

The SBM Newsletter

From Peter

How time flies! It's now mid-October, half-way through the semester. This has been one of the most busy periods for me. From what I see (all the Faculty/School and subject area meetings, special orientation sessions, DAC meetings, hiring interviews, paper presentations, mid-term exams, search committee activities, etc), we are clearly into a very exciting year. I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their participation and hard work.

We have been occupied by planning activities on the various aspects of our new Business building — not only the Dean and the Faculty of Business Directors, but also the members of the faculty/staff sub-committees. The establishment of these sub-committees is to ensure faculty/staff input. A number of sub-committee meetings, with lively discussions, were held. Two faculty-wide town halls were held with more to come. As well, I understand the work of the various sub-committees will continue.

This year's University Fair was held on September 24th, 25th and 26th. Thousands of high school students and their parents/friends dropped by. As usual, Ryerson had the busiest booth at the Fair. I must thank all the faculty volunteers for helping out.

More to report in the next issue.

Student Services by the Numbers



by Dr. Maurice J. Mazerolle

Greetings to everyone and I hope that this term is going well so far. I can tell you that it has been very busy both for me and the office of Student Affairs. There have been a number of changes that have taken place since the start of my term as Associate Director of Student Affairs. The first major change is that this office is no longer handling the International Student Exchange Program. This is currently being managed by Dr. Dale Carl who will be ably assisted by Kristy Holzworth at least for this next year. It is anticipated that this program will eventually become faculty wide.

As for the activities that have occupied my time as related to this office, I have been discovering that there is definitely a seasonality to this position. For example, August and early September were incredibly busy deal-

ing with suspended students who are trying to get reinstated back into the B.Comm in SBM. An interesting observation is that there seems to be an increasing number of students who have been suspended from the engineering program who now want to get into our program. Part of the reason that we have been so busy with these students is because of a change in the suspend policy here at Ryerson that now allows suspended students to take up to two courses for credit while on suspension. This requires that each student meet with me to review their academic history, the reasons for suspension,

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Student Services by the Numbers

create a plan for their reinstatement back into our program and sign a sort of contract in which they commit to obtaining at least a B in one course and a C in the other in order to be considered for reinstatement. It should be noted that the grades, achieved for any credits obtained during this period of suspension, do not get factored into their GPA. But on the more positive front, this office also deals with student awards which this year will be held on November 25th in the Commons and which I would encourage any faculty interested in attending and on presenting to please let me or Joanne DiBratto know so we can schedule it. This year we have more awards to give out than ever, over 70, and in particular we have Joey and Toby Tannenbaum to thank for not only increasing the number but also the value of the awards that are available for our students. It is an amazing night and it really is difficult to remain a cynic when you see and hear about our students' accomplishments.

To give you some indication of the number of students that we are dealing with, consider the following. Currently there are 3140 full time students in SBM, and of these, 200 are conditional, 175 are probationary, 91 suspended and 5 withdrawn. While we have had the practice of scheduling mandatory workshops for our probationary students, we are for the first time going to offer a workshop for our conditional students on October 20th. It is our hope to begin to reach out to students who may be at some risk of getting into trouble

academically and making them aware of the resources that are available to them, and to suggest that now is the time to take advantage of this. I should also tell you that I will be undertaking a more comprehensive examination of the data that we have on our student population especially those who end up on some academic difficulty and I hope to be able to report on the preliminary findings in the near future.

Speaking of services, we now have a Student Help Centre that is operating in BUS 208. As many of you know, our students often get into trouble in dealing with the many quantitative courses that are required in our program. In order to assist them, SBM has established a Student Help Centre that is staffed with teaching assistants from Accounting, Statistics, Economics and Finance. It is available on a drop-in basis and there is a schedule that allows for almost all of our students to be able to access it. I want to thank Peter Luk for his support of this initiative, but I really want to thank Steve Joyce who has just graduated from our program, but who was the head Finance teaching assistant, for his perseverance in making this happen. So that is it for now, although I must say that running the BUS100 course with 800 students in the Ryerson Theatre has been interesting. I will have more to say about that in a future edition of the Newsletter.

Faculty News

Dr. Vanessa Magness had a very busy and productive spring/summer. Her paper "Strategic Posture, Economic Performance and Environmental Disclosure: an Empirical Test of Legitimacy Theory" was presented in 2003 to the Canadian Academic Accountants Association (CAAA), and to the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada (ASAC) where it won best paper award. This paper is currently under review for the *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*. In 2004 she presented "The Impact of Financial Reporting Regulation on Corporate Environmental Disclosure" to both the CAAA and ASAC. This paper was also presented to the *International Association of Accounting Educators and Researchers* by Dr Kate Bewley (co-author). A partially completed paper "When Trees Become Stakeholders" was also presented this year to ASAC. Part of this working paper was spun off into a standalone article and is currently being reviewed by editors of *Accounting and the Public Interest*. This paper was also used to support a successful grant application to *The Centre for Accounting Ethics*. "Teaching Large Classes" was published just recently in *Canadian Accounting Education and Research News*. Finally, her case "The Portfolio Review Team", which asks students to consider the effects of a series of accounting policy choices on alternative users of financial statements, was presented at ASAC this year, and is scheduled to be published in *Business Essentials* in 2005.

Faculty News

Dr. George Gekas presented the following 2004 conference papers:

1. "Work is not a place: the virtual office, working from home". Promoting new forms of work organization and other cooperative arrangements for competitiveness and employability Conference. University of Athens, Athens, Greece, January 2004.
2. "Performance Indicators for Municipal Performance", ASAC 2004 Conference, Quebec City, Quebec, June 2004.
3. "Municipal Bench Marking, Key Factors Influencing Municipal Performance". Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) Conference, Athens, Greece, June 2004.

Charrette 2004

"Designing Learning Environments That Work"
by Joy Vertes and Genevieve Farrell

Nine students from the Faculty of Business participated in the Charrette 2004: "Designing Learning Environments That Work" hosted by the Faculty of Community Services during the weekend of February 6th, 7th and 8th. The students were Allison Ide, Livia Wang, Tek Holida, Jim Nursey, Keri DeCoste, Jeff Lipinski, Darren Bonnick, Janka Smotlak and Nida Kazmi. They were joined by students from areas such as Nursing, Social Work, Early Childhood

Education, Occupational Health and Engineering, making this a truly interdisciplinary learning experience.

This year's event was organized by Cathy McCarthy, Coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program. Genevieve Farrell, Gabor Forgacs and Joy Vertes represented the Faculty of Business on the planning committee and were involved in the event. We would like to thank the Dean, Tom Knowlton, for his generous contribution which greatly facilitated the running of this marvelous learning experience. Professor Ian Sakinofsky joined the audience on the Sunday to see the final presentations. Director Judy Britnell represented the Teaching and Learning Office.

The topic this year was "Designing Learning Environments that Work!" The focus was on Ryerson's learning environments. The students were divided into 5 interdisciplinary teams that were each given an in-depth topic to research: "Meeting Different Teaching and Learning Styles"; "Utilizing Technology in the Classroom"; "Designing the Social Environment" and "Designing the Physical Environment". The final team integrated the research from the other four groups into one composite program. Presentations from Dr. Lennie Scott-Webber (Chair, Interior Design), Dr. Bill Glassman (Psychology) and Dr.

Gosha Zywno (Engineering) kicked off the event.

The students were given a package of items including reference materials. On Friday night, after the presentations, the groups met, set goals, divided tasks and began their intensive weekend of collaboration, team building, conflict resolution and research to develop their short and long term creative strategies to address their team's particular problem.

On Sunday, after a rehearsal, the groups presented their findings in innovative, fun, interactive fashions!! Each team was given immediate feedback by the Jurors (Wendy Freeman, Digital Media Projects; Betty Rigler, Student Programs; Lennie Scott-Webber, Interior Design and Suanne Kelman, Journalism). Also present were the graders, Lawrence Altros, Urban and Regional Planning; Sue Wilson, Associate Dean, Faculty of Community Services; Gabor Forgacs of Hospitality and Tourism; and Gosha Zywno of Engineering.

The students found the Charrette an interesting and challenging experience. Some comments included: "I really liked the effectiveness of having knowledge from different disciplines to achieve a task." "This was a much more fulfilling experience than writing an essay." "Our topics were of deep interest to me." "I will definitely consider that different backgrounds do in fact impact a group situation." "I liked the fact that I got to work with students from completely different backgrounds because

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Internship Reflections

by Tina West



I would venture a guess that most students, staff and faculty within the School of Business Management have at least heard of the Internship Program. There are signs in the elevators, posters in the lobby and on the 7th floor, and students receive the occasional e-mail notifying them of information sessions and other related news. What some students may not know is just what this Program can offer them.

We encourage SBM students who maintain a minimum CGPA of 3.0 and who demonstrate the dedication and initiative to be proactive in their personal and professional development to register early in their academic studies — ideally before the end of their second year. This past year, we carefully screened and registered approximately 120 students from all seven majors through the Internship Program. Of these, 43 students received placements as a direct result of referrals through the Program during the 2003-04 academic year. Many of the remaining students benefited indirectly by having an opportunity to improve their resume and cover letter writing

skills, practice interview techniques and learn additional job search strategies, thereby enabling them to land placements through other sources.

Our Program is an informal one at this point. The work placements don't count towards a student's degree completion requirement and there's no guarantee of a placement for every registered intern. However, those students who do find a match to their academic and career interests benefit in ways that go far beyond 'another entry for the resume'. Rather than describe their experiences myself, I asked a few of this past year's interns to share their thoughts about the placement they held. Here's a snapshot of the good, the bad and the ugly...

Marlene Lagoa, Marketing Major
Internship — Triathlon Canada (May-August)

As an intern I was assigned to junior administrative tasks, which is to be expected — as before I started, the office manager with two degrees and a masters was doing it himself!

I got exposure to the not-for-profit sector and a look into the difficulty faced by amateur sports organizations, as well in the media management area, which was unexpected but came as a pleasant surprise.

I really enjoyed my internship, and have raced in my first triathlon! Right now I am looking to developing a triathlon club at Ryerson!

Issa Guindo, Economics & Management Science Major

Throughout my training with The Strategic Planning Group this past summer, I familiarized myself with the "TSPG way" by reviewing old projects. My marketing and analytical skills were put to the test by the challenging projects assigned to me. Partners in the firm also provided mentorship during my internship and gave me the opportunity to accompany them on two business trips. Some of the valuable lessons learned from my internship experience this summer include:

Many organizations, regardless of size, are internally highly dysfunctional. Business politics is often a major contributor to the company's inability to meet performance targets.

Many organizations are designed with functional silos. This organizational structure often poses significant challenges when developing integrated organizational-wide strategies

Elizabeth Elias, Finance Major

For 16 months, I was working as Cost Analyst in the Centralized Finance Department at Celestica. During my placement, I faced many challenges, which have definitely helped me grow as an employee and individual. During the first month on board, I was given no training on how to perform my job. I felt lost and was constantly having to ask others in my team questions to try and figure out what to do. Others in my team were also experiencing difficulties at the time because SAP was just installed,

Internship Reflections

and many did not understand how to use the system to perform their daily job. Additionally, there was significant turnover within the department during my placement. The morale was very low and it was, during many times, discouraging to be working around so many people that were looking to leave the company because they were that unhappy. Additionally, I was frustrated many times because I was in a constant battle to receive information from other teams and departments on a timely basis to perform a lot of my daily tasks. There was little support from management and a lot of the issues, which I raised, went unattended.

However, there were many positive things that I got from the internship. My immediate team was very supportive and I developed extremely good working relationships and friendships with them. I was able to improve on my written and oral communication skills because I constantly had to give mini presentations and explanations to co-workers and management. Furthermore, I learned how to use many new software programs, such as SAP and Khalix. Finally, through this internship I am better able now to assess the career path I want to head down, and really decide what area of finance I want to get into.

Neal Christou, Accounting Major

This past summer I held a placement at KPMG in the CA Summer Student Internship Program. The program ran from May to August and involved a two-month rotation in a

specialty practice and in assurance services. I was given the opportunity to work in US Corporate Tax and Owner-Managed Business Assurance.

The major highlights of my summer included, training in Muskoka, building strong bonds with the other students and working alongside experienced professionals in the public practice sector. However, my greatest challenge was conducting interviews with senior members of the client's staff, which initially was a little intimidating.

I worked as a member of a team on every engagement. Thus, adapting to the unique personalities of the different seniors and team members that I worked with was of extreme importance. The ability to work efficiently and to communicate effectively in a team is an essential element to the nature of the firm and industry. This, for me, represented the greatest learning outcome of the summer.

Cindy DiDiodato, Human Resources Major

Receiving experience in my field for the first time has given me confidence in my future goals and an overall understanding of what I can expect once I graduate from my program. Working at Toronto's Children's Aid Society has been great! The staff was friendly, knowledgeable and eager to help me gain as much experience in my field as possible. I couldn't have asked for a better job than this one!

Sue Cheung, Marketing Major

I worked at small company called The Marketing Clinic from June-August 2004. I was a Marketing Assistant and dealt with a variety of responsibilities varying from advertising scheduling to project management to basic administrative tasks. At the beginning it was absolutely amazing, however as time passed, it wasn't all I originally thought it to be. Perhaps it was the frustrations associated with a start-up business, however I found the company to be somewhat disorganized and much of my time spent there was very stressful. At one point I was ready to quit, but I'm glad I didn't. That is something that has given me great confidence. The biggest challenge was not taking other people's emotions & frustrations to heart and adapting to different personality styles. Ultimately, this has been an excellent, excellent learning experience and I have absolutely no regrets! Thank you, Tina & Zena, for all your help and support. Thanks also to the wonderful people at Weave Communications, who shared the same office space, for being so welcoming and sweet.



Charrette 2004 *continued*

because this is something that we never get to do.” “Wow, I learned a lot! I learned how to work together and accommodate others from very diverse areas of study. Along with time management and strict time lines!” And the usual, “Thanks, lunch was great!”

If there are any questions regarding involvement in the Charrette in the future, please contact **Joy Vertes** at ext. 6735, **Gabor Forgacs** at ext. 6693, **Genevieve Farrell** at ext. 6328, or **Cathy McCarthy** at ext. 6226, for further information.

REMINDERS

FALL CONVOCATION:

Wednesday, October 20, 2004

at 2:30 p.m.

AWARDS NIGHT:

Thursday, November 25, 2004

In memoriam

Dr. Konstanty Eckhardt, Professor Emeritus SBM, passed away last month in Poznan, Poland.

He taught in the QMS Area for several years before retiring in 1992.

A great teacher and colleague, he was well-liked by all.

The School of Business Management Newsletter

Editor: Antoinette Andrade

Director of the School of Business Management:
Dr. Peter Luk

Printed by: Claudio Tesi
Duplicating Services, Business Building

SBM Mailing Address:
350 Victoria Street,
Toronto, M5B 2K3
Location: 285 Victoria Street,
Toronto, M5B 1W1

Enquiries: 416 979 5000 x 6710
Fax: 416 979 5266
E-mail: aandrade@ryerson.ca
The Newsletter Homepage:
www.ryerson.ca/business

