

Monday, February 9, 2009

CIBRE Education: Bringing students and business together

Building on a strong history of transforming business education, programs and activities for SBA undergraduate and graduate students delivered through **CIBRE** equip students with the practical application of business education while providing them the framework to operate in a climate that evolves daily.

"SBA students gain this experience through the integration of CIBRE's activities," says SBA Dean Mohan Tanniru. "A foundation that blends theory and practice, CIBRE augments the SBA curriculum with the influence of today's businesses and business leaders."

New and established educational programs bring SBA students directly to the business world through CIBRE. Two programs connect high-achieving students with supporting businesses to solve business issues, while also linking the students' educational experience to social, business and economic realities.

The undergraduate program – the innovative, award-winning **ATiB** program founded in 1997 – has provided more than 75 companies with student teams who create business solutions using information technology. A \$4 million investment in student scholarships from regional businesses is a testament to this program's success.

Following that successful model, the new **Experiential Learning and Innovation (ELI)** program offers businesses the opportunity to tap into the advanced skills of SBA's top graduate students on company-sponsored projects – from business start ups and market expansions to product launches -- providing the students the chance to integrate their coursework with real-time learning all while advancing education and supporting economic growth. (See **ELI story** this issue.)

Undergraduate students with strong academic track records are encouraged to apply to participate in the CIBRE's **Scholars Program**, a competitive, engaging and challenging program, founded in 2007 that puts them on the academic fast track and offers the opportunity to expand and integrate their learning beyond the classroom through networking, teamwork, mentoring, community action and research. With categories such as research scholars, team/theme scholars and global project scholars, CIBRE provides SBA students specific opportunities to engage in undergraduate research, team and theme based internship programs and global team projects (virtual, face-to-face or hybrid models).

Tanniru shares the story of one student that exemplifies the depth of the integration: "We have an undergraduate SBA student who is an economics major, business school scholar involved in leadership activities, worked on a research project and is now participating in a global project with a team of students from Hohai University, Nanjing, China using virtual collaborative technologies." This is a true example of how one student can leverage the integrative experiences of SBA to enrich their professional career.

"I've gained so much experience," says OU Junior Matilda Dule, who is working with Mark Simon, associate professor, management, to analyze how top executives make leadership decisions. "Professor Simon is working with me on my ideas and helping me to hone in on one important topic for my own research. It's great professional experience."

Through CIBRE, the SBA also integrates professional development and career enhancement skills into its undergraduate curriculum through the mandatory **ACHIEVE** program. All business students, starting in their freshman year, are required to engage in a select set of prescribed activities that enhance their career and professional development skills through this mandatory four-year professional development series that helps students learn about business careers, their degree, and then equip them with the skills they need to land a job and succeed in their chosen profession. The program exposes students to industry through networking, job shadowing and internships so students can target their coursework toward their chosen profession.

"ACHIEVE will give SBA graduates a differentiator in the job market," says Rande Somma, president, Rande Somma and Associates LLC, a leadership coaching and development company that he formed after retiring from Johnson Controls where he served as president of the Automotive Systems Group Worldwide. "ACHIEVE is the bridge that connects the dots between learning and application. As companies get leaner and leaner, the impression of readiness makes a difference in the hiring decision. I applaud SBA for going beyond the core of learning and really helping students successfully transition to a career," adds the SBA's first Executive in Residence.



SUMMARY

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