

The Rohrer Review

A Publication of the William G. Rohrer College of Business

Experience Personal Learning. Experience Your Future.

Students Help Organization Take on Bullies

In an era when heart-wrenching tales of bullying dominate national headlines, Gail Murphy knows all too well the pain it can cause.

Her 12-year-old has withstood the taunts of classmates for years, but when bullies continued to torment him as they exited a school anti-bullying seminar, it was the last straw.

"I thought: 'What would it take to keep these kids from bothering my son?'" Murphy said. "I realized that the answer isn't the same for any given student. Students are motivated by different things."

Galvanized into action, Murphy created Clique In, an antibullying incentive program. "In a nutshell, the purpose of the program is to diminish bullying and provide a safe place for kids to become extraordinary," said Murphy, a veteran attorney. The goal of her company is to help schools create a positive environment

through incentive programs.

Murphy turned to students in the Rohrer College of Business to help her market the Mt. Laurel-based company.

Students will develop marketing materials for the business, research penetration strategies to get the program into schools and create a social media presence on Facebook and LinkedIn social networking sites, said their professor, Dr. Steven Phelan, Rohrer Endowed Chair and executive director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Murphy is grateful for their assistance. "My background is in law, not marketing, and because we're a nonprofit, it's a lot to do on our own," she said. "I was really blown away by the students. They were so receptive and well prepared and had really great ideas."

While assisting their client, students will develop real-world skills in marketing a

small organization, Phelan said. "There is a lot that cannot be learned from textbooks in terms of the trials of delivering a project on time and budget," he said. "We try to encourage our students to think of entrepreneurship in broader terms than just high-growth businesses, and Gail's case is a classic example of that."

M.B.A. Program Tops the Region in Growth

Last fall, the M.B.A. program at the Rohrer College of Business soared to the top of the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* list for enrollment growth among M.B.A. programs in the region. The program showed an impressive 81-percent growth from 2008-09 to 2009-10.

"In a relatively short time, the program has doubled in size," said James Jordan, who joined the staff in January 2010 as the program's director. "It puts us at the forefront regarding how quickly we're expanding, and it shows we're attracting a lot of students to the program. At the same time, we are becoming more selective in terms of admissions."

A number of factors contributed to this growth, said Dr. Robert Lynch, professor emeritus of management. "These included offering off-campus courses and heavily advertising the program in Gloucester County and the counties surrounding the College," Lynch said.

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Students **Ernest Holtzheimer**, **Valori Ferrigno** and **Hollie Butler** (left to right) share marketing strategies with **Gail Murphy** (standing).



New Investment Course Yields High Returns

Rohrer College of Business undergraduate students are likely to bank on hefty dividends this semester as they watch their hand-picked investments ride the tumultuous ups and downs of the stock market.

Through a portfolio management course that began this spring, students are gaining real-life experience through a new student-managed investment fund, enabling them to invest actual money and learn about security research, asset valuation, asset allocation and portfolio management.



Dr. Jia Wang (standing) helps **Adam Lefkowitz**, **Kristen Nobile** and **Anthony Cinelli** (left to right) research investments.

“This is a wonderful hands-on experience for our students,” said Dr. Gulser Meric, professor of finance and the John B. Campbell Professorial Chair. “We are very fortunate that the Rohrer Foundation supported this activity for us.”

Students are working in 10 groups, with each group analyzing and choosing stocks for the sector designated for its group. The class has chosen 20 to 30 stocks from among thousands of investments and determined asset allocation.

“Our sector managers follow their sector closely,” said Dr. Jia Wang, assistant professor of finance. “They identify investment candidates and pitch the stock to the class. Sometimes there might be intense debate. Then the class votes on the investment. Our economy analysts update the class on U.S. and global economic conditions.”

Students have responded enthusiastically to the challenge. “The students are excited, and they are coming to our offices to explain what they are doing and what they are finding,” Meric said.

To further enhance students’ learning experience, a new financial trading lab is slated to open at the College in September 2011.

As well as providing real-world experiences students can share during job interviews, the course yields a range of other assets. “We think it’s going to develop students’ oral and written communication skills, analytical skills, critical thinking ability, international orientation, interpersonal skills and business ethics,” Wang said.

Professors and Students Join Forces in Research

Although students can count on their professors to supply a wealth of knowledge and expertise, often professors engaged in research also can benefit from their students’ skills.

Since the fall semester, Dr. George Romeo, professor of accounting, has been working with senior Laura Bennett, an undergraduate accounting major from Williamstown, on research exploring the wide range of accounting certifications.

“When I first decided on accounting as a major, I knew of only public accounting and corporate accounting, never realizing that there were specialties within the profession,” said Bennett, a married mother of three and partner in an accounting software consulting firm. “Accountants have the opportunity to practice ‘general’ accounting or hone their skills within a specialty, such as auditing, forensics or tax, among others.”

Bennett and Romeo soon found, however, that few people are aware of the spectrum of opportunities in the field. “We surveyed the senior accounting students, and a lot of them didn’t realize the certifications that are available,” Romeo said. “We listed 26 certifications, and students knew about no more than five or six, so there’s a lot of work that needs to be done.”

Their paper, “A History of Accounting Designations in the United States from James Bennett to the 21st Century,” was accepted for presentation at the Academy of Accounting Historians 2011 Research Conference, which will be held in June at the University of Maryland. They also plan to present or publish their research in other forums.

The collaboration between students and professors can be a win-win situation for both. Bennett explained that, although she has published software manuals, this was a new experience for her. “It certainly will look excellent on my resume in applying to graduate schools,” she said.

Romeo credited Bennett for helping him move his research forward. “I’m very happy with the work Laura is doing, and I’m hoping other students consider this, particularly as they start their junior year,” he said.

Student **Laura Bennett** and **Dr. George Romeo** collaborate on research exploring the range of accounting certifications.



Students Gain Edge Through College Events

Many events at the Rohrer College of Business help students build the skill set and knowledge base they will need in the future. Two of these events are the annual Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Conference and the Business Plan Competition.

The third annual PRME Conference on April 1 featured executive keynote speaker Jeffrey Hollender, co-founder and former president and chief executive officer of Seventh Generation, and academic keynote speaker Dr. Susan Jackson, distinguished professor at Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations. The event also highlighted an update from Lisle Ferreira, manager, PRME Secretariat, United Nations Global Compact Office, and presented a range of other experts.

A primary goal of the event is to transform the culture of the University so that every student who graduates with a Rowan business degree has a very clear understanding of sustainability, said Dr. Dilip Mirchandani, coordinator of the PRME Conference and chair of the Department

of Management and Entrepreneurship. “Sustainability is an ongoing journey, and we need to transform our culture so our students really understand and get it and are prepared when they leave here,” he said.

Another important occasion is the final round of the yearlong Business Plan Competition. This year’s event, held on April 2, enabled budding entrepreneurs to present their plans to a panel of judges, competing for prizes ranging from \$500 to \$5,000.

The competition offers several benefits, including workshops teaching entrepreneurs to map out their ideas, write business plans and develop materials they can present to prospective investors, marketing specialists and others who can help them achieve their goals, said Dr. Linda Ross, professor of management.

This year, contestants had the opportunity to consult Venture-Preneurs. “Students talk with these specialists, who answer some of their questions and give them feedback in [a] one-on-one consultation,” Ross said.

The event helps new entrepreneurs take that first critical step. “We’re giving them

that launch pad, that public exposure that often allows a business to attract assistance and customers,” Ross said.



Lisle Ferreira, manager, PRME Secretariat, United Nations Global Compact Office, speaks at PRME Conference.

Students Offer Input to Nonprofit Organizations

M.B.A. students are capturing an exclusive view of the intricacies of operating nonprofit organizations by taking seats on nonprofit boards.

Student Rob Hess, '97, a Glassboro resident, has been serving on the board of the South Jersey Technology Park at Rowan University since the fall semester. Although he spends much of that time listening and absorbing, he explained that he also offers input on the environmental impact of the park because he volunteers for a nonprofit organization that monitors a nearby nature trail.

“By having students serve on the board, we get their perspective on how we’re going to be developing the land here,” said Sarah Piddington, interim director of the South Jersey Technology Park.

M.B.A. students will continue to partner with nonprofit organizations in the future through this new program, gaining numerous

benefits. “Students are contributing to real-world organizations while building their resumes,” said James Jordan, director of the M.B.A. program. “In addition, they’re gaining hands-on experience that complements what they’re learning in the classroom.”

Hess appreciates the insights he has

acquired. “It connects me to different levels of business that I’m normally not exposed to in my job,” said Hess, who is a software developer for Beringer Associates Inc. in Pennsauken.

Organizations also benefit from students’ input. “Students have very specific business-related training from the M.B.A. program that they can bring to the board, and the board may not necessarily have that skill set available,” Jordan said.

Although this aspect of the M.B.A. program is new, Jordan anticipates students may be able to provide additional services to nonprofit organizations. “They may be able to bring to the table a number of things, such as financial analysis or a look at how the organization markets itself,” he said.

Sarah Piddington shares plans for the South Jersey Technology Park with **Rob Hess**.



Alum's Path Reveals Keys to Success

When marketing major Ed Albert graduated from Rowan University in 1995, he envisioned a future working with growing companies. However, he soon found out life doesn't always turn out the way you expect.

Working to achieve his goal, he earned an M.B.A. from the University of Maryland and landed positions with companies such as Marriott International Inc., Ernst & Young and Fortress Investment Group.

His real potential emerged when Ernst & Young promoted him to a restructuring position, where he worked with distressed companies. "I thought I was an entrepreneur, and it turned out that I was much better at fixing broken things than I am at creating things," Albert said.

Drawn by Albert's expertise in this arena, Macquarie Capital USA in New York City hired him as managing director in 2009 to head up its New York restructuring division.

In retrospect, clues to Albert's business acumen were evident during his college years. Although he admitted that he

took little interest in his high school studies, he wholeheartedly dove into his business courses at Rowan. He also enjoyed a range of extracurricular activities, joining a fraternity, participating in student government and working in the Dean of Students' Office. "Once I started taking classes in the business school, I became engaged in learning and I became an 'A' student," he said. (However, meeting his future wife, education major Stephanie Goldsmith, '95, was his most important Rowan accomplishment, he said.)

During the last decade, the Chevy Chase, Md., resident has had a hand in the restructurings of many major American corporations, including cases involving US Airways, Adelphia Communications Corp., Delta Air Lines and General Growth Properties Inc.

The lessons he learned through his circuitous career path are worth noting by today's business students. "There are certainly times when focus is important, but being opportunistic and flexible has served me very well," he said.



Ed Albert, '95



Message From the Dean

I am pleased to welcome you to the spring 2011 issue of the *Rohrer Review*, offering a glimpse of many exciting accomplishments since our last issue.

After two years of research and deliberation, the College adopted its tagline: **Experience Personal Learning. Experience Your Future.** This phrase encapsulates our primary stakeholders' collective credo of what we were, what we are and what we would like to be, helping us brand the College as a distinctive business institution in the region.

The College continues to achieve distinction in other respects. Our M.B.A. program has enjoyed an 81-percent growth in enrollment since 2008-09. This is the largest growth among M.B.A. programs in the Delaware Valley according to the *Philadelphia Business Journal*.

Our committed faculty members build successful programs with the goal of making a difference in the region. In this issue, senior faculty members reminisce about shaping the entrepreneurship program, which expanded to embrace the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

Engaging students in vital research is another important element. Students gain hands-on experience while supporting area businesses, as you will learn when you read about students who are helping an organization take on bullies. You also will read the story of a senior accounting professor who is guiding a student to complete research on accounting certifications.

In addition, you will discover how our new student-managed investment fund is strengthening our niche in active learning. Our students are "investing" real money to gain valuable learning experience. In another vein, our M.B.A. students are serving on nonprofit boards to develop important boardroom skills while providing independent perspectives. Furthermore, we hold events such as the Principles for Responsible Management Education Conference and Business Plan Competition to prepare our students for their future professions.

We have graduated more than 9,000 alumni, whom we would like to see stay connected, remain involved and give back to the College of Business. The story of an exceptional alumnus is a compelling example of his deep ties to the College.

As you will find as you read this newsletter, the "happenings" at the Rohrer College of Business are anything but usual. Thanks to the generosity of our friends, alumni and supporters, we can bring these unique and enriching activities to our students. Your support enables us to offer a business education that is pragmatic in content and relevant in context. I hope you will continue your support by visiting www.rufoundation.org today and designating your gift to the Rohrer College of Business.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nirnanjan Pati".

Nirnanjan Pati, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor of Management & Entrepreneurship

Professors Recall the Early Years of Program

In the heart of a deep recession, new ideas for novel businesses continue to sprout every day in the Rohrer College of Business.

Entrepreneurship becomes particularly critical in a downturn, when people may be forced to leave their jobs. “This kind of period of time is when many, many new businesses typically get started. It’s an outstanding time to start a business,” said Dr. Linda Ross, Rowan professor of management.



Dr. Linda Ross and **Kimble Byrd** help budding entrepreneurs prepare business plans.

For almost a decade, the College has helped new businesses take root through its entrepreneurship major and the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. Established through a grant from the William G. Rohrer Charitable Foundation, this program promotes entrepreneurship initiatives while fueling economic growth in the region.

At the outset, the College named Dr. Mark Weaver as the first Professorial Chair in Entrepreneurial Studies. Weaver turned to Ross and Kimble Byrd, professor of management, to help develop the program.

Entrepreneurship has never been more important. “As you look at business as it’s conducted at this point in time, there’s been a paradigm shift, moving toward smaller, more agile organizations from the larger multinational corporations that existed before,” Byrd said.

The Rohrer program offers unique resources. “There aren’t many majors in entrepreneurship in the state of New Jersey or the region,” Ross said. “What we did is create a new curriculum that was specifically aimed at business startups.”

Ross seeks to inspire students. “I’m looking for people who have a dream or vision, and I want to help enable them to realize that vision by providing them with the know-how and introducing them to people who can help them get where they want to go,” she said.

In the future, professors hope to offer entrepreneurship minors to students in other majors, introduce these concepts to high school students and engage alumni. “Alumni are not necessarily going to develop new ventures at the beginning of their post-academic lives, but at some point, if they’re interested in doing that, this is the place for them to learn how to launch,” Byrd said.

Company Helps Advance Incubator Businesses

Startup companies in the Rohrer College of Business Incubator at the South Jersey Technology Park are capitalizing on a new resource to help them master the essentials of growing their businesses.

The Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE) has contracted with Washington Township-based Incutate LLC, an offshoot of Lauletta Birnbaum LLC, a law firm serving the needs of technology companies throughout the country. Incutate will provide mentoring, presentations by guest speakers, roundtable discussions and support from a team of professionals to Incubator clients and area businesses.

Frank Lauletta, a New Jersey native who served as general counsel for a Silicon Valley startup, founded Incutate to bring this expertise to the area.

“We’re not downtown, we’re not in Center City, we’re not in Silicon Valley,” said Dr. Steven Phelan, Rohrer Endowed Chair and CIE executive director. “Often these places are hubs of expertise and knowledge on how to take your company to the next level and grow it quickly. It’s valuable to be able to tap into the expertise of someone who’s worked in that environment and can demonstrate to our companies how fast they need to move and bring them the knowledge they need to take on the world.”

This is particularly beneficial in the current economy. “Startups have very limited resources, so they can’t afford to keep making mistakes and making the wrong moves,” Phelan said. “They may get only one shot at making it work the right way, and we want to make sure they get that best opportunity.”

Jeff Botbyl, president and chief executive officer of Provonix, an Incubator company providing data-related services for pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device clinical trials, welcomed this resource. “It’s really helping me figure out what our long-term plan is for our business and the steps we need to take to get there,” he said.

Phelan invites area companies to contact him at phelan@rowan.edu to learn more about becoming a potential client.



Marc Kramer, executive director, Pennsylvania Investors Forum, speaks at an Incutate-sponsored event.



In April, M.B.A. students, alumni and faculty gathered at The Mansion on Main Street in Voorhees for the 2011 M.B.A. Networking Event. Participants included (left to right) alumna **Varuni Singh**, who earned her M.B.A. in management in 2010; **Jim Jordan**, M.B.A. director; guest speaker **Dr. Ninfa Saunders**, president and chief operating officer, Virtua; and **Dr. Niranjan Pati**, dean of the Rohrer College of Business.



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M.B.A. Program Tops Region in Growth

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“The major change, however, was when we began to allow students to earn their complete MBA online.” Students also enjoy the convenience of courses in Cherry Hill and at the South Jersey Technology Park.

“We try to be as flexible as possible with our students and accommodate their existing career obligations,” said Edward Schoen, professor of management and former dean of the College. “I think southern New Jersey is an attractive location for many of our students.”

The College’s certificate programs also offer students more variety. “The Certificate of Graduate Study in Business is an avenue for people to earn a graduate business credential,” Jordan said. “If they decide after a few courses that they don’t want to go through the entire program, they still have earned a certificate they can use in the job market.”

The College also offers a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study and a Certificate of Graduate Study in Management Information Systems.

The M.B.A. program offers students a package of attractive options. “It caters to students’ needs in every respect,” Lynch said.



James Jordan plans for future growth of the College’s M.B.A. program.

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