Nearly one year ago, the idea of the Seidman Graduate Student Advisory Board (GSAB) hosting a weblog (blog) page was born. The primary function of the blog would be to serve as a means of casual, yet informative, communication among prospective students, the graduate student body and members of the Seidman College of Business GSAB. In doing so, it would create a personal level of communication not typically offered to students at this level.

A normal blog consists of one or more authors periodically posting various brief articles chronicling certain events, such as a journal of a vacation. In an education setting, members of the GSAB will use this increasingly popular means of communication to routinely post various observations on their experiences at Grand Valley and more specifically with the Seidman College of Business. As is the case with most blogs, once the articles are posted, they are opened up to what is essentially a discussion forum.

Leadership in Sustainable Business
By Dan Meyering, GSAB Vice President

I had a chance to sit down and talk with Fred P. Keller, CEO and President of Cascade Engineering, in January as a part of the Graduate Student Advisory Board’s continuing effort to provide insight about the leadership we have in West Michigan and associated with Grand Valley.

Cascade Engineering is a leader in the field of plastics solutions for the industrial, automotive, and solid waste industries. Cascade Engineering has grown from a small plastics molding company to a global organization. Throughout Cascade Engineering’s growth, it has continually focused on the triple bottom line consisting of economic, environmental, and social components. On a day-to-day basis Keller focuses on the strategic planning for each of the company’s 15 different business units to keep the company on the forefront of sustainable business.

After receiving advice from his father to study in the plastics engineering field, he went on to receive a bachelor’s degree in the field of materials science from Cornell University. He later obtained a master’s degree in business management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Keller started out as a metallurgist for Pratt & Whitney before starting his own company which has focused on innovation and continual learning. Learning is a large part of the environment he promotes at Cascade Engineering, and that is why the company headquarters is aptly named the “Learning Center.”
A Letter from the Director

Happy New Year, Graduate Students!

On behalf of Seidman faculty and staff, I wish you a very productive winter semester. I hope that your holiday break provided much needed rest and relaxation.

By the time this newsletter is published, you will have already attended Pizza with the Dean. This year our pizza week is held early to jump start the semester.

Also early this year, on February 5, is our Distinguished Executive Lecture. Michelle VanDyke, President and CEO of Fifth Third Bank, Western Michigan, will speak on the current credit crisis. You won’t want to miss this opportunity and can find details about the reception and address other places in this newsletter.

Seidman takes special pride in providing opportunities for students to connect with the community. In addition to the Distinguished Executives Lecture Series, the Alumni Breakfast Series and the Ambassador Secchia lectures are open to graduate students. The Ambassador Secchia lecture on February 28 will feature Mark Murray, President, Meijer, Inc. and former GVSU President. Mr. Murray will speak about the Michigan Economy. Breakfast begins at 7:30 and the address at 8:00. Please join us. Other breakfast programs will be added, so watch your Graduate Student Info Center on Blackboard for up-to-date information.

If you are graduating this semester, be sure to contact me so that I can submit a diploma card for you. This will ensure that you receive your diploma in a timely manner and that you receive information about Commencement and Seidman’s reception following.

As always, please let me know how I can be of assistance. Remember that the Graduate Business Office exists for one reason only – to serve you. Best wishes for a productive and enjoyable winter semester.

Sincerely,
Claudia Bajema
Director, Graduate Business Programs

Seidman Mission Statement
The Seidman College of Business provides a rigorous learning environment with a student focus, a regional commitment, and a global perspective. In its teaching, scholarship and service activities, the College innovates, applies knowledge, and integrates concepts.
Graduate Student Advisory Board Blog

For example, a blog posting on a distinguished lecture series presentation would be open for everyone to discuss the lecture.

As the initial blog idea was discussed, the GSAB decided to pursue additional blogging channels. Once the technology infrastructure is in place, it would not be difficult to bring in additional blog journals—and the added value would be significant. The first additional blog discussed was one in which Seidman faculty would, on a voluntary basis, post articles related to the field of their teaching. A second blog would be one in which business leaders throughout West Michigan could post articles about the industries and positions in which they work. This idea was taken to the Dean’s Executive Advisory Board last May and was met with great enthusiasm. This particular blog will be open for comments and questions to GVSU students only, but will be visible to the public.

Under the current timeline, the blogs are expected to be brought online by the end of February. On behalf of the Graduate Student Advisory Board, I am excited to offer these unique services to both our current and prospective students here at Grand Valley’s Seidman College of Business!

Graduate Student Focus

Derek DeLange

The Grand Valley graduate student body is comprised of talented individuals from many disciplines and varying interests. Graduate Student Advisory Board member Wally Wasilewski was able to catch up with Derek to learn more about his background and interests.

GSAB: Please tell us about your job.

I work as a network administrator at Newaygo County Mental Health. I’ve been working there for over seven years now. Typical day-to-day activities include server administration, network & data security, and lately, electronic health record (EHR) implementation.

GSAB: What colleges did you previously attend and majors did you pursue prior to enrolling in the Seidman College of Business?

I earned a BA in Information Systems from GVSU prior to enrolling in the graduate business program.

GSAB: Which Seidman degree are you pursuing and when do you anticipate completing your coursework?

I am pursuing an MBA, and I expect to be finished by the end of this calendar year.

GSAB: What made you choose Seidman College of Business for your MBA?

I chose Seidman for a few reasons – primarily for the low cost (since I do not have employer tuition reimbursement), but also for the relationship Seidman has with the West Michigan business environment. The close proximity of the university to where I live was also a factor.
Fifth Third Bank Executive to Address Graduate Students

Michelle VanDyke, President and CEO of Fifth Third Bank, Western Michigan, will address Seidman graduate business students on February 5. A reception will begin at 5:15 p.m., followed by the address from 6:00 to 7:00 in the Loosemore Auditorium.

Ms. VanDyke overseas the management of the Western Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Northern Michigan, and Tampa Bay, Florida affiliates of Fifth Third. She began her banking career as a college intern at Old Kent Bank while she was a student at Calvin College. Within ten years, she was serving as Senior Vice President and Manager of the Illinois Mortgage region. In 2000, Ms. VanDyke was named President of Old Kent Bank, Illinois.

When Fifth Third Bank acquired Old Kent Bank, Ms. VanDyke returned to West Michigan to accept the position of Executive Vice President of Retail Banking. In 2004, she became President and CEO of Fifth Third Bank, Western Michigan and later named Regional President for each of Michigan’s affiliates as well as the Tampa Bay affiliate.

Michelle is active in the community, serving on a number of boards, including the Grand Valley State University Foundation. She is married and has four children.

The title of Ms. VanDyke's lecture has not been determined at the writing of this newsletter, although she has shared that she will speak on the current credit crisis. All graduate business students are invited and encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to hear the perspectives of Ms. VanDyke on this timely topic.

Congratulations, Fall 2007 Graduates

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Leadership in Sustainable Business  
Fred P. Keller

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As a part of Fred’s learning, he is currently reading a couple of books that he recommends. The first is Green to Gold: How Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive Advantage by Daniel C. Esty and Andrew S. Winton, which he recommends to anyone looking to expand the understanding of how sustainable business practices can improve a company. The second book is Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together by William Isaacs, which offers unique insight into communication and how to effectively collaborate with others.

When Fred is not working in the office, he is crafting a new piece of woodwork or working a piece of land with his 1957 Farmall Tractor. He is also involved in numerous community foundations, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, School-to-Career Progressions Board, Seidman College of Business Dean’s Advisory Board, and several other organizations and committees. In 2004, Keller was also appointed to the United States Department of Commerce Manufacturing Council, chair of the Workforce Committee.

Keller advises that new MBA graduates don’t expect to be finished in their education. “Instead use your early years of your career to refine your education. The key is to look for opportunities to excel and capitalize on them.”

Business Leader Biography  
Fred P. Keller

Fred P. Keller is chairman and CEO of Cascade Engineering, a leading provider of plastics solutions for the automotive, industrial, and solid waste industries. Under Keller’s leadership, Cascade Engineering has grown from a small injection molding company with six employees into a complex manufacturing organization with 1,200 employees and 13 facilities worldwide.

A materials engineer by training, Keller founded Cascade Engineering in 1973, following an earlier career as a metallurgist with Pratt & Whitney. Cascade Engineering was built to reflect his belief that businesses should be “sustainable” and committed to realizing lasting and socially beneficial goals. His model for sustainable business focuses equally on three types of capital: financial, social, and ecological. Through his focus on this model, and an emphasis on the potential impact each individual employee can make, Keller has created not only a successful business enterprise but also an organization dedicated to achieving broader community and environmental aims.

Keller’s leadership has attracted widespread industry recognition. He is the recipient of numerous, high-profile awards, including Chrysler’s “Technology Role Model,” number 8 in the country as 'Best Medium Company to Work for in America' at National Human Resource Conference, the Hugh Michael Beahan Foundation’s “Faith in Humanity” Award, the White House’s Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership, and Goodwill Industries’ “Employer of the Year.” In 2004, Keller was named to the United States Department of Commerce Manufacturing Council, chair of the Workforce Committee and received a “Distinguished Service Award” from the National Governors Association.

Keller serves as director of Meijer, Inc. and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, vice chairman of the Economic Club of Grand Rapids and chair of the School-to-Career Progressions Board. His achievements and innovative management approach have been featured in numerous trade and business publications, and he currently teaches a course on sustainable business at Cornell University. A Grand Rapids native, Keller earned a bachelor of science degree from Cornell University and a master of science in business management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.
Holiday Book Drive Results Are In!
Thank You For Helping the Santa Claus Girls!
By Heidi Beckemeyer, GSAB Member

The 2nd Annual Holiday Book Drive for the Santa Claus Girls ended very successfully for 2007 thanks to the support of the students and faculty of Grand Valley! As you remember, the Santa Claus Girls is a Grand Rapids women’s organization that organizes a book collection for area children in need during the holidays. The new children’s books that were collected this season were distributed to area children as holiday gifts. This year, the Graduate Student Advisory Board, Graduate and Professional Student Organization, Masters of Social Work Student Organization, and the Undergraduate Student Advisory Board once again partnered with the Santa Claus Girls to help make the collection a huge success. With the help of the students and faculty on the Pew Campus, we were able to donate 313 new children’s books and $308 in monetary donations to area children in need this holiday season. This turnout more than doubled our collection efforts last year. Thank you to all those who were able to donate this holiday season. Your school and community appreciate it greatly! Best wishes to all in 2008!

Calendar of Events
Winter 2008

Jan 28-31 Pizza with the Dean, 5 – 6 p.m., University Club Room
Feb 1 Last day to drop at 75% refund (classes that meet all semester*)
Feb 5 Distinguished Executive Lecture, Michelle VanDyke, President and CEO, Fifth Third Bank, Western Michigan, 6:00 p.m., Loosemore Auditorium
Feb 9 & 16 GMAT workshop, 8-noon. Contact the Graduate Business Office for information
Feb 28 The Ambassador Secchia Lecture, Mark Murray, President, Meijer, Inc., presenting. Breakfast 7:30, presentation, 8:00.
Feb 29 Last day to drop with W (classes that meet all semester*)
Mar 2-9 Spring break
Mar 10 Registration begins for 2008-09 classes
Mar 27 Seidman Recognition Dinner (by invitation)
Apr 26 Commencement, 10:00 a.m., Van Andel Arena, Reception following, B.O.B.

* Contact Graduate Business Office for refund dates for classes that meet for 7 weeks.

Watch your “Graduate Business Info Center” on Blackboard for breakfast programs or other events that could be added.
Graduate Student Advisory Board

The purpose of the Graduate Student Advisory Board for the Seidman College of Business is:

To support the mission and vision of the Seidman College of Business

To promote a closer relationship and enhance communication between students and the faculty, staff and administration of the Seidman College of Business in ways that will foster and encourage student participation and constructive feedback among all parties

To strengthen existing graduate programs by identifying the needs of business students and the College’s role in preparing those students for professional careers

To provide input, advice, and counsel, where feasible, to the Dean and the Director of Graduate Business Programs of the Seidman College of Business

To serve as ambassadors for the Seidman graduate programs with both internal and external constituencies.

The Board is composed of graduate students in the MBA, MSA, and MST programs with the following current members:

Victor Attang  Heidi Beckemeyer  Kenneth Bogard  Daniel Byrne  Derek DeLange
Carrie Doran  Dan Fase  Jason Gallivan  Supriya Hegde  Dan Meyering
Andrew Miedema  Tamara  Brent Mulder  Phil Rolfe  Wally Wasilewski
Milobinski

Ex-officio:  Dean H. James Williams  Claudia Bajema
GSAB: How did your education at Grand Valley help you in your career or future endeavors?

My education, both undergraduate and graduate, has helped instill real-world perceptions of the business and IT environment by offering numerous classes which study business cases and/or include guest lecturers from West Michigan businesses.

GSAB: What do you enjoy most from your time at Seidman?

I think the best thing Seidman has to offer in its graduate programs is the personal level of attention given to the students. This holds true both in the classroom and when dealing with administrative functions such as financial aid or class scheduling. GVSU and the Seidman College of Business offer a technologically advanced learning environment that I have found very useful during my time as a student.

GSAB: What recommendations would you offer to others attending Seidman?

Make sure to plan ahead with electives. Most of them are offered only once a year, some less frequently than that. Don’t hesitate to talk to advisors for help in scheduling classes.

GSAB: Do you have any recommendations for business reading?

There is a lot of good material out there. Most of my business reading has been geared toward IT, and two good books in this area are IT Doesn’t Matter by Nicolas Carr and The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman. Periodicals such as The Wall Street Journal and The Economist have a lot of great content as well.

GSAB: Do you have any recommendations for business activities or groups to be involved in?

The Graduate Student Advisory Board is great for anyone who wants to take their experience at Seidman to another level and has the time available to dedicate to the demands of board membership. For undergraduate students, membership in the Seidman Investment Portfolio Organization (IPO) provides networking opportunities and teaches hands-on portfolio management.