

Spring 2006

BALL STATE

business

A MAGAZINE FOR
MILLER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
ALUMNI & FRIENDS

Also inside:

- MBA Live
- Best in Business: Beta Gamma Sigma
- Business Alumni Work Worldwide



Business Fellows

**Partnering with Indiana
communities and companies**



Growing Opportunities

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Trees are budding and temperatures are warming—spring has arrived, and what a great time to be graduating from Ball State's Miller College of Business! More than 275 graduates and their families and friends will gather at our May 6 college commencement, which will feature an address by alumnus Denny Oklak, CEO of Indianapolis-based Duke Realty and 2005 Hall of Fame inductee.

These new graduates join thousands of Miller College alumni who are making a difference in businesses and communities across Indiana, throughout the United States, and around the world—including a growing number who live and work internationally. Several are featured in this issue, as a follow-up to our fall 2005 article on our revised international business major.

Business career opportunities truly are global, and our college has set an ambitious goal of providing 25 percent of our students with an international experience by the year 2008.

As part of our efforts to address this goal, Associate Dean Ray Montagno, Associate Professor Sushil Sharma, and I visited four universities in

India during February to discuss potential partnerships. India is a fascinating country, and the faculty members we met are eager to exchange visits with our faculty and students.

Closer to home, Ball State business students and faculty mentors are partnering with Indiana businesses and communities as part of the university's Business Fellows program. Read how they are turning academic knowledge into business solutions that benefit Indiana economic development.

In addition, I hope you'll enjoy reading about our MBA program and some of those who have benefited from the program's unique way of delivering quality and convenience. Quality also is the essence of Beta Gamma Sigma, the honor society for AACSB-accredited business schools, and I am proud to be completing a four-year term on the Beta Gamma Sigma Board of Governors this spring. Turn to page 18 to learn more about the organization and members who are recognized as the best in business.

We continue to value the time, knowledge, and financial resources you share. Please let me know what you think about the articles in this issue by calling (765) 285-8192, or e-mail lrichardson@bsu.edu. Better yet, pay us a visit—we love having alumni and friends back on campus. And wherever you are, enjoy spring! ●

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BALL STATE business

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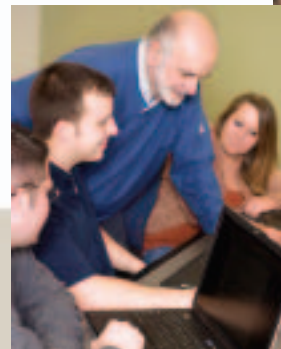
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On the cover:

Students involved in Ball State's Business Fellows program are immersed in intensive, hands-on work experiences that benefit Indiana businesses and communities—from the Indianapolis International Airport to Jay County Community Development and a nonprofit dinner theatre in Muncie.



AACSB Accredited



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alumna Haifa Al Khaifi
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business success.



Miller
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Ball State University

Spring 2006

Ball State explores university partnerships IN INDIA

The Miller College of Business is tapping into one of the world's fastest growing economies by working to create partnerships with universities in India.

In February, Lynne Richardson, dean of the Miller College of Business; Ray Montagno, associate dean for research and outreach; and Sushil Sharma, associate professor of information systems and operations management, spent a week in the south Asian nation, touring several universities and discussing future partnerships. The project was initiated by Sharma, a native of India, who began informal discussions with college officials in his former homeland during a visit last summer.

"India is a breathtaking country, and we were amazed at how it is transforming," says Montagno, who says the subcontinent's fast-growing economy is creating a need for managers and executives with master's degrees in business administration.

With a population of more than a billion, India's booming economy has created millions of jobs along with consumer demands that have attracted American businesses. While 80 percent of the population lives in poverty—on less than \$2 a day—the nation's middle class has increased to 300 million—more than the population of the United States. And although the number of international students studying in the United States declined 3.1 percent between the 2001–02 and 2004–05 academic years, the number of Indian students studying in the United



Sushil Sharma, Lynne Richardson, and Ray Montagno, accompanied by guide Awadesh Chaudhri, take a break from meetings with officials from several universities in India to visit the Taj Mahal.

States has increased 20.4 percent, according to the Institute for International Education.

"We think the Miller College of Business may have a role in educating Indian college students because MBAs from American schools are highly valued," Montagno says. "The number of Indian students who want to go to college is astronomical, but the capacity to handle them is tough."

Although no formal arrangements have been finalized, student and faculty exchanges may be available as early as next academic year. In addition, the Global Media Network, Ball State's Web-based video conferencing system, may allow conversations between the university's entrepreneurship professors and business people in the United States and India.

"By enrolling about 10 students from India in our MBA program each year, we'll add a new perspective to our classrooms," Montagno says. "We hope this program emulates our relationship with colleges in Turkey, which has brought to campus many extremely well-educated students over the last several decades."

THE NEXT BIG THING

Last fall, Ball State's nationally recognized Entrepreneurship Center and the Center for Media Design's Student Technology Incubator joined forces to offer an innovative business program called The NEXT Big Thing.

The joint initiative, which is designed to encourage entrepreneurship and expand the development of technology ideas in East Central Indiana, offers student teams opportunities to explore business idea development through workshops and a new business idea competition.

Last semester a series of idea feasibility workshops, which included presentation training and one-on-one mentoring, culminated in the November 18 idea competition. Ten student teams competed in the day-long event, and five teams received monetary awards to continue developing their business concepts. Teams were judged on their overall presentation, market assessment, business proposition, development plan, and proposed use of technology.

The NEXT Big Thing program is made possible through grants from the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership, Lilly Endowment Inc., and Ball State's Entrepreneurship Center.

For more information, contact Karen Vaughn at kvaughn@bsu.edu or Suzanne Plesha at splesha@bsu.edu.

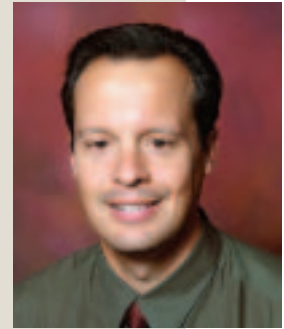
H. H. Gregg Center for Professional Selling secures site licenses

The H. H. Gregg Center for Professional Selling recently acquired secure site licenses for use by the center and Miller College of Business sales technology classes from a worldwide leader in on-demand customer relationship management services.

Salesforce.com, which provides integrated, customizable enterprise online applications for companies of all sizes, is making available to the college 34 annual site licenses of its Enterprise Edition, valued at \$51,000 annually.

Scott Inks, assistant professor of marketing and associate director of the H. H. Gregg Center for Professional Selling, has been working with the company to secure the site licenses. "They will allow our students to learn on-demand applications that manage and share sales, support, marketing, and partner information," explains Inks. "It may be the best system to manage contacts, advisory boards, and marketing campaigns that we've seen."

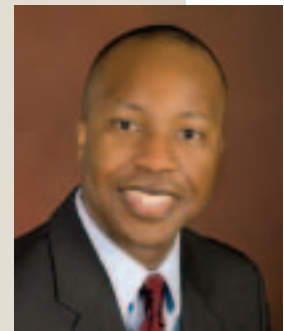
Salesforce.com was founded in 1999 by former Oracle executive Marc Benioff, who pioneered the concept of delivering enterprise applications via a simple Web site. More than 399,000 subscribers at 20,500 companies worldwide use the company's products to manage their sales, marketing, and customer service.



Scott Inks

Business alumnus joins university staff

Ball State business alumnus Carl Davis recently joined the university as a director of development for the Miller College of Business. Davis, who graduated with a degree in economics in 2003, works closely with business alumni and administrators to support the college and its students. For information about making a gift to the Miller College of Business or establishing a Ball State University Foundation scholarship, contact Davis at (765) 285-5106.



Carl Davis

Sales Career Fair attracts record numbers

Ball State's annual Sales Career Fair set several attendance records when 71 firms and more than 400 students participated in the January event at the Alumni Center.

Sponsored by the Miller College of Business and the H. H. Gregg Center for Professional Selling, the event has become one of the largest sales career fairs in the country, successfully linking companies with students interested in professional sales careers.

Among the companies at this year's fair were Cingular Wireless, Cintas, Emmis Communications, New York Life Insurance Company, Northwestern Mutual, Pacers Sports and Entertainment, and the Hershey Company.

Ramon Avila, the George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Marketing and the founding director of the H. H. Gregg Center for Professional Selling, attributed increased attendance to the improving economy and a heightened interest in sales by students.



Ball State's Sales Career Fair links students with future employers.

International development fund honors Erdogan Kumcu

Members of the Miller College of Business and Ball State community gathered with the family of Erdogan Kumcu on November 17 to honor the memory of the longtime marketing professor, who died in 2004.

At the ceremony in the Whiting Building, a lecture hall was named for Kumcu, who taught in the business college for 21 years and was instrumental in developing the college's international education component. In addition, his family's recent gift to the college was acknowledged.

Emine Kumcu, the late professor's wife, has established the Erdogan Kumcu Memorial Fund for International Development, which will provide financial support to the academic exchange program between Istanbul University in Turkey and Ball State University. The fund will be used for professional development for junior business faculty members of Istanbul University visiting Ball State or for students of Istanbul University who are or will be studying in the master's programs at the Miller College of Business.

Kumcu was instrumental in establishing academic ties between Ball State and Istanbul University, where he received his bachelor's and doctoral degrees. At the time of his death, he was director of the Global Media Network, an interactive distance education system that allows students and faculty around the world to interact in real time for classes, seminars, and meetings.

"Throughout his career Erdogan Kumcu had both an admirable diligence and a sense of humor that made him an extraordinary role model to students and faculty," says Lynne Richardson, dean of the Miller College of Business. "He will be remembered for his drive to make sure every faculty member and student had some kind of international experience. He was a person with a very strong vision for internationalizing Ball State, and he dedicated his life to that."



Ball State University President Jo Ann M. Gora joins Emine Kumcu, wife of the late Erdogan Kumcu, and the couple's daughters, Aylin and Asli, at a ceremony to honor the memory of the longtime Ball State marketing professor.

Graduate program in entrepreneurship ranks among best in the nation

Ball State's graduate program in entrepreneurship is listed among the best in the nation in the latest rankings by *U.S. News & World Report*.

In the magazine's annual listings of top graduate programs offered by business schools, the entrepreneurship graduate program in the Miller College of Business is ranked 25th, up one spot from last year. In the last five years, the program has been consistently ranked in the magazine's top 30.

"This latest recognition from *U.S. News & World Report* is a tribute not only to our entrepreneurship faculty and staff, but also to our students, who amaze us every day with their entrepreneurial spirit and innovative concepts," says Ball State Entrepreneurship Center Director Larry Cox. "We plan to continue to build on this ranking

through exciting initiatives such as The Ground Floor, an MBA program designed to generate high-potential new ventures."

U.S. News & World Report ranked the university's undergraduate entrepreneurship program among the top five in the nation for 2006. In addition, the entrepreneurship program has been highly rated in recent years by *Success* and *Business Week*.

"The ranking is a testament to the hard work and dedication that has led the entrepreneurship program to be considered one of the best in the nation," says Lynne Richardson, dean of the Miller College of Business.



Alumni return to campus for interactive event

Last fall, 45 Miller College of Business faculty members hosted 61 business alumni in 93 sections of classes during Dialogue Days. An initiative of the college's alumni board, the annual event provides an opportunity for Ball State business students to interact with successful alumni.

In October, business professionals returned to campus from communities across the country—from Indiana to Kansas, Florida, and Texas. The alumni represented diverse professions, including sales executives, entrepreneurs, managers, and chief executive officers, in industries ranging from manufacturing to financial services and telecommunications.

Business alumni are invited to participate in the next Miller College of Business Dialogue Days program, which will be scheduled for spring 2007. For more information about Dialogue Days, contact Tammy Estep, director of external relations, at testep@bsu.edu.

Plan to attend 2006 Alumni Awards dinner

Business alumni are invited to mark their calendars for the third annual Miller College of Business Alumni Awards dinner, September 8, 2006. Following a gala reception and dinner, outstanding Ball State Business alumni—including two new Hall of Fame recipients—will be honored. Last year's celebration drew nearly 300 alumni, university dignitaries, and members of the business community.

New donor recognition wall celebrates generosity

The Miller College of Business will honor alumni, friends, and corporate sponsors who have made lifetime gifts to the college by placing their names on a donor recognition wall.

The wall, to be constructed near the Hall of Fame room in the Whiting Building this spring, will measure more than eight feet wide and nearly six feet high and will feature a walnut wood base and black quartz Corian nameplate.

Accounting major earns Academic All-American accolades

Ball State senior volleyball standout Sarah Obras has been named to the 2005 ESPN The Magazine Academic All-America Third Team, as voted on by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Obras, an accounting major with a 3.86 grade point average, is just the fifth Ball State women's volleyball player to earn Academic All-American accolades.

"There really is no better way for Sarah to end her career than with one of the highest athletic and academic honors a student-athlete can receive," says Ball State women's volleyball head coach Randy Litchfield. "Without this award, she closed her career in great fashion. Being named an Academic All-American just adds a cap to all the achievements she has made over her career."

The Academic All-America Teams program honors 816 male and female student-athletes annually who have succeeded at the highest level on the playing field and in the classroom.



Sarah Obras

Business student presents economics paper

Ball State business student Justin Patterson's paper on economic shocks and long-term bond risk premiums was one of 16 accepted for presentation in the undergraduate sessions at the Midwest Economic Association (MEA) meetings in March.

Patterson wrote the paper for an economics class taught by Cliff Stone, professor of economics. This marks the second year in a row that Miller College of Business students have presented papers at Economic Association annual meetings.

Marketing major's firm receives recognition

A student firm that was part of Assistant Professor of Marketing Russ Wahler's marketing simulation course last semester was named to McGraw-Hill's Business Strategy Game list of global top 20 companies for 2005 in December. At the time, the firm managed by marketing major Brian Chase and advertising major Jodi Willis was operating in ninth position globally on stock price and eleventh place for earnings per share.

Based on their performance, Chase and Willis were invited to compete in McGraw-Hill's Best Strategy Invitational in mid-December. More than 9,000 student teams throughout the world were involved in the business strategy game simulation last semester.

Feature



As part of Ball State's Business Fellows program, Miller College of Business students and faculty mentors are partnering with an array of Indiana communities, businesses, and organizations, from top: Justin Bates and Brent Krieg are members of a team of entrepreneurship students working with Jay County Development officials Ami Davidson and Robert Quadrozzi to explore a county-wide chamber of commerce concept; business students assess potential applications of computer clustering technology for the Indianapolis International Airport; a business plan created by Miller College students supports productions of the Downtown Dinner Theatre Project in Muncie.



Business Fellows

Partnering with Indiana communities and companies

**By Layne Cameron
and Marc Ransford**

From studying the potential use of cluster and grid computing techniques at the Indianapolis International Airport to creating a business plan for a professional dinner theatre company, Ball State business students are partnering with Indiana businesses and communities as part of the university's Business Fellows program.

Over the last two years, nearly 25 Business Fellows projects have provided some 200 Ball State students with opportunities to turn academic knowledge into business solutions. They gain valuable skills through intense, semester-long applied work experiences that benefit an Indiana business, industry, or organization.

Faculty mentors guide teams of students, working on problem-based projects that improve business services, quality, or competitiveness, with the potential of increasing revenue or developing new job opportunities.

Business Fellows, funded by a \$1.5 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., demonstrates Ball State's commitment to providing students with quality, immersive learning experiences and is a part of the university's Building Better Communities initiative, which is establishing itself as an invaluable economic engine for Indiana.

"The projects have been a great success in communities all around the state," explains Deborah Balogh, Ball State's interim provost and vice president for academic affairs. "The momentum from these successes will allow us to create new business connections in a wide variety of disciplines that will also help increase future job opportunities in Indiana for our students."

Investing in communities

One such connection was made in southern Indiana's Daviess County where faculty and students from Ball State's Entrepreneurship Center spent the last year working with area officials to assess the local entrepreneurial climate.

Cultivating small business growth and assisting the areas to expand and create new jobs may be the keys to this area's long-term economic viability, says Jeff Hornsby, entrepreneurship professor and project coordinator. "Outside of Indianapolis, there is very little potential for immediate job growth for many of the state's rural areas," he says. "For the most part, you are not going to attract a major company to relocate its headquarters or factory because there is incredible competition from cities across the nation."

Working through the center's Entrepreneurial Community Assessment Program (ECAP), which was funded by Building Better Communities, students identify potential markets for business development, evaluate the availability of funding, take an inventory of residents' education levels and skills, and assess barriers and facilitators to completing new venture development, including transportation, logistics, and taxes.

In Washington, Indiana, the students gave residents of the Daviess County seat community hope, says Mayor Dave Abel. "Their efforts have allowed us to look within ourselves to see what we can do," he says. "When people start making investments in their own communities, others follow their lead. I think we can start something here to foster growth for coming generations."

In conjunction with establishing an entrepreneurship committee for the Washington community, Ball State has helped

develop an entrepreneurship action plan. The goal is training community leaders to create an atmosphere that is friendly to entrepreneurship. "Not only do you want your entrepreneurship committee, or 'e-committee,' to be excited about the potential, but you want them to understand what it takes to foster an environment to grow your own jobs," Hornsby says.

Cooperating counties

Ball State also was able to spin off another project in Daviess County and work with area officials and their counterparts in Greene and Lawrence counties to capitalize



Jeff Hornsby, Ball State's George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Management, coordinates the Entrepreneurial Community Assessment Program, which partners students with Indiana communities to assess the local entrepreneurial climate.

on the technology assets of the Naval Surface Warfare Center, located in Crane.

"The best way to take advantage of various community assets is to look at what your community can offer another," Hornsby says. "By pooling assets, communities can work together to help people start new businesses or attract firms that would employ people from the area."

Hornsby cites Indianapolis as a case in point. Counties surrounding Indianapolis continue to profit from their proximity to Indiana's largest community, attracting

firms that are better suited to smaller cities and towns. As a result, Hamilton County is one of the fastest-growing areas in the state. Hornsby notes that other counties can emulate this example, working together to capitalize on each other's strengths.

Taking off with technology

Indianapolis is the site of another Business Fellows project in which seven Ball State students, working with faculty mentor Fred Kitchens, are studying the use of cluster and grid computing techniques at the Indianapolis International Airport.

Kitchens, associate professor of information systems and operations management and the project coordinator, believes a cluster or grid computer system—comprised of multiple personal computers networked to harness their cumulative power and available resources—could improve many of the airport's management operations.

He explains that the enhanced system of the cluster computer can outperform traditional supercomputers at a fraction of the cost. Other benefits may include faster processing speed, superior database capabilities, significantly less downtime, improved disaster recovery, and continuous operation at a fraction of the cost associated with a traditional supercomputer.

The Ball State business students are reviewing the airport's operations to determine the potential benefits and best implementation strategies for a cluster computer system. "Since supercomputers have been replaced by clusters and grids, there have recently been some major applications developed to make clusters more user-friendly for corporations and other private business entities," Kitchens explains.

The computers also can be distributed throughout a facility and then networked together, which adds an additional benefit. "If there is a terrorist attack or natural disaster like a major storm that wipes out part of a complex containing a portion of the network, the system can still function with the remaining components of the grid in existence," he adds.

In recent years, Kitchens has established

himself as a cluster computer expert. He undertook Ball State's first cluster computer project in 2001 as part of a student-team project. And in 2003, Siligi Solutions LLC became the first company to enlist Ball State's cluster computer to test a new program for the U.S. Department of Defense.

Supporting software

Closer to home, Kitchens directed a student team for Paragent LLC, a Muncie-based software company, in developing a proposal to operate a usability lab and develop a customer support plan. While Kitchens directed the computer side of the project, another group of Business Fellows, led by marketing professor Joseph Brown, conducted market research and developed a strategic marketing plan for Paragent.

The team was able to provide invaluable research into the security market that will enable the software company to move out of the Muncie Innovation Connector, the local business incubator, and blossom into a major corporation with its own headquarters.

"A big benefit came when the students held focus groups," says Eric Banter, Paragent's chief operating officer. "That information allowed us to better understand the security market, giving us an idea of what potential customers are looking for in a security product."

Producing results

Identifying new customers is the objective of another team of Ball State business

students who are helping an Indianapolis firm reach its potential.

Faculty mentor Ray Montagno, associate dean for research and outreach for the Miller College of Business, says the students are gaining valuable experience in learning how to grow an existing business by working with The Whale Hunters, LLC. The sales process and business development company is focused on assisting fast-growth companies in becoming more effective in identifying, tracking, closing, serving, and retaining larger accounts.

"The Whale Hunters helps companies stuck in no-man's land to move forward," Montagno says. "We are doing the same for them by examining new clients and potential new products."

Students researched new business opportunities for the company by analyzing privately held firms in the Midwest. They examined the market and delivered a list of firms that are a good fit with the company's products. "We put a lot of responsibility on the students in asking them not only to find the clients, but to tell us why they're good prospects for us," says The Whale Hunters cofounder Barbara Weaver Smith. "We want to know why particular firms will want what we offer."

Producing results—the end goal of all Business Fellows projects—took on a whole new meaning when the Miller College of Business joined the Department of Theatre and Dance for the Downtown Dinner Theatre Project.



Two Business Fellows teams worked with software company Paragent to develop proposals for a usability lab and a customer support plan.

Harold Mortimer, assistant professor of musical theatre, created the concept for the not-for-profit dinner theatre company in Muncie's revitalized downtown, mentoring theatre students who successfully staged the pilot production—*Pump Boys and Dinettes*.

Srinivasan Sundaram, associate professor of finance and insurance in the Miller College of Business, worked with Mortimer and a group of business students to develop a business plan that would sustain the dinner theatre and produce profits that fund scholarships for students attending Muncie's Cornerstone Center for the Arts and Ball State Department of Theatre and Dance students.

Sundaram notes that in addition to learning to create both a successful business and performance, the two groups of students benefited from working with each other. "The theatre students appreciated the business perspective on budgeting, keeping accounts, and fundraising," he says. "The business students had a unique opportunity to see how others on campus are feeding their passion." ●

Layne Cameron and Marc Ransford are Ball State University media relations managers.

How to Partner with Business Fellows

Business and community partners play an essential role in the Business Fellows program, establishing existing problem-based projects and working with Ball State faculty and student teams to create solutions.

Partners benefit by:

- Receiving new ideas and perspectives to apply to organizational challenges
- Strengthening connections to Ball State University
- Working with an energetic and knowledgeable team of students and faculty expert
- Gaining the advantages of a consulting team approach without long-term, costly investments
- Developing contacts for high-quality future interns and full-time employees

For more information about Business Fellows go to www.bsu.edu/careers/fellows

Business Fellows is part of Ball State University's Building Better Communities initiative—www.bsu.edu/bbc

Feature





For three months every year, the average low temperature is below zero in Roseau, Minnesota. It's hardly shocking to learn that Roseau, just a few miles south of the Canadian border, is best known for the design and manufacture of snowmobiles.

What might be more surprising to hear is that the tiny crossroads, located 1,000 miles from Muncie, is home to an unusually large concentration of Ball State MBA graduates.

As hard as it might be for a typical Miller College of Business student to locate Roseau on the map, the Roseau contingent might have an equally difficult time pinpointing Muncie. Most have never been there because they have taken their Ball State classes via a satellite video downlink to a Minnesota classroom. It's a prime example of the power of distance education and why it's so important to the Miller College of Business MBA program.

Roseau's Ball State MBAs work for Polaris Industries, maker of snowmobiles and other all-terrain vehicles. "They had a lot of engineers designing snowmobiles," says Inga Hill, assistant to the dean for graduate programs and overseer of the master of business administration program in the Miller College of Business. Roseau is far from everywhere, she notes: "They didn't have any programs that were very accessible. This is a way for them to finish their MBAs in a really accessible site."

The truth is, a good MBA program can be just as inaccessible for many Indiana residents. They may not live on the frozen landscape of northern Minnesota, but still may be far from a university campus or busy with a full-time job. These are the students that Ball State was targeting when it pioneered a live-television-based delivery model in 1983.

Even though the Internet has since brought other institutions' MBA education to the living rooms or kitchens of pajama-clad students, Ball State's model continues to distinguish itself because of its unique combination of live interaction, convenience, and quality instruction. "What really differentiates us is the way we deliver our program," says Lynne Richardson, dean of the Miller

College of Business. "Students literally all over the state can stay in their home environment and further their education with a quality program."

Live from Ball State

Ball State first offered an MBA in 1968. It was a traditional, on-campus program, one that Inga Hill got to know well because she went through it herself within its first decade. Hill, who had been working in occupational therapy and special education, sought an MBA because, she says, "It looked to me that the world was changing, and there would be lots of opportunities in business." For her, the opportunity resulted in teaching business. She earned a PhD in 1980 and joined the Ball State faculty.

Not long after Hill began her teaching career, the business college decided to expand the reach of its MBA program using the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System (IHETS), a consortium of educational institutions of which Ball State was a founding partner. IHETS offered the ability to transmit television signals of classes to sites across the state, including public schools, Ivy Tech locations, and corporate sites.

At the time, Hill says, there wasn't anything quite like it in the state. Though distance-learning course work was available, it usually followed the "independent study" or "correspondence course" model and typically did not include the ability to view lectures. "Purdue had a distance-education master's in engineering, but it involved sending out videotapes," she recalls.

The Ball State MBA concept, on the other hand, promised live, real-time interaction with professors and other students. Unlike independent study courses, it maintained regular class meetings led by professors lecturing and interacting in front of an on-campus class of students. Distance-learning students had the opportunity to call in to the classroom with questions and comments.

A little research, experience, and experimentation at the program's outset led to a successful tele-education format. "When we started, we had to help the producers understand what it was like

to teach a class,” Hill says, noting that to achieve the best effect it was important to show not just the professor but the students. “We set it up so there’s also a camera in the front of the classroom that can zero in on individual students.”

Richardson likens the format to the old Phil Donahue show, on which the host appeared in front of a studio audience but was famous for his query, “Is the caller there?” “That’s the way this works as well,” the dean says. “Students all over the state have an opportunity to call in with questions.”

The arrangement, says Hill, offers an optimum combination of flexibility and structure: “It provides the convenience of an online class, but it requires assignments due at a certain time and gives a sense of familiarity with the professor.”

The concept strikes a good balance, agrees Bill Mandler, a Miller MBA alumnus and general manager of Encerotec Inc. in Columbus. “I think the distance-learning program was as close to having an on-campus learning experience as was possible at the time,” says Mandler, who also serves as a member of the MBA advisory board. “We watched the on-campus class live and had a direct communication to the professor, who was actually teaching a class rather than talking to a camera, which made it very close to an on-campus experience.”

“The difference was that you could do that with a Burger King Whopper sitting in front of you as you tried to grab a quick bite after work,” adds fellow advisory board member Steve Matthews of Carmel. Matthews studied for his Ball State MBA in Indianapolis at a corporate site: Allison Gas Turbine, now Rolls-Royce, where he works as a financial controller.

Access and experience

Like many MBA programs, Ball State’s curriculum requires 30 credit hours of study, divided into 10 three-hour courses. “We have eight core courses that are oriented toward applying business knowledge and improving managerial decision-making,” Hill says. “Those are courses in leadership, statistics, information systems, accounting, economics, finance, marketing, and global strategic management.”

To those eight core courses, students add a pair of electives that may be chosen from a wide variety of topics, ranging from law and insurance to project management and electronic commerce. New electives are added from time to time to address current business issues and trends, and nearly all courses contain some subject matter relating to international business.

“Students may earn a concentration that appears on their diploma,” Hill notes. “The largest and best known area is entrepreneurship.” Other choices include finance, operations management, and

information systems. Earning a concentration requires completing three courses in one area, which often means taking at least one additional course beyond the required 10. Those focusing on entrepreneurship can still complete the MBA with 30 credit hours because the first entrepreneurship course takes the place of the core course in leadership.

Although no previous studies in business are required for admission into the MBA program, those who have not had business education in the past may be required to complete a series of foundation courses, including basic studies in accounting, economics, finance, marketing, operations management, and managing organizational behavior. “If you don’t have those, you can take them at the graduate level,” Hill explains.

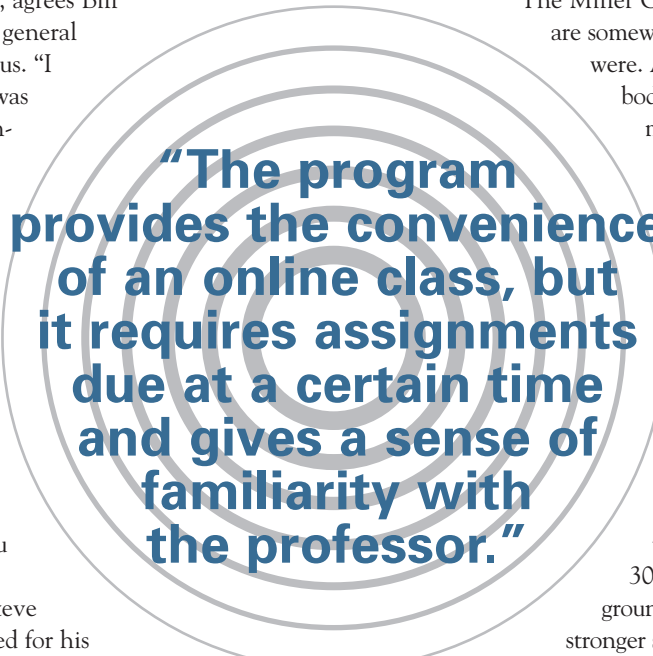
The Miller College of Business MBA requirements are somewhat different from what they once were. AACSB, the professional accrediting body for schools of business, requires a minimum of 30 hours for an MBA program. “Several years ago our program had a minimum of 36 hours, and we were starting to lose students to competitors because their programs were shorter,” says Richardson.

The college responded by restructuring its program. “We didn’t lose the content, but we looked for overlap,” she explains. “We took some topics and instead of offering a full class, we integrated them into other classes.” The result is a 30-hour MBA that covers as much ground as the former 36-hour program, with stronger student demand.

Though it’s not a traditional executive MBA program, which typically concentrates classes on weekends or intensive on-campus sessions, Ball State’s program is geared toward students who already are in the workplace, with classes scheduled Monday through Thursday evenings. The course load can be completed in a year if a student is enrolled full-time, and those who opt to take two classes at a time can finish in five semesters. But Hill says it’s a flexible program, enabling students to take a lighter load or take a semester off now and then as needed, as long as they finish the degree within six years.

Rolling admission allows students to begin their studies in the fall, spring, or summer. Basic requirements include an undergraduate grade point average of at least 2.5 and a minimum score of 400 on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). Hill says the college applies a mathematical formula that takes both measures into account. The formula yields a cut-off score that is used to maintain high admission standards and to control enrollment in the program.

“We’re looking for a balanced picture in students who demonstrate that they can do the work,” she explains. “If your GPA is lower, you have to do really well on the GMAT.” Last fall’s incoming class had an average undergraduate GPA of 3.3 and an average



“The program provides the convenience of an online class, but it requires assignments due at a certain time and gives a sense of familiarity with the professor.”



GMAT of 556. Once in the program, students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0.

Of the approximately 2,500 students enrolled in the Miller College of Business, some 190 are in the MBA program. Nearly three-quarters of the students are enrolled part-time, and about two-thirds of the MBA students take their classes at one of about 50 off-campus sites.

In addition to making a quality MBA program accessible to working adults in all parts of the state, the Miller College of Business' distance-education approach yields a student body that already has a wealth and diversity of real-world work experience. Hill says some 14 countries are represented within the student body, and the average student enters at about age 28, after spending five or more years in the working world.

"Often our distance-education students have a lot more experience and are currently in managerial positions," Hill points out. "There's good interaction between on-campus and off-campus students, and that helps out everybody."

Carol Hanna, who pursued her Ball State MBA while living and working in Anderson, says that having one foot in the working world helped her better relate her course work to business reality. "I think I was able to learn more because I had some real-life experience," says Hanna, who is now finance manager at Indiana tomato-processing giant Red Gold Inc.

The on-campus students, meanwhile, play a valuable role in the program and the college, Richardson observes. "We have 40 to 50 students every year who are on-campus students," she says. "Typically, they have recently graduated and want to come back or stay to earn an MBA. Many have graduate assistantships, so they become a resource to our faculty."

Quality and convenience

Alumni and current students alike give the Miller College of Business MBA program high marks for both quality and convenience.

The availability of evening and Saturday courses made it possible for Hanna to earn her MBA while maintaining a day job. "I was able to fit classes into what my personal life was requiring at the time," she says.

Jim Bickel, vice president of professional and support services for Columbus Regional Hospital in south-central Indiana, was in his early 40s when he signed up to study entrepreneurship through the distance-learning option. "I had three children in middle school and high school and a full-time work commitment," he says. "The ability to attend a major university without the travel time was instrumental in choosing an MBA program."

Bill Mandler agrees: "Considering I had a young child, a working wife, a mortgage, car payment, business travel, etc., the distance-learning program was the only viable option."

Another Miller MBA alumnus, Paul Kuczora of Marion, faced similar circumstances as he explored MBA education in his late 30s. He and his wife had recently had their third and fourth children—twin daughters. "My work as the CEO of a health and social-service organization requires substantial community involvement which precluded my attending an 'executive MBA' program," he says. Kuczora started out as an on-campus part-timer, but switched to distance-

learning after finding that commuting and parking were too time-consuming. "It did get me accustomed to missing Monday Night Football, though," he quips.

Studying outside of the traditional classroom took some getting used to, Bickel says, though after a semester or so the arrangement felt relatively natural. "I thought the curriculum and instruction quality was excellent," he says. "Shortly after beginning my MBA program, I was promoted to the executive level within my organization. I use and apply many aspects of my MBA daily in my job responsibilities."

Current entrepreneurship graduate student Jason Gornito of Peru, located about 70 miles from Muncie, finds the arrangement convenient and appreciates being able to connect with professors even though he's out of town. Most important, he says, "I feel confident in the quality of the education because my classes are identical to those on campus."

Personal and professional

Delivery technology has changed through the years, as IHETS has moved from microwave-based transmission to fiber to satellite, but the off-campus experience has remained similar. The latest changes are opening some new possibilities for MBA students. IHETS has added Internet-based video streaming, which means many students are now able to attend classes from their own homes, in front of their personal computers.

"We previously had been almost entirely site-based—you had to go to a place that could download the signal from the satellite," Hill says. "Currently, classes are going out both over the Internet and also over the satellite."

Though satellite delivery is scheduled to end this summer, students still will have the opportunity to gather at download sites if they prefer. "We still have students who like to go to a site and participate with other students in the same room," Hill explains. "We're trying to make it look the same and feel the same and trying to enhance the quality with two-way communication. Communicating during class should be easier."

From a technological point of view, delivering over the Internet means students can now take Ball State MBA classes from virtually anywhere in the world. But Hill and Richardson say there's no plan to change the program's character, or to transform it into a massive MBA mill.

"We provide good quality, convenience, and a lot of what you can get in a somewhat smaller program," Hill says. "For example, if someone calls with a question about being admitted to the MBA program, they'll talk directly to me. A lot of people find that personal touch appealing."

The program's appeal is reflected in strong demand. "Right now we literally have as much business as we can handle," says Richardson. And although more and more institutions are entering the market with online programs designed to be taken independently, at an individual pace and with little direct interaction with others, that's simply not the Miller College of Business niche, she says. "We think there's a lot of value in the classroom environment, where you see one another. We like where we are." ●

Steve Kaelble is an Indianapolis-based freelance writer.

CRASH COURSE

IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

<BALL STATE BUSINESS STUDENTS HELP GULF COAST COMPANIES REBUILD>

By Marc Ransford



A team of Ball State business students spent spring break helping Katrina-ravaged companies rebuild.

While many college students spent their spring break basking on Florida beaches, a group of Ball State University business students helped two adjoining Mississippi towns battle back from one of the worst natural disasters in American history.

Amid biting bugs, humid temperatures, and pools of wastewater, 18 students from the Miller College of Business stocked shelves, moved boats, and painted signs to assist struggling businesses in Bay St. Louis and Waveland, Mississippi—ground zero for the eye of Hurricane Katrina and subsequent water surge that engulfed the area.

“We were there to lend a hand, doing anything that was needed,” says Andrew Greider, a junior from Muncie. “The people in town were happy to see us, and it was great to be able to help put some companies back on their feet.

“It was nasty down there, but it was worth the long trip,” he adds. “I plan to go back as soon as I can. I think we all feel that way.”

About 95 percent of the homes and businesses in the sister cities of Bay St. Louis and Waveland were damaged or destroyed when Hurricane Katrina made landfall. The area had been notable for its pristine beaches and for being the highest point on the Gulf of Mexico coastline.

In the weeks after the disaster, representatives from the Miller College of Business contacted the local chambers of commerce,

offering the college’s expertise to help the communities.

“Right after the hurricane hit, we knew we wanted to do more than just have a fundraiser and send money,” says Ray Montagno, associate dean for research and outreach in the Miller College of Business. “We have a great deal of expertise in the college and thought we should use it to help business owners.”

Students and faculty from the college visited the area in October and January to create a plan to resuscitate the town’s businesses. Montagno and Rod Davis, associate dean for instruction and operations in the Miller College of Business, were faculty advisors for the trip and worked together to complete a physical inventory of local businesses located on Interstate 90.

“We started out by just helping out wherever we could,” says Montagno. “Two students were assigned to a business for a few days to lend a hand. That meant working outdoors in the hot sun pulling boats across a lot for a boat business or simply putting things on shelves to restock a business. Whatever it took, we did.”

Greider spent several days working for a sign company, which had plenty of business in a community that encountered several hours of hurricane-force winds.

“The business community is coming back to life, and the best way to attract customers is to put up signs,” he says. “It wasn’t easy work, and the bugs drove us crazy.”

The weeklong working vacation gave the students a good understanding of what business owners encounter following a major catastrophe, says Montagno. “I am very proud of these students for giving up their spring break and working very, very hard for a week,” he says. “They will never forget this experience.”

In the coming months, faculty and students from the Miller College of Business plan to develop a long-term plan to assist businesses in the two Mississippi communities. The program could include student internships and class projects.

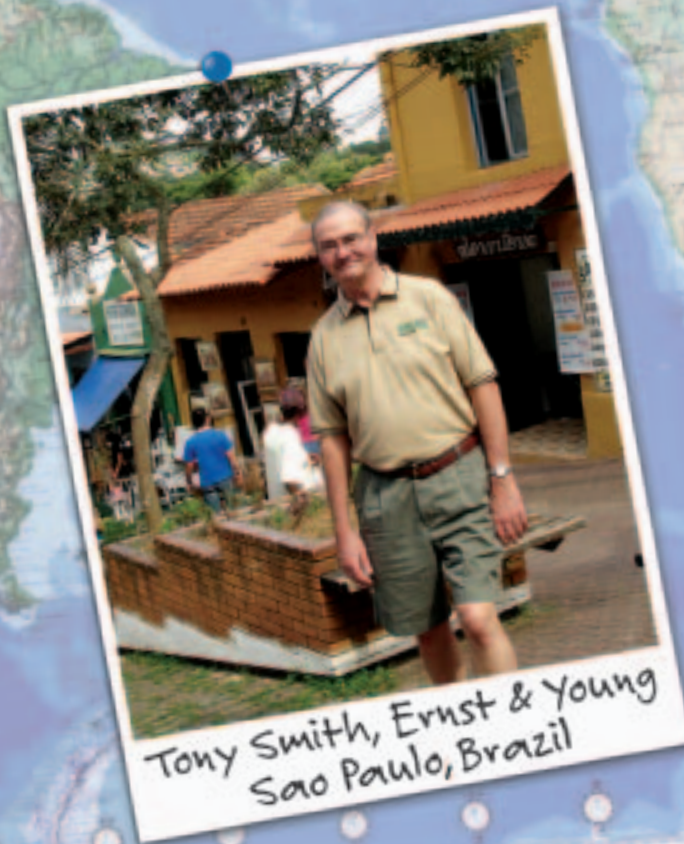
Davis believes the college and others at Ball State could play a major role in rebuilding the Gulf Coast, a process that could take up to a decade. “I think that by being there for just a few days over spring break, we reenergized some of the business owners,” he says. “We were able to bring enthusiasm, which sparks hope. We believe they’ll get back on their feet, and we plan on being there for as long as they’ll have us.” ●

Marc Ransford is a Ball State media relations manager.

WORKING WORLDWIDE

Miller College of Business alumni enjoy international opportunities

BY MARY G. BARR



In the last issue of Ball State Business, we reported on the renaissance of the international business program in the Miller College of Business. Here, we share stories of alumni who are succeeding in business beyond American borders.

Months away from retiring from a 35-year career with Ernst & Young, Anthony W. Smith sat in his Indianapolis office and picked up a call from a company vice president with a remarkable proposition. Would he consider postponing his planned and well-deserved retirement for a special assignment—to open a capital markets center that would serve all of South America?

Smith, who earned an accounting degree from Ball State in 1968, had often counseled top performing employees to take inter-

national assignments sometime during their careers. “Little did I know that I would get my opportunity literally at the end of my career!” he says.

Today Smith is among more than four million Americans who are employed beyond United States borders and an increasing number of Miller College of Business alumni who are enjoying business success in international settings.

Smith decided to put his retirement plans on the shelf and follow his own advice for best serving global clients: move outside comfort

zones, adapt to a totally different environment, and experience another culture.

“My career to date had been entirely with Ernst & Young in the Indianapolis office,” explains Smith, a managing partner who, prior to his South American post, was assigned to the national office with a focus on managing the firm’s risk and consulting with engagement teams.

Smith’s current assignment in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where he lives with his wife, Marla, places him more than 4,000 miles away from his geographical comfort zone, but in a field that is familiar territory.

He oversees Securities and Exchange Commission foreign private issuers in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru for the recently opened capital markets accounting and auditing center. It conducts foreign filing reviews for private issuers of Ernst & Young in the area. A foreign private issuer is a foreign company that has securities registered with the SEC, explains Smith. Prior to filing an annual report with the SEC, the company must receive a review from someone with experience in accounting principles generally accepted in the United States and knowledge of the rules and regulations of the SEC. Smith and his staff perform that function for the South American market.

“I find working with Ernst & Young personnel in South America is similar to working in the U.S., however there are barriers to living in the environment that are pretty high,” says Smith, who received special cultural training prior to his departure. “Until you are immersed in the environment, you really don’t understand the differences. You simply must experience and adapt to them.”

He has made multiple adjustments to accommodate his South American assignment, including learning different business regulations and practices, as well as two new languages—Portuguese, which is spoken in Brazil, and Spanish.

An active alumnus, Smith shares his years of business experience as a member of the Miller College of Business Executive Advisory Board. But he says he’s still learning through his new cultural immersion.

“We’re so sheltered in the United States that we don’t understand some of the perspectives that come from outside the U.S.,” he says. “If you visit a country to simply deal with a specific service or client issue, you really don’t grasp the cultural issues involved. The benefit of this experience to me is a much better understanding of the world and its cultures.”

To Ball State and back

Like Tony Smith, fellow business alumna Haifa Al Khaifi says there are some things you just don’t understand until you are immersed and living in a new culture—like snow.

“I vividly recall the first time I saw snow,” recalls Al Khaifi, for whom Muncie was the new culture. “I will always remember walking down Calvert Street with the bare tree branches covered in ice like mini stalactites. They would act as little prisms, and the sun would shine through as millions of little rainbows.”

Following a “Ball State family legacy,” Al Khaifi traveled half the globe from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Muncie, where as a 16-year-old international student she learned important lessons outside, as well as inside, the classroom.

Always an analytic thinker with passions for economics and information technology, Al Khaifi naturally drifted to the Miller College of Business, like

her sister before her. Her experiences in a marketing internship convinced her to pursue a career in the oil industry.

Today she is a top performer at Shell International Gas and Power Ltd. in Dubai, UAE, located along the Arabian Gulf. As the manager for regional planning and reporting, her responsibilities include business planning for projects, management reporting, governance, risk management, and assurance for the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. The position presented itself at what she describes as “an exciting time of rapid growth in the Middle East within the gas sector.”

The evolving role of chief financial officer is a significant challenge in the global business environment, observes Al Khaifi. “The CFO role has now come under more scrutiny than ever before,” she explains. “CFOs are, therefore, now under tremendous pressure not only to deliver on their promises, but also to demonstrate that they have done so in compliance with the set standards.”



Al Khaifi, who complemented her American degree with a British Chartered Management Accounting qualification, is grateful for her educational roots. "Ball State has certainly provided me with a solid academic foundation in business," she says, noting also the leadership development she gained via extracurricular and volunteer activities. "These nonacademic experiences nurtured leadership and communication skills while stressing the importance of team work, networking, and absolute commitment. These skills can only be polished when you go above and beyond the academic experience."

Al Khaifi's older sister Najat Al Yarubiya also has worked internationally since earning an accounting degree from Ball State in 1988. After beginning as an accountant, she is now the human resources skill pool manager at Petroleum Development Oman in the Sultanate of Oman, a country on the southeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula and about a five-hour drive from Dubai.

Recalling her initial hyperawareness of her foreign surroundings, Al Yarubiya describes her experience at Ball State as life changing and credits her education with providing her the business skills and confidence necessary for success. "I currently work in a multicultural environment and having been educated in a multicultural environment at Ball State gave me an edge," she says.

From Old Quad to Far East

Today, a whole new brand of young alumni finds traveling and working internationally as attainable as a stroll across the Quad. And thanks to many opportunities for study abroad at Ball State, they often get a healthy dose of global business exposure while still a student.

Andrew Church spent the summer of 2002 on a Ball State study trip to the Far

East. Between moments of culture shock, he saw opportunities. Knowing he was just a semester away from completing his degree, he began to dream of a life working in China. Church now works in Shenzhen, China, as the manager for business development and client services for Specialized Technology Resources, Inc. The company is a global provider of product development and

supply chain support services for major consumer product retailers and manufacturers.

One of the greatest lessons he has learned is the art of gentle communication. "Americans often tell it 'the way it is,' and that doesn't go over too well in China," Church explains. "The need to be sensitive in communication was something that took me a while to improve. I now try to communicate in a way that is both easy to understand and doesn't offend anyone."

Church, who has learned some Mandarin, says there are additional communication subtleties. "I have learned to listen to what people want, not just what they say," he says. "The Chinese don't often say 'no.' If you ask someone if they would like to do a task, or even a different job, they will say 'yes' when in reality they don't want to at all. So it's important to try and understand what employees like and what their goals are so you can match their skills and objectives with the company's needs."

Growing up in the Midwest, Church experienced the usual adjustments to living far from home. "But now things I couldn't imagine doing before I moved here are second nature and part of everyday life," he says, noting that his lifestyle has become simpler, with less need for material things.

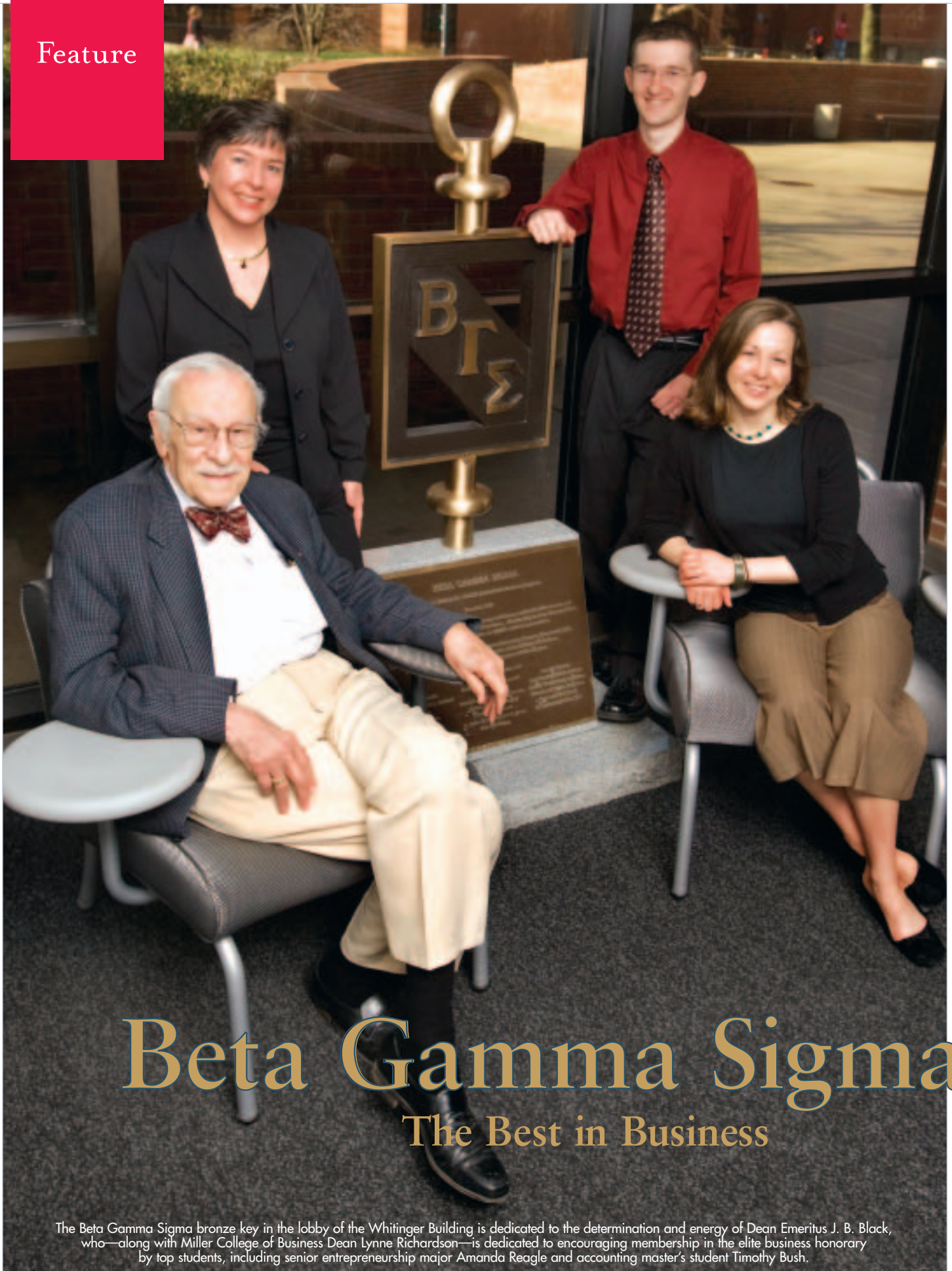
"Every day I see extreme poverty, so every day I am thankful and try not to take for granted what it means to be an American," says Church. "While I enjoy living overseas, I'm proud to be an American and appreciate our freedom of speech."

In addition to MBA studies through an executive program in Hong Kong, Church is acquiring additional global business experience and encourages all executives to be more aware of what's going on in the world.

"For example, it's important to recognize how and why the lifting of textile quotas last year affected countries around the world and what influence Vietnam joining the World Trade Organization would have on the U.S. and other developing countries," he says. "We should understand how U.S. actions can impact the rest of the world both financially and in foreign attitudes toward Americans." ●

Mary G. Barr is an Indianapolis-based freelance writer.





Beta Gamma Sigma

The Best in Business

The Beta Gamma Sigma bronze key in the lobby of the Whiting Building is dedicated to the determination and energy of Dean Emeritus J. B. Black, who—along with Miller College of Business Dean Lynne Richardson—is dedicated to encouraging membership in the elite business honorary by top students, including senior entrepreneurship major Amanda Reagle and accounting master's student Timothy Bush.

J.B. Black, dean of Ball State's business college from 1973 to 1984, is routinely recognized for achieving three goals pivotal to its success: moving it from scattered Quonset huts to a new home facility; leading the successful attainment of AACSB accreditation; and championing a salary plan to draw the best professors.

But the dedicated dean emeritus says there's one more accomplishment that means a lot to him—establishing a chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma business honorary.

"Beta Gamma Sigma membership is the highest honor business students can receive," says Black, who has attended all but one or two initiation banquets since the Ball State chapter was formed in 1979. "It's an indication to the students and to others that they are capable of doing great things."

Indeed, the 68 Miller College of Business students tapped for membership in Beta Gamma Sigma this year join an elite organization that pays lifelong dividends. Seniors in the top ten percent of their class and juniors in the top seven percent are invited to join the honor society, which serves business programs worldwide that are accredited by AACSB, the premier professional accrediting body for schools of business.

Miller College of Business Dean Lynne Richardson, who is completing a four-year term on Beta Gamma Sigma's Board of Governors, says that in addition to being the "ultimate" recognition of academic success, membership in the international organization is "a signal to recruiters that these business students are at the top of their class and the best in the world."

Black agrees. "You can't buy those kinds of credentials," he says. "Membership goes a long way toward opening doors and almost guarantees a job interview."

Black feels so strongly about the benefits of Beta Gamma Sigma membership that when he retired in 1988, he and his wife, Mary Jane, established a foundation that pays the \$50 initiation fee of each Ball State student invited to membership. To guarantee the tradition will continue, he also has bequeathed money to the college for that purpose.

"In addition to making sure it was possible for students who were not able to afford the fees to join, I also wanted to encourage those who might not fully appreciate the impor-

ance of the organization," he says, adding that he thinks Miller College faculty and administrators are doing a better job than ever getting the word out about Beta Gamma Sigma.

This year, Black was invited by Richardson to speak about membership benefits and opportunities to some prime potential honorary members—a group of sophomore business students who made the dean's list.

In addition, Richardson says that the process of tapping students for membership and recognizing them before their peers is an effective way of promoting the organization. Each year in early March, Richardson and faculty who are members of Beta Gamma Sigma go into classrooms, talking about the honorary and presenting invitations.

"It's a fun surprise and an honor," says Richardson, who notes that the organization has provided her with many meaningful experiences of her own.

Richardson was a Beta Gamma Sigma faculty advisor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham for six years before coming to Ball State in 2001 and was elected to the honorary society's international Board of Governors in 2002. The board meets three times each year, and Richardson has served on a number of committees during her four-year term. Most recently, she chaired the Beta Gamma Sigma Partnerships Committee, which helps develop corporate relationships that have the potential to provide value to the organization and its members.

Making connections is among the most important of the advantages offered by Beta Gamma Sigma membership, says Richardson. Alumni chapters offer excellent opportunities to network, and membership is a win-win situation for students and businesses.

"Human resource people understand that Beta Gamma Sigma members are the best business schools have to offer, so it's a unique way of giving future employers a heads up," she explains. "Students can post resumes and view postings by companies, and corporations gain access to the cream of the crop."

Another important student benefit is the Beta Gamma Sigma Student Leadership Forum, a weekend event offered twice each year. Top students from each college chapter are invited to interact, develop leadership skills, and meet recruiters from

corporations who underwrite the event.

In addition each college chapter that qualifies as a premier or exemplary chapter (based on the membership acceptance rate) receives an annual Student Leadership Forum Scholarship that provides \$500 from the international organization to match the chapter's \$500 contribution. The Miller College of Business chapter has achieved premier status for the last few years, and its most recent scholarship recipient, senior entrepreneurship major Amanda Reagle, attended the leadership forum in November.

"The people are the best part," she says, noting that she met members from across the United States, plus a number from Canada and England. "It also was a great chance to get away and focus on career and future."

Last year Timothy Bush—who is earning his master's degree in accounting from Ball State—was the Miller College chapter's representative to the leadership forum, which he describes as "amazing."

"Beta Gamma Sigma provides an excellent business network and a meaningful credential, which is highly regarded by business professionals," he says. "It's a great honor and represents to me all my hard work."

Honoring students' extra efforts and achievements is the focus of the Miller College of Business annual Beta Gamma Sigma initiation banquet. "It's a time to come together and celebrate the students' successes with faculty, family, and friends," says Richardson. "It's great fun for all of us."

In addition to the initiation dinner and an inspirational speaker, new members and their families are treated to a few words from J. B. Black about Beta Gamma Sigma and why he established the fund that supports membership. He says, "I tell them that they have my permission to make a contribution to the fund." Often, he says, they do, and many remember the favor he has done them.

Recently Black was introduced to Ball State business alumnus Carl Davis, a new university development director. Black reports: "When we met, he said to me, 'I know your name. I graduated from Ball State. I'm a member of Beta Gamma Sigma, and you paid my initiation fee.'"

While that kind of conversation is gratifying, Black says he already has received his reward many times over: "I just wanted to see our good students get the recognition they deserve." ●

Creating Community

Creating and maintaining community—among individuals and institutions—is a top priority for Dave Heeter.

Whether talking about his family, the Miller College of Business, or his work as chief executive officer of Mutual Federal Savings Bank in Muncie, the Ball State business alumnus enthusiastically espouses the importance of long-term relationships and lasting links.

“I’ve been involved with the board for a long time,” says Heeter, who is serving his second year as president of the Miller College of Business Alumni Board.

“As a volunteer, you have a certain amount of time to give, and you want to allocate it to things that really make a difference. The alumni board is creating energy, and business alumni are really proud of being Ball State graduates, so we are able to connect with people who haven’t been involved in the past.”

That energy is transforming Miller College alumni events, including the hugely successful annual Alumni Awards Dinner, which began in 2004. Heeter was instrumental in launching the celebration, which brings together alumni and friends of the college, as well as a “who’s who” of business community leaders, to recognize exceptional alumni. Nearly 300 were on hand last fall to honor Hall of Fame recipient Dennis Oklak, chairman and CEO of Duke Realty Corporation, and others. Papa John’s Founder and Chairman John Schnatter, the 2004 Hall of Fame award winner, presented the keynote address at the inaugural gala.

“It’s been a great event, a chance to bring back some very successful alumni and

reconnect them with the Miller College of Business,” says Heeter. “We still have a deep pool of successful graduates to recognize in coming years.”

In addition, he notes that the dinner is an opportunity for alumni and faculty to become reacquainted and for a select group of students to network in a business setting, “rubbing shoulders” with successful business professionals.



The business and academic worlds also intersect at another successful activity initiated by the alumni board. Each fall the Dialogue Days event brings business alumni back to campus to speak to students. With the goal of featuring a speaker in every business class, students have the chance to learn about practical real-world experience right in the classroom. In October, 45 business faculty members hosted 61 speakers

over the two-day program.

“It’s important that alumni stay connected to the university, and it’s good for students to meet alumni and learn about the business world outside the academic arena,” says Heeter. “Our role as a board is to do whatever we can to maintain those kinds of connections.”

Heeter knows first-hand the importance of making connections as a student. As a senior in high school, he worked in the accounting department of Mutual Federal and continued there throughout his four years at Ball State before completing an internship and management trainee experience. After a year with another banking institution, he returned to build a respected 27-year career.

Named CEO of Mutual Federal in November 2003, Heeter is proud to lead the oldest financial institution in Delaware County. Typically, he views his role as one of outreach. One example that he particularly values is a scholarship for deserving business students that Mutual Federal and Mutual Federal Savings Bank Charitable Foundation have provided for each of 37 years.

That, says Heeter, is what it means to be part of a community.

“As a company, we believe that providing students with opportunities for education benefits the entire community,” he explains. “If we can help students get an education, then they can become productive community members and, in turn, help others.” ●

by Carmen Siering

Dave Heeter has been a member of the Miller College of Business Alumni Board for seven years. He and his wife, Deb—both 1983 graduates of Ball State University—live in Yorktown.

Connections

Chad Bailey, BS Finance, 1993, is IT director, ProHealth Network, for Community Health Network in Indianapolis.

Christine Bailey, BS Management Information Systems, 1993, is the senior systems administrator of managed hosting services for Aprimo, Inc. in Indianapolis.

Niel Ellerbrook, BS Accounting, 1970, has been inducted into the Evansville Business Hall of Fame, which honors outstanding business leaders and presents business role models to the youth of Southwestern Indiana. Ellerbrook is chief executive officer of Vectren Corporation, Evansville's largest headquartered company and one of only three publicly-traded NYSE companies headquartered in the city. He is a member of the Miller College of Business Hall of Fame and received the college's Award of Distinction in 1999. In 2001, he was awarded the Ball State University Alumni Association's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Bob Fields, BS Accounting, 1993, recently accepted a position as the managing director of research and trading at Breeden Partners in Greenwich, Connecticut.

Kelly George, BS Accounting, 1983, has accepted a position as the chief operating officer at VEI and Community Health Network in Indianapolis.

Danyelle Granger, BA Management, 2002, received her master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern Indiana and is a foundation program specialist at Old National Bank in Evansville.

Christopher Hanks, BS Management Information Systems, 1997, recently accepted a senior consultant position with Quest Information Systems in Indianapolis.

Ralph Flowers, BS Business, 1972, joined the Ball State Federal Credit Union in Muncie as a mortgage loan officer after 26 years in banking. He also serves as the district director for the Indiana Trustees Association for East Central Indiana.

Laurent Jean Fontaine, BS Marketing, 2004, works in international marketing in Valbonne, France.

Nathan Hensley, MBA, 2001, is the online customer service director for Cincinnati Financial Group. He lives in Hamilton, Ohio.

John Kaufeld, BS Management, 1985, is the communications manager for the Game Manufacturers Association in Columbus, Ohio.

Haifa Al Khaifi, BS Marketing, 1995, is the regional manager for financial planning and reporting for Shell International Gas and Power. Her territories include Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. She and her husband, Paul Cummings, have two children.

Larry Metzger, BS Accounting, 1970, was honored recently with the 2005 Outstanding CPA in Business and Industry award by the Indiana CPA Society. A member of the Ball State University Alumni Council, Metzger is senior partner with Sunbelt Indiana Business Resource, a business acquisitions and merger company in Indianapolis. He served on the Miller College of Business Alumni Advisory Board from 1986 to 1996.

Lawrence Palmer, BS Accounting, 1980, is employed by Lauth Property Group in Indianapolis.

Steve Patterson, BS Finance, 1988, was appointed to the Indiana State Fair Board by Governor Mitch Daniels. He will serve on the board through September 2009. Patterson, who lives in Brownsburg, is a training manager for Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance.

Scott Stowers, BS Business Administration, 1990, is a juvenile court magistrate judge for the Marion County Superior Court in Indianapolis.

Ted Tetrick, BS Finance, 2001, earned his MBA from Notre Dame in 2005 and is a senior financial analyst for the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan.

Kishana Burnett-Rogers, BS Marketing, 2003, recently accepted a position as market supervisor for the Indianapolis east district with ACNielsen Market Research. Burnett-Rogers also has been appointed the national vice president for the midwest province of Phi Gamma Nu national professional business fraternity.

Joseph Schroeder, BS Accounting, 2003, recently received the Wlajah Watt Sells award for placing in the top ten of all 2004 Indiana CPA exam candidates.

Charles Shaver, MBA, 1991, retired from the U.S. Army after more than 27 years of service. Shaver, who lives in Virginia Beach, Virginia, also was awarded the Legion of Merit.

Xingjian Jack Xue, MBA, 2005, is the application architect for the department of information technology at Conseco Services LLC in Carmel.

Name _____

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