including Detroit, Chicago, Boston and Columbus. He says a lot of his colleagues are also involved in competitive sports. "To be a trial lawyer, you have to be aggressive," he says. "Most attorneys I know are involved in competitive sports — golf, tennis, biking."

Gleeson's wife, Lisa, runs a thriving gift wrapping business, "Lisa's Gift Wrappers," based in Royal Oak, Mich., and recently named in *Hour Magazine's* "Best of" issue. Their 19-year-old son is a student at Oakland Community College, where he is enrolled in the criminal justice program and plans to become a police officer.

PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL

Gleeson jumped at the chance last year to become a member of the SBA Board of Visitors, where he says he added diversity to the group. "It's mostly, if not all, business people, including high-ranking managers," he says.

He's impressed with the direction of OU and the SBA, and credits the professors and administrators for helping the university grow.

"Dean Mohan Tanniru is a ball of energy," he says. "It's people, from the dean down to the students, who keep that energy going."

Young people come to Oakland with new and innovative ideas. You can see the growth; it's been unbelievable."

Gleeson believes there's something special at Oakland University.

"The professors and deans are all so dedicated; and it's not for advancing their own interests, but because they're committed to the university," he notes. "It has had a tremendous impact on me. People feel very emotional about OU — I'm not suggesting that that's rare — but it's certainly had an effect on me." ■

By Dawn Pauli



Executive MBA alum applies business acumen, leadership skills to medical practice

Dr. Muhammad Haitham Al-Midani loves a good challenge.

It is that drive to solve problems that first drew him to the medical field and, later, to join the first cohort in the OU School of Business Administration's Executive MBA (EMBA) program.

"I like to challenge my intellectual curiosity," says Al-Midani, EMBA '02, founder, Digestive Disease and Nutrition Center in Burton, Mich. Al-Midani launched the practice in 1981 after earning his medical degree at Damascus University College of Medicine in Syria, and completing his residency and his fellowship.

THE BUSINESS OF MEDICINE

Al-Midani was initially drawn to the field of medicine because he felt he could alleviate suffering and provide solutions to sometimes complex or baffling digestive medical problems, but the field was evolving and growing increasingly complex. "In the 1990s we had the penetration of managed care," he says. "I needed more skills to manage the practice and get into the business of medicine."

In 2000, Al-Midani began researching MBA programs. He saw that while he was successful in the examining room, his practice and his patients were challenged by the business aspects of medicine — from navigating insurance companies' expectations to post-operative care needs.

Among national and regional MBA programs available for physicians, OU's program was unique because of its emphasis on health care management. Other programs focused solely on hospital administration.



Dr. Muhammad Haitham Al-Midani, (right) EMBA '02, found tremendous value in the SBA's EMBA program and so he encouraged his practice's finance manager Bashar Al-Sakkal, (left) EMBA '10, to enroll.



Dr. Muhammad Haitham Al-Midani, EMBA '02, founder, Digestive Disease and Nutrition Center in Burton, Mich., found the SBA's Executive MBA program unique due to its emphasis on health care management.

"I was intrigued because nobody else offered that at the time," Al-Midani says. "It allowed me to stay patient-focused in my practice, and become much more effective in managing the business support structures necessary."

Once he began the coursework on leadership, Al-Midani discovered the material had direct relevance to his day-to-day work as the head of a growing business. "I found out most people who make a change in their lives need to have leadership skills to make that change work," he says.

The knowledge and experiences he gained over the next two years in the SBA's Executive MBA program helped him grow the Digestive Disease and Nutrition Center into a 15-employee operation. "Without having this knowledge, I would not have been able to take my practice to where it is today," Al-Midani says.

QUALITY RESULTS

The center has become the only Michigan practice providing outpatient endoscopy surgery accredited by The Joint Commission, a nonprofit organization responsible for accrediting more than 17,000 health care organizations and programs across the United States. The practice earned accreditation for the last three years and the next three years, and is a recipient of The Joint Commission's coveted Gold Seal of Approval, a distinction for meeting nationally recognized standards in areas that include quality care, infection control, patient safety and facility cleanliness.

"For me, to have accreditation for safety from the most stringent agency and to have a Gold Seal for quality, that is something to be proud of," Al-Midani says. "We worked really hard to raise ourselves to those standards."

Also prized by Al-Midani is the review he received from one of the commission inspectors, who observed Al-Midani on the job as he moved from patient to patient and followed up with their families.

"He told me I worked very efficiently without any loss of quality of care," Al-Midani says. "I run a very tight operation."

LIFELONG REWARDS

Al-Midani, who is pursuing a doctorate in science from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, values and continues his involvement with the EMBA at OU. His practice's finance manager completed the Executive MBA program in 2010. Al-Midani has been a strong supporter of OU's EMBA program and serves as an ambassador for it. Sometimes he sits in on classes, simply to satisfy his intellectual curiosity.

Learning is for life, Al-Midani says. "I earned my M.D. when I was 24. I'm still studying, and I'm 60 now. Anyone who wants to learn, it's open for them. The rewards are there for everybody." ■

By Flori Meeks

Executive MBA benefits alumnus in physician, leader roles



Dr. Bassam Nasr, EMBA '07, co-founder and medical director, Physician HealthCare Network, says his career and medical group have thrived since he completed the SBA's Executive MBA program.

When Dr. Bassam Nasr was looking to enhance his business knowledge and leadership skills, the co-founder and medical director of Physician HealthCare Network discovered the perfect avenue in OU's Executive MBA program and its concentration in Health Care Management.

"I intuitively sensed we were making the right moves, but I knew I needed formal training to lead this physician's group in the right direction," says Nasr, EMBA '07.

It's safe to say both his career and his medical group have thrived since he completed the EMBA program. Nasr is the immediate past chief of medical staff of St. John River District Hospital, which presented him its Physician of the Year Award in February 2009.

Physician HealthCare Network, a multi-specialty physician partnership serving St. Clair and surrounding counties, has grown from 35 physicians to more than 75 providers in recent years.

QUALITY, COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM

Nasr, who is board-certified in internal medicine, gastroenterology, sleep medicine, medical management and clinical nutrition, already had served seven years as the partnership's medical director when he started looking for an EMBA program. He knew from the beginning that he wanted to look at Oakland. "I had heard good things about this program from graduates over the years," says Nasr, who also spoke to SBA faculty members.

He considered an online program, but he knew Oakland's proximity to work and home would give him the benefits of collaborative learning. "I wanted to be in a program where there would be dynamic interactions with peers and faculty," Nasr says. "I felt there was opportunity to learn from others."

The decision to go with Oakland was a good call, Nasr says. "It was a learning experience for me meeting individuals with various backgrounds in the health care industry. It was a high-caliber program with excellent faculty."

When it was time to take on a capstone project — a final project culminating all of the EMBA training

"It is a high-caliber program with excellent faculty."

Dr. Bassam Nasr
EMBA '07

and experiences — Nasr and his teammates created the nonprofit Diabetes Prevention Foundation. "We considered diabetes based on its great burden on the health of a large number of individuals," he says. "It would be an important contribution to our community."

The foundation's website, www.diabetespreventionfoundation.org, gives patients tools for managing their illness and taking steps to prevent complications, including stroke, blindness and kidney disease.

KNOWLEDGE ENHANCES EXPERTISE

Today, Nasr says, he finds himself applying the knowledge he gained through the SBA's EMBA program to work frequently. "There's no question it added a lot to how I approach business problems and how to map solutions."

He found the experience especially helpful in his interactions with other physicians. "It has impacted how I lead, how I encourage teamwork and how I mentor others so they can contribute to the organization."

Nasr, who places great value on community service, is extending his relationship with Oakland's SBA. His medical group sponsored two graduate students through the SBA's Experiential Learning and Innovation (ELI) program over the last two years.

"The students learn, and we benefit from their work," says Nasr.

Nasr also continues to reach out to the community. He is chairing the professional division of the United Way Campaign this year, as he did in 2007, and he serves on the boards for the St. Clair County Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Community Foundation of St. Clair County, Port Huron Hospital and Lakeshore Woods Village. He also is a member of the executive committee of St. Clair County Medical Society, an elected member of the Board of Directors of the Michigan State Medical Society, and a member of Michigan's Delegation to the AMA. ■

By Flori Meeks

The Executive MBA (EMBA) at Oakland University's SBA prepares highly motivated professionals to become dynamic global business leaders and offers concentrations in Health Care Management and Information Systems Leadership. For more information, attend an information session Saturday, March 19, or Saturday, May 21, at 9 a.m., contact Monica Milczarski at (248) 370-2059, e-mail milczars@oakland.edu or visit the Executive MBA website at <http://emba.oakland.edu/>.

Lessons from the hive: Bees provide unique perspective to pre-business students

Most Oakland University students would probably agree: pursuing an education keeps them busy as bees. But a group of pre-business students can now say bees are not only busy, they are also a valuable source of information about how to be productive, organized and team-oriented.

A unique program, dubbed BEE U, gave SBA students a first-hand look at how the organization, roles and production of bees can mirror the traits of a successful business. In addition to observing and discussing proven business principles, students received an education in the real-life workings of the multimillion dollar beekeeping industry and the environmental issues facing all businesses today.

Thanks to a cross-campus collaboration with OU's School of Education and Human Services (SEHS), the SBA offered BEE U to pre-business residential students as part of the school's Live and Learn Community program, which is aimed at helping new students better connect with resources on campus, succeed in their studies, and ultimately improve retention and graduation rates.

THE BUZZ ON GREEN

Making BEE U even more timely — and valuable — was the focus on integrating the environmental and green initiatives that are important in today's business world. This program recognizes the growing trend of organizations beginning to embrace green business practices.

In BEE U's four modules, students heard from experts, watched videos on problem solving and learned about how to run a business, which helped them understand how who they are as individuals relates to how they fit into teams and organizations. They also learned about bees: specifically, how bees and bee health play a major role in the environment, food production and the agricultural industry.

"We are showing them that the personal is the professional," says Robin Michel, director, development, SBA, and SEHS Ph.D. student. Michel conceived and implemented the program as part of her field study, along with SEHS' Dyanne Tracy, department chair and a professor, K-8 mathematics. "The students aren't separate from their studies," Michel says.

Lacie Melasi, a senior accounting major, is the resident adviser who led the program and brought the thematic unit to life in the residence halls. One of the main points of focus is environmentally friendly practice, something businesses take seriously, she says.



Dyanne Tracy, professor, K-8 mathematics for OU's School of Education and Human Resources, and BEE U students visit the hives at OU's apiary to observe how bees work together to create productive, successful organizations.

"A lot of businesses are using a new trend — going green," Melasi says. "This program shows that. The different modules are all based around being eco-friendly and different business subjects."



AN ACTIVE HIVE

The participating students attended BEE U in the evenings, learning about beekeeping, the ecological impact of bees and key business tenets like organizational

behavior, sales, finance and accounting. The students also visited the university's apiary to check out bees in action, which gave them an up-close view of how bees work together to create productive, successful organizations.

Guest speakers added another level of expertise to the experience, enhancing learnings from the books *The Wisdom of Bees: What the Hive Can Teach Business About Leadership, Efficiency and Growth*, by Michael O'Malley, a management professor at Yale University, and *Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping*, by Dewey Caron.

Speakers included Mike Ames, former COO of the Savannah Bee Company; Judy Martin, education coordinator for the SBA's Center for Integrated Business Research and Education; and Dave Rooney, SBA executive in residence and former marketing executive for Chrysler.

A HONEY OF A SUCCESS

Through BEE U, students also connected with one another while learning about their majors and preparing for their future careers. Melasi says feedback about the program has been overwhelmingly positive.

"I didn't know much about bees," says Mitch Myers, freshman. "I ended up loving it and I really liked the environmental aspect. It's a great piece of my education. It's good knowledge to possess. It's good to learn something simply because you want to learn it and not because it's required. I related to it in a lot of ways."

Says Michel, "BEE U was a great way for students to learn in a hands-on way to support the SBA's goal of graduating students who are fully prepared to contribute starting with their first day on the job." ■

By Korie Wilkins

news briefs

GRAND OPENING MARCH 7: SECURITY NETWORK INSTRUCTIONAL LAB

Check out how the SBA's new advanced network security lab enhances the school's strong Management Information Systems (MIS) program at an open house Monday, March 7, at 4:30 p.m., in 200C Elliott Hall.

Thanks to a generous donation of high-performance networking and security solutions from Juniper Networks, and the recognized expertise of SBA faculty members in the field, the SBA now offers students the opportunity to experiment online with network configurations, firewalls and computer malware.

SBA faculty members also use this advanced lab to conduct research and explore issues relating to desktop virtualization, surveillance and information systems security.

Come to the grand opening where you can:

- Check out the lab's features
- Meet with expert MIS faculty members to learn about courses and research projects
- Talk with Juniper Network executives
- Discover how the SBA's new lab further prepares MIS and other OU students for careers in this growing field

For more information about the lab, features and course, visit the oakland.edu/sbasecuritylab. ■

SBA ALUMS HONORED FOR INSPIRING WORK

Three School of Business Administration alumni were honored for their success in business, community service and volunteerism at the Oakland University Alumni Award banquet this winter.

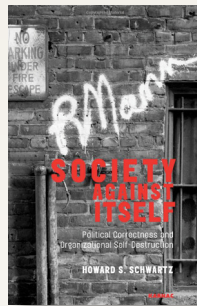
- Craig Stinson, SBA '84, chairman, Norma Group GmbH, received the Distinguished Alumni Service Award. This is OU's highest alumni honor, recognizing peerless volunteer leadership to OU.
- Thomas Schaeffler, SBA '85, executive vice president and COO, Credit Union ONE, received the Spirit Award, which recognizes exemplary volunteer service to the university
- The Honorable Bryan Barnett, SBA '98, mayor, City of Rochester Hills, received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award. This new award recognizes alumni who have demonstrated the worth of their education through their post-college achievements.

For details about their inspiring accomplishments, visit the SBA website at www.sba.oakland.edu. ■

SBA ALUM NAMED 2010 BANKER OF THE YEAR

James C. Conboy Jr., SBA '68, director, CNB Corporation in Cheboygan, was named 2010 Michigan Bankers Association (MBA) Banker of the Year by the Board of Trustees of the association's Robert M. Perry Schools of Banking. Each year, a banker is selected for this distinguished award based on his or her contribution to the bank's success, commitment to the MBA, service to other banks and a strong record of community service.

"Jim Conboy has served his community, the banking industry and the MBA with supreme dedication and professionalism," said Dennis Koons, president and CEO, Michigan Bankers Association, in an article on the MBA website, "There is no one more deserving of this distinction." ■

**MANAGEMENT PROFESSOR PUBLISHES BOOK ON SOCIETY, POLITICAL CORRECTNESS**

In his new book *Society Against Itself: Political Correctness and Organizational Self-Destruction*, Howard S. Schwartz, professor, organizational behavior, in

the School of Business Administration's Department of Management and Marketing, looks at how the psychological dynamics of political correctness lead organizations to destroy themselves.

Schwartz brings a new theoretical perspective to the study of self-destructive behavior in organizations, illustrating it through a number of meticulous case studies. They run the gamut from the media, reflecting on the Jayson Blair scandal at the *New York Times*, to the corporate world, where he looks at the undermining of employee morale at the Ford Motor Company, to the academic, examining how Larry Summers was forced out of Harvard University, to the religious, where he considers some damage wrought upon itself by the United Church of Christ. Other focuses of his attention are the deterioration of morale at the Cincinnati police department, the self-destruction of Antioch College, and the regrettable transformation of the United Kingdom represented by the shift from Queen Elizabeth to Princess Diana as its national symbol.

The book was recently released by Karnac Books in London. The publisher's Web page includes a synopsis and several reviews by peers in academia and management consulting. They call it "extraordinary and timely," "brilliant and lavishly sensible," "incisive" and "pioneering," and say it "demands to be heard." ■

STUDENT ORG RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Long considered a superior chapter, the OU SBA student chapter of Beta Alpha Psi (BAP) is now the recipient of the 2010 Ernst and Young Diversity Initiative Award. One of only ten chapters nationwide to receive this award, the professional accounting organization was recognized for its projects — on campus and in the community — which demonstrate how it embraces and supports diversity.

Ernst and Young sponsors and presents the award to encourage future business leaders to value the contribution of all people and develop effective teaming, which incorporates the diversity of thought generated from team members from different backgrounds and perspectives.

The SBA BAP's award was based on initiatives, such as co-hosting professional meetings with the National Association of Black Accountants and majors from pre-business and other business disciplines in its professional speaker outreach; organizing a food and clothing drive; preparing tax returns for low income families; and tutoring OU students in introductory accounting courses. ■

INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE SEEKS EXPERTISE OF SBA PROFESSORS

Papers by two SBA professors recently have been among the top ten downloaded papers on the Social Science Research Network (SSRN). The Internet network serves as an international clearinghouse for social science research.

Sherman Folland, professor of economics, received notification that his paper "Does 'Community Social Capital' Contribute to Population Health?" was listed on SSRN's top ten download list for "Population, Health & Economic Development eJournal," with more than 112 downloads.

Mohinder Parkash, professor of accounting and chair, accounting and finance, and Rajeev Singhal, associate professor, finance, were notified their paper "Earnings Quality and Perceived Auditor Independence: Irrelevance of Nonaudit Services Time Period," was listed on SSRN's top ten download list for "Auditing, Litigation & Tax eJournal," with more than 76 downloads. ■



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Check the SBA website at www.sba.oakland.edu for details as they are available.

March 7

Grand Opening: SBA Network Security Instruction Lab
www.sba.oakland.edu

March 19

Executive MBA Information Session for Prospective Students
<http://emba.oakland.edu>

March 24

Alice Conner Gorlin Memorial Lecture by Carmen Reinhart, author of best-seller *This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly*

March 31

Registration deadline for Financial Planning Boot Camp
www.sba.oakland.edu/ce

April 14

Registration deadline for Certified Financial Planner spring program
www.sba.oakland.edu/ce

May 21

Executive MBA Information Session for Prospective Students
<http://emba.oakland.edu>

August 4-7

Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS) 2011
<http://amcis2011.aisnet.org>

Support the SBA

The SBA offers many different ways alumni can help SBA students develop into professionals through its career development programs.

- If you would like to volunteer with students, contact Judy Martin at martin23@oakland.edu.
- If you are looking for an intern or your company wants to hire a solid graduate with academic and presentation skills, contact Donna Kellstrom at kellstro@oakland.edu.
- Consider making a gift to the business school. Help OU's SBA build a school that is advancing leadership in the business community with a gift that will transform lives. You can give online at www.sba.oakland.edu/give.