
School of Business: We Do It!



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“Let’s do it!” characterizes the faculty and administrators in the School of Business from the time of its inception. As a result, the School has evolved rapidly from primarily an office program in the early 1940s to the addition of a marketing emphasis in the 1960s. The 1970s was a decade of significant growth with the addition of a rudimentary data

processing program (using a needle with cards), a management program, a hospitality program, and a legal program. During that time period, fashion merchandising also became a prominent offering. Additionally, following an accrediting visit in 1974, the General Education Department became more formalized and was attached to Business under the title “Division of Business, General Studies, and Learning Services.”

In the 1980s, the School of Business was separated into its own unit. At that time, Business had three departments: Office Administration and Secretarial Technology, Business Management, and Computer Information Systems. In 1990, the Accounting Department was separated into its own department.

Helen Ashton, during her years of contribution, was an example of the energy that characterized the faculty and administrators throughout the school’s progress. Confronted with declining enrollments (unbelievable), the “Division” was the first to develop a professional presentation detailing the reasons why students should enroll in its programs. It worked. From that time forward, enrollments have increased--sometimes steadily, sometimes precipitously. Moreover, as students saw the School of Business as a viable educational alternative, the community, particularly prospective employers, became more involved with the College. As a result, the School was successful in getting funding for rooms in the Business Building; the Cartwright and Thomas families funded rooms that resulted in beautiful interiors and furnishings.

Credibility from the business community grew as more students graduated and were employed locally. As a result, these linkages brought strength to

the School of Business as faculty became involved with corporations like WordPerfect and Novell and with the legal community. The Cooperative Education program was a very strong entity; and placement of students in internship positions, once again, provided strong linkages to the College in general and to the School of Business in particular. Business faculty became intricately involved with the community in providing on-site training, in establishing advisory committees, in serving on boards, and in using specialists from the community to teach business classes.

As the College moved from a technical institute to a technical college to a community college and then to a State College, the School of Business played a major role in these transitions. Attention was paid in 1974, for example, to making certain curriculum was developed that met state, national, and international standards. That strong curricular foundation insured the readiness of the School to move to community college status and hence to a four-year college.

The energy in the School of Business was reflected, once again, in its first establishing four-year degrees for students in a two-plus-two mode in concert with Utah State University. Students then could obtain four-year degrees without leaving home. Moving to offering the degrees was relatively easy, inasmuch as the School had been hiring faculty, developing curriculum, and establishing facilities in anticipation of the new status. For these reasons, three of the first four-year degrees were offered by the School of Business.

The School of Business has been fortunate to have strong leadership. I was the first Dean; Doug Warner, the second; and Ian Wilson, the third. Each contributed unique skills that were needed during the time he or she held these positions. I brought to the College a knowledge of curriculum development and management theory that facilitated the development of both curricular and management structures. Doug epitomized the importance of having policy in place; of providing rationales for reasonable, thoughtful processes; and for instilling respect and pride in the school. Ian “made things happen.” Under his superb leadership he shepherded significant and ambitious projects to fruition.

The international vision projected by the School also resulted in phenomenal projects, prime of which was its offering a two-year management degree

in Kiev, the first accredited degree offered by an American institution in that country. The timing for such an offering was fortuitous. Kiev was transitioning from a communistic regime to a democracy and was experiencing serious problems, including despair. The offering of this program did bring with it a modicum of hope that ultimately resulted in significantly changing the lives of over 100 students, many of whom would have had no educational opportunities at all.

The commitment of the faculty members who served in this program was reflected in their willingness to experience privation, in their commitment to remedy the hopelessness of the situation, and in their singlemindedness in making certain students were given much needed skills and the knowledge necessary to make a living. Their linkages with the community were also made visible as the program was underwritten with a grant from a business philanthropist.

More important than any special project or any outstanding event is the ongoing integrity expressed in the day-to-day classroom education process. Very impressive, for the most part, is the consistent in-depth preparation for classes. Moreover, this School pays strong attention to the teaching process itself. Students are welcome in offices after classes and their reactions are valued. This commitment is also expressed in student organizations whose competitions result in overwhelming numbers of winners. DEX and PBL organizations have provided opportunities for developing student leadership and for instilling in students confidence that simply is difficult to provide in other ways.

Collegiality and good humor have always been, and are now, hallmarks of the School. As the departments moved from small, homogenous units to large diverse groups of faculty, the culture that was developed years ago has remained—not intact, but strong. Differences are respected, materials are shared, faculty teach for one another, and all rally around one another in times of tragedy or stress.

The strong leadership, the quality instruction, the excellent curriculum, the collegiality, the professionalism, and the energy have characterized the School from its beginnings; these attributes characterize the School now.

*Respect and Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Lucille T. Stoddard for 32 years of service as the Dean of the School of Business and Academic Vice President of Utah Valley State College.