Clark celebrates innovative learning

Sigel Center dedicated

Clark University, the Graduate School of Management (GSOM) and dozens of admiring business leaders, family and friends celebrated Mort '51 and Vivian Sigel's long-time commitment to Clark University on Friday, Nov. 21, 2003 by dedicating the new GSOM Interactive Learning Center in their honor. The Sigels' support has been continuous since Mort graduated from Clark with a degree in business. He has served two terms as a University trustee (1977-87, 1991-99) and co-chaired the University's Centennial Campaign and the Campaign for the New Century. He has also served as general chairman of the Alumni Association and the Clark Fund. In recognition of his decades of tireless leadership, Mort was the recipient of the Clark Alumni Association's Distinguished Service Award in 2001.

Mort continues his active support of Clark as an Honorary Trustee and provides leadership and counsel to President John Bassett and GSOM Dean Edward Ottensmeyer as chair of GSOM's Advisory Council. Throughout his distinguished career, as founder of Millbrook Distribution Services and, most recently, president and CEO of Boston-based Tekscan, Inc., Mort has personified the creative and ethical business leader that Clark strives to develop.

"I've seen the pace of business and the demand for increasingly sophisticated business communication and information sharing explode during my 50 years in business," said Sigel. "Vivian and I are pleased to provide an opportunity to ensure that these new technologies are available to Clark M.B.A. students to help them compete successfully in today's challenging business environment."

In his opening remarks, President Bassett noted that "The Sigels represent one of the outstanding families of the Clark community. In completing this dedication, we are acknowledging the kind of substantive contribution that will make a tremendous difference in the future of GSOM and Clark University."

The Mort and Vivian Sigel Interactive Learning Center offers students and faculty access to electronic library resources, virtual classrooms and video-conferencing on a dedicated network.

"What we're celebrating here today is truly what Clark represents in its finest tradition. Graduates of the school, who benefited from the school, and then committed themselves through their time, effort, and fortune to make a difference," said Perry Pero, Clark University trustee and a member of GSOM's Advisory Council.

"The creation of this interactive learning center has been a top priority for GSOM. This is a major accomplishment that brings state-of-the-art technology and a model classroom to the campus. Mort Sigel's support of GSOM over the last 20 years is unmatched. Naming this room in honor of Mort and Vivian recognizes their long-standing generosity in a tangible way," said Dean Ottensmeyer.

New instructional technology enables GSOM to attract high-quality students and exposes future business leaders to the technologies and business practices that they need as they begin their careers. GSOM Professor Bill Mosher, Student Council President Paul Guertin and students already using the technology participated in the ceremony from Clark's Graduate Management Center in Framingham.

"The faculty at the school of management believes that teaching is enjoyable not only because what we teach is always changing, but the way we teach it, the technology of teaching, is also changing. Mort's generosity, the important new technology we see in this room, will continue to make teaching a pleasure. We thank him for making us more powerful teachers," said Professor Gary Chaison.

Photos by Frederick Peck
A Message from the Dean

We have so much to be proud of as GSOM begins its third decade. In this issue of Connect, you will read about many recent highlights. For example, our entering class of full-time M.B.A. students stands at an all-time high — 40 percent above target. Our grant from the Kauffman Foundation helped us provide extraordinary internship experiences for several students working with the region’s entrepreneurs. The Sigel Interactive Learning Center, dedicated in November 2003, has allowed our students to enjoy the benefits of video-conferencing. GSOM’s Advisory Council has three new members who bring their exceptional talents to further strengthen our strategic planning. The faculty’s record of scholarly achievement and classroom innovation continues to be strong. Professor Mary-Ellen Boyle’s work on business ethics, profiled in this issue, is one example of the impressive work of our faculty. These activities and accomplishments take on special importance because they support our fundamental educational mission — preparing outstanding leaders and managers for tomorrow’s organizations. Over and over, I hear from our graduates that their GSOM experience changed their lives. When I probe deeper, these former students tell me, first, that they learned new ways of seeing the world around them and, second, that they developed the confidence to take on major challenges.

These words about changing perspectives always remind me of the Edgar Allan Poe story, “Descent into the Maelstrom.” In it, two brothers on a fishing boat are being drawn into a massive ocean whirlpool. They are both terribly afraid. One brother is totally overcome by his fear, seeing only that the boat is doomed, but the second brother observes the workings of the whirlpool and begins to see possibilities for survival. He sees that long, irregular objects like the boat are indeed doomed, but that cylindrical objects like barrels swirl around and do not always sink to the bottom. He sees that the boat is doomed, but not necessarily him. He understands that he is not simply a sailor on a boat, but a seafarer who can do what it takes to survive in uncharted waters. He lashes himself to a barrel, leaps into the sea and is saved.

In similar, though less dramatic ways, people making business decisions can often benefit from a fresh perspective on the world swirling around them. Providing new ways of seeing the world, building basic analytical skills, developing confidence to challenge conventional wisdom and providing opportunities to hone creative leadership abilities are our most important challenges as educators. At GSOM, we take these challenges very seriously and, with your help, we will continue to meet them and to change lives in the process.

Your ideas are always welcome and your generous support is deeply appreciated. Please accept our best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2004!

Ed Ottensmeyer
eottensmeyer@clarku.edu

Changing perspectives and changing lives

Dean Edward J. Ottensmeyer
Full-time enrollment reaches new heights

Clark’s Graduate School of Management (GSOM) reached record enrollment numbers, welcoming 70 new full-time graduate students to its M.B.A. and M.S.F. degree programs in the fall.

“Based on our prior experience and market conditions, we expected to see 50 new students,” says Patricia Tollo, director of graduate admissions. “This increase of more than 40 percent over prior years confirms our growing visibility in both the U.S. and global markets since we saw increased enrollments in both areas.”

“We focused our communications on new GSOM initiatives while providing more intense follow-up with prospective students,” says Tollo. “We had exciting program development news to share, including GSOM receiving a Kauffman Foundation grant for the academic year 2003-2004. This grant allowed the school to provide new learning experiences for students, and to appoint Clark’s first Kauffman Entrepreneur-in-Residence, George Gendron, former Editor-in-Chief of Inc. Magazine.”

Global awareness continues strong

In 2003-2004, new graduate students come from 20 different countries, indicating a powerful awareness of Clark in the global market. The strength of the programs and the diversity of the student population is a key reason that students choose Clark.

“I found much information about Clark from alumni in Thailand,” says GSOM student Kate Nimitrapon of Thailand. “There are many Clark alumni in Thailand who I know found good jobs and career opportunities after earning their M.B.A. here. They continue to praise Clark’s curriculum.”

“The diversity of the program was one reason I chose Clark,” says GSOM student Allison Fredette. “Coming from three years of work experience at a global company, I have seen firsthand just how international the business marketplace operates in this day and age. In order to excel, I felt I needed an M.B.A. program that prepared me for conducting day-to-day business on a global scale. Part of that is being able to interact with people from different cultures and to understand how their values and surroundings influence the decisions they make.”

The GSOM admissions staff received high marks for making students feel comfortable in the Clark community. “They make you feel like a part of the community from the moment you are accepted,” says Fredette.

Moe Malik, a Pakistani and a graduate of Brown University, joined GSOM’s M.S.F. program in the fall. “I was immediately impressed by the qualifications of the faculty, both in terms of academic expertise and professional experience,” he says. “GSOM has consistently updated its curriculum to keep pace with current trends. I discovered that, in every aspect, GSOM is committed to shaping its students into high-caliber professionals.”

Alumni are encouraged to join the growing GSOM Network at www.clarku.edu/alumnicommunity.

2004 Alumni-elected Trustee Ballot  Please Vote

Three candidates are on this year’s ballot:

• Chandler Bailey ’72;
• Margot Nones M.B.A. ’83;
• Lee Plave ’80.

Please send in your vote by April 15.

Or vote online at www.clarku.edu/trusteeballot.
Building an ethical culture

When it comes to business ethics, GSOM Professor Mary-Ellen Boyle is convinced that it takes more than just one bad apple to spoil the bunch. “What I try to help people understand is that it’s not just the bad apple, but also a bad barrel,” Boyle says. When trying to understand why good people make bad decisions, she explains, the key is to look beyond the individual to the organizational structures that allow such ethical quagmires to develop.

“It’s usually an organizational phenomenon,” she says.

An organizational sociologist, Boyle studies how organizations function and change. She examines business ethics through this lens and has found, like many other researchers, that ethics problems stem from the climate. Organizations without trust, in which people are managed by fear, she explains, create the perfect climate for ethical mistakes.

“We all have a strong sense of what’s right and what’s wrong, but sometimes we’re flummoxed by our environment,” Boyle says.

Likewise, she notes, the research also shows that good business ethics stem from empowering employees to act. “The more you treat people like adults and they are assured that they won’t be punished for giving the boss bad news, the more people will do the right thing,” Boyle says.

Boyle teaches these principles to both undergraduates and M.B.A. students at Clark. While a new focus within some programs, Clark’s GSOM has always included ethics as part of its core curriculum. In her undergraduate course, “Business Ethics,” Boyle focuses on exposing students to the kinds of issues they will face as managers. Because undergraduates have very limited work experience, Boyle tries to teach them as much as possible about the ethics issues in different industries and in different countries.

Boyle also requires her undergraduates to complete a service-learning project in the Worcester community. Teaching students citizenship is a core mission of the University, and Boyle believes that teaching future managers the value of giving back to the community is an important component of any business ethics curriculum.

“A nd the students love doing something real, that has an impact,” she says.

Her M.B.A. students study the broader topic of business and society from internal and external perspectives. They write a case study analyzing an ethics situation they have faced personally in the workplace. Boyle says this gives her graduate students the opportunity to examine their own values and how those values will impact their work as managers. Boyle also has her M.B.A. students research three companies that are good public citizens around a particular societal issue, such as AIDS, breast cancer or public education. While the news is filled with examples of poor business ethics, Boyle uses this exercise to reinforce the fact that there are many more organizations that follow ethical business practices internally and are good public citizens.

“For every bad story we hear, there are thousands of successful businesses out there making the world a better place,” Boyle says.

Boyle also hopes to broaden her M.B.A. students’ understanding of business ethics to a system-wide view. She wants them to think about how their decisions will impact their employees, coworkers, the organization as a whole, the community and society, and to learn to consult their stakeholders on such decisions.

“Whether they’re deciding whether to blow the whistle on an organization, or where to build the next factory, they shouldn’t be doing it alone. They should engage,” she says.

Boyle, who is in her fifth year as a full-time professor at GSOM, comes to business ethics with a wealth of real-world experience. She was a high-school teacher for a few years before working with several state and federal agencies, and was a manager in the insurance industry. She believes this enhances her teaching because her students respond to her practical knowledge. Boyle is currently studying corporate citizenship among higher education institutions and how they live up to their responsibility to their communities, as well as the challenges of implementing ethics programs in different countries.

Alumni Notes: Stay Connected to Clark - Contact us at www.clarku.edu/mba

Send us your news

Lisa Beittel M.B.A. ’94, Worcester, Mass., formerly senior academic administrator for the UMass Memorial Department of Surgery, is now a senior program development associate for the Commonwealth Medicine Department of the University of Massachusetts Medical School.


Geoffrey K. Dancey M.B.A. ’02, Worcester, Mass., is a financial analyst with Cutler Capital Management, LLC in Worcester. Dancey also is an assistant men’s soccer coach at Clark University.

Tracy Fuller ’02, M.B.A. ’03, Shrewsbury, Mass., recently accepted a position as human resources associate at Seven Hills Foundation, Worcester.

Mary G. Haggar M.B.A. ’88, Princeton, Mass., a financial consultant in the Worcester office of Smith Barney, has earned the firm’s financial planning specialist designation. The designation reflects a 50-hour personal-finance training program and a three-hour final examination.

Jason Levin ’96, M.B.A. ’97, New York, is an Internet analyst for Nielsen/NetRatings and often represents the firm on the business news networks.

Michael Politiopoulos M.B.A. ’94, North Bergen, N.J., is president and technical director of GP Chemicals, Inc.

Terry Rafferty M.B.A. ’75, Staten Island, N.Y., is associate director—Hospitals at Sea View Rehabilitation Center & Home, where she was recently honored as Administrator of the Year.

Rodney Somma M.B.A. ’95, Spencer, Mass., recently accepted a position as production services manager for Quebecor World Eusey Press.


In Memoriam

Edward Horton Jr. M.B.A. ’90
Rumford, R.I. April 26, 2003
Kauffman internship program great success for students, alumni and entrepreneurs

Extraordinary things can happen when business students and entrepreneurs get together. Thanks in part to a grant from the Kauffman Collegiate Entrepreneurial Network, which is part of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and the University’s Corporate Associates Program, Clark’s Graduate School of Management (GSOM) was able to develop the new entrepreneurial internship program for its students, while strengthening and promoting small business development in the region.

An important priority for GSOM is to provide opportunities for students to learn experientially and apply classroom knowledge in regional entrepreneurial organizations. GSOM’s Kauffman Entrepreneurial Internship Program allowed 13 students to undertake paid internships during the summer and fall 2003 semesters, with seven more planned for the spring 2004 semester.

David Carroll, director of GSOM career services, noted that GSOM alumni held senior-level positions with seven of the 13 Kauffman internship employers, and credited the alumni with supporting these internship placements.

“Developing the internships with alumni employers helped to streamline the process since they are familiar with the quality of our M.B.A. and M.S.F. programs, and the commitment that GSOM has made to experiential learning,” says Carroll.

“Our students had opportunities in entrepreneurial organizations at a management level,” Carroll states. “This allowed the interns to work with senior-level executives who were focused on making key decisions within the organizations.”

To measure the effectiveness and impact of the internships, GSOM conducted student and employer surveys following an internship’s completion. Employer results confirmed that the students made a significant contribution during the internship, and the students unanimously agreed that the internships were a positive learning experience.

Amit Schroff, who completed his internship with Commonwealth National Bank in Worcester, says, “The internship gave me the opportunity to put into practice what I learned in class. The staff I worked with was great; they had the patience to explain things and appreciated my contributions.”

“I wanted to see the entrepreneurial aspect of business operations,” says Irena A ndonova, who achieved her goal through an internship with ECI Biotech in Worcester. “I knew small companies had strategic alliances with large companies, but I wanted to see how the negotiations actually worked.”

A ndonova experienced this communication and interaction firsthand. Her interest and skills in financial modeling, forecasting and budgeting gave A ndonova the opportunity to work directly with the CEO. “I saw what it really takes to run a company,” she says.

Carroll cites the Kauffman Entrepreneurial Internship Program as a classic win-win partnership. “GSOM students received a career-enhancing experience, and companies benefited from high-level thinkers who provided the sought-after resources needed within their entrepreneurial organizations,” says Carroll.
Alumni calendar

All Clark alumni, parents and friends are welcome at these upcoming regional events. Events with a GSOM designation are geared specifically toward GSOM alumni, parents and friends.

February
19 New York City: Clark alumni and friends are invited to “Clark Night at the Blue Man Group,” the innovative performance group co-created by Matt Goldman ‘83, M.B.A. ‘84.
20 New York City: Clark alumni are invited to attend a networking reception with Career Services Director Hilles Hughes.
26 Westborough: Clark students, alumni and friends are invited to Worcester Business Journal’s Business Leaders of the Year ceremony, sponsored by Clark University’s Graduate School of Management.

March
11 Guaynabo, Puerto Rico: Edgardo Rivera ‘86 and Liza Rivera will host a reception for Clark alumni, parents and friends.
18 Worcester: Clark alumni, students and friends are invited to GSOM’s Leadership Speaker Series featuring Mitchell Modell, Chief Executive Officer of Modell’s Sporting Goods.
20 Jonas Clark Hall: Clark students and alumni are invited to “Entrepreneurship 101”; Keynote Speaker: George Gendron, presented by Clark University and the Center for Women & Enterprise.
26 Carlson Hall: GSOM students and alumni are invited to attend the GSOM Alumni Marketing Careers Panel, presented by MBA Career Services.

April
TBA Worcester: Clark alumni and friends are invited to the next event in the University’s Arts, Humanities & Management Initiative.
TBA Framingham: Clark alumni and friends are invited to the next event in the GSOM Leadership Forum.

May

Visit the GSOM Web site at www.clarku.edu/gsom/intranet/alumni/index.shtml for more information about upcoming events.