The Business College as Servant Leader

The Servant Leader is a concept that dates back to at least 4th Century India. It revolves around the notion that the leader serves the people the community first and foremost. The Servant Leader considers not what is good for self but, rather, what is good for those he or she serves. Indeed, the Servant Leader actually takes up the mantle of leadership in an effort to better serve others. This type of leader emphasizes trust, commitment, collaboration, and the ethical use of power. Very importantly, when Servant Leaders can coalesce around a particular mission, focused on serving students, businesses, the larger community, and each other they become a Servant Leader organization. The Seidman College of Business is such a Servant Leader organization, striving to provide appropriate leadership in business education, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

At a time when Federal and State governments openly question the effectiveness of institutions of higher education and demand their accountability it behooves our academic units to respond. Unfortunately, too often, the Servant Leader becomes too busy actually serving. And so it may be with the Seidman College. However, in this issue of the Seidman Update we take the time and space to share with you, whom we seek to serve, snippets of our service accomplishments through the past year. Of course, the College focused first on fulfilling its fundamental mission of serving the projected 750 undergraduate and graduate students who graduated during December and April. In addition, from facilitating Meijer President Mark Murray’s poignant address to students and higher education on meeting future business and world challenges, to the convening of educators, business leaders, and entrepreneurs to identify and discuss supply chain opportunities in alternative and renewable energies, to partnering with Stryker to develop the next generation of leaders, to the leading of business delegations to India and China, to hosting an online business incubator, the Seidman College faculty, staff, and students demonstrate the core values of the Servant Leader as the evolving global economy makes this type of leadership ever more valuable and, indeed, necessary.

Enjoy this edition’s look at the many ways in which the Seidman College of Business achieves its mission to serve its students, its many constituent businesses, and its communities, local, national, and international!

— H. James Williams
Dean, Seidman College of Business
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Seidman Update is a bi-annual publication of Grand Valley State University’s Seidman College of Business, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Seidman College offers the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Science (BS) or Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Economics, Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Science in Accounting (MSA), and Master of Science in Taxation (MST) degrees. The college is fully accredited by AACSB International.

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Cover cityscape photo: Linda Anderson
As the State of Michigan grapples with approving a statewide Renewable Portfolio Standard, and business and industry attempt to realign resources in an ever-changing environment, Grand Valley State University took the lead and hosted a successful Alternative and Renewable Energy Summit on March 11. A number of West Michigan partners collaborated to plan and sponsor the event, including the Seidman College of Business, the Padnos College of Engineering & Computing, the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center, the Right Place, Inc., the West Michigan Strategic Alliance, NextEnergy, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Wolverine Power Marketing Cooperative, and Spartan Renewable Energy. The objective of the conference was to link West Michigan manufacturers with supply chain partners regarding the commercialization of renewable energy and alternative fuel technologies in West Michigan.

Over 200 attendees listened to Fred Keller, Chairman and CEO of Cascade Engineering, provide an overview on “Understanding the Energy Policy Landscape in Michigan” and Jim Croce, CEO of NextEnergy, on “What is the opportunity and business environment for renewable energy and fuel technologies in Michigan?”

During the day, participants attended panel sessions on current technologies, including wind, solar, methane recovery, and biodiesel, as well as on emerging technologies, including cellulose-based ethanol, battery technologies, and fuel cell. Special presentations were also given on “component manufacturing and supply chain opportunities in West Michigan for solar and wind turbines” by Greg Northrup, President of the West Michigan Strategic Alliance, and “Purchasing 20 percent renewable energy for the City of Grand Rapids” by Mayor George Heartwell. The summit ended with a networking reception to facilitate follow-up.

Of particular note was a study prepared by Seidman Professors Hari Singh and Paul Isely, in which they determined that if Michigan were to shift to 20 percent renewable energy sources by 2020, the impact between 2010 and 2030 would include savings in carbon dioxide
emissions of 414 million tons, and an air pollution decrease that would save $1.9 billion. The net jobs created by 2030 would be 4,707.

A number of positive comments were received from attendees, including “Best conference I have attended” and “West Michigan we need you.” David Koyle, CEO of Franklin Resources, said that “Because of the Energy Summit, I look forward to establishing my assembly plant in the Grand Rapids area.”

By all accounts, the Summit was a tremendous success! The Seidman College of Business looks forward to continuing its partnerships with others in the West Michigan community to promote the realization of alternative and renewable energy opportunities.

...if Michigan were to shift to 20 percent renewable energy sources by 2020, the impact between 2010 and 2030 would include savings in carbon dioxide emissions of 414 million tons and an air pollution decrease that would save $1.9 billion. The net jobs created by 2030 would be 4,707.
It is often a difficult task for entrepreneurs to find time and resources to work "on" their business rather than "in" their business. Accelerating Michigan Entrepreneur (AME) is an online business consulting service that provides access to all business resources for entrepreneurs via the Internet.

The Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC) and Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) partnered to bring AME to Michigan business owners. The AME online business incubator is designed for existing Michigan business owners who want to grow their business but realize they need to develop new skills and techniques to accomplish that goal. Its purpose is to build healthy, lasting businesses in Michigan's 83 counties through leveraging a state-wide network of expertise and resources.

Business owners become tenants in AME and have access to direct services such as leadership coaching, business consulting, technical assistance, business assessment, training, access to financing and market research. Other services are available for business owners through the web site to self-direct business growth.

When Josh Little started his business, Maestro eLearning, he sought the consulting services of the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center. Josh was experienced in his industry but needed help on all aspects of owning a business. In order for Maestro eLearning to grow, Josh needed to assess his business and the resources available to him. The AME was the perfect option for his needs and busy schedule. "As a new tenant, we did a complete needs analysis of my business. I learned what I was doing right and what I was doing wrong," stated Josh.

Josh received marketing, business metrics, and financial coaching through AME. "The most impactful aspect of AME for me has been the leadership coaching. It has helped me know where I was strong and where I was weak," commented Josh. There have been substantial changes in Josh's business, and the AME consulting has shown Josh where he was missing opportunities. "The one hour reflection a couple times a month has really helped me turn the corner for my business; it has been invaluable."

When asked what the greatest benefit is of the AME, Josh stated, "The greatest benefit is being able to sleep at night, knowing I have an extension of my management team who have the experience and want my business to succeed in the State of Michigan." He continued, "As an entrepreneur, I see a growing trend of people owning their own businesses, more entrepreneurship. There will need to be more support services to assist these entrepreneurs. Without a doubt this program will continue to grow."

The tenants in AME work directly with a business coach to create a development plan based on the needs and goals of the entrepreneur. In addition, a business survey is completed to determine priorities for the company's growth. A plan is built to include benchmarks based on the entrepreneur's goals for the business. "We will help them determine their needs for leadership growth and business skills for operations, marketing, finance, and personnel," stated Nancy Boese, one of AME's consultants. "For instance, if the entrepreneur's goal is to double the company's revenue, that would be a benchmark of the plan. Each company is different."

Hugh Armbruster, owner of Nickels Boat Works, sought the AME after being referred by the Vet BizCentral. He had just purchased Nickels Boat Works and needed assistance in understanding business management, marketing, and what steps he needed to take to grow his new business. Hugh met virtually with a business consultant and started to work on growing his business.
“The business consultants have been very responsive and their assistance has been helpful,” stated Hugh. “AME has put me in the capacity to make my own decisions now.” Through utilizing this source of assistance (service), Hugh has saved time by communicating with business consultants on line and conferencing phone calls. He has saved real dollars in personnel management, and his marketing budget is now being efficiently used to secure target markets.

“It’s a valuable service and it should grow if people are aware of it. It is very beneficial to have dialogue with business consultants to help sort out ideas. This is truly a valuable asset to have while growing your business,” stated Hugh Armbruster. Hugh plans to continue to use AME for introducing new products into the market.

An entrepreneur has to apply to become a tenant in the incubator. The entrepreneur is asked to provide specific information, such as background on the business owner, history of the company, future goals of the company, and market conditions. Upon receipt of the application, project directors determine whether the company and owner meet the criteria of an early stage company with good prospects for growth.

Long-term contracts are not a part of this program. Tenants will leave the incubator when they have achieved all of their benchmarks. For more information go to www.accelmich.org or call 877-806-0624.

Nickels Boat Works
Hugh Armbruster
www.nickelsboats.com

Nickels Boat Works is a world-renowned builder of sail boats. When NBW started in 1983 it only built one style of boat. After 25 years building boats, it has expanded into building several classes of one-design boats. NBW has developed the reputation of building high quality, race winning boats. Sailors all over the world know that Nickels-built boats can be sailed “Right Out of the Box.”

Maestro eLearning
Josh Little
www.maestroelearning.com

Maestro eLearning is a full-service eLearning business. It delivers technological solutions to educational challenges by understanding the needs of the corporate education and training environment. Maestro eLearning brings together the universe of creative media to create a high impact, high retention, and entertaining learning experience. It offers services such as learning management system development and management, interactive learning module development, video production, 3D animation, web development, and web casting. Maestro eLearning’s goal is to help corporations become more profitable by making the learning process more efficient and effective.
It’s a well-kept secret that exports create jobs. Michigan is a big exporter, seventh among the 50 states. In 2007 it exported $44.4 billion in manufactured goods, involving more than 10,000 Michigan companies and generating nearly 222,000 jobs.

But, did you know that 90 percent of Michigan’s exporters — nearly 9,000 companies — have fewer than 500 employees? Exporting is a golden opportunity for Michigan’s middle-market companies to reinvent manufacturing in innovative ways. Michigan products — machinery, chemicals, primary metals, and more — are hotly coveted in export markets. And two of the biggest export markets are India and China.

To help West Michigan companies see that they too can export to these big emerging markets, Seidman took four middle-market companies on “valet-style” trade missions to India and China. The trade missions were funded by Access China/India (AC/I), a grant awarded to Seidman’s International Business Programs and Van Andel Global Trade Center (VAGTC) by the U.S. Department of Education’s Business and International Education Program. Typically, if a company wants to export, it may hire costly research to see if it is worth it. AC/I Trade Missions were designed to reduce that cost. The trade missions were “valet” quality because AC/I staff provided superior, customized support.

Seidman Runs “Valet” Trade Missions to India and China

Front row (L–R): Sonja Johnson (VAGTC), Carmen Chen (Expeditors, China), Carol Sánchez (Seidman), and Yalin Song (VAGTC); middle row (L–R): Ed Doza (Lorin Industries), Sridhar Sundaram (Seidman), Jeannie Jansma (Sebright Products, Inc.); back row (L–R): Terry Stemler (APEC) and Doug Burkhardt (Lorin Industries)
support to each company before and during the trip. Company representatives attended half-day pre-departure orientations on business and culture in each country. They received detailed market research on their products. They were given appointments with potential agents and distributors in the country, and they had their entire international travel and lodging arranged.

Terry Stemler, vice president of sales and marketing of Automated Process Equipment Control (APEC), an animal food equipment manufacturer located in Lake Odessa, joined the India trip in August 2007 and the China visit in January 2008. Stemler, who is also an owner of APEC, noted, “The trade missions helped me quickly get a clear picture of market possibilities in China and India. The market research and pre-qualification of meetings that Seidman did before the trip helped me be more productive on arrival.”

Other trade mission participants included Sebright Products of Hopkins, Lorin Industries, a Muskegon-based aluminum finishing company, and Progressive Tool & Die of Muskegon. The trade missions found potential agents and customers for these companies in India and China. Doug Burkhardt, vice president of sales for Lorin, says they haven’t picked up any new business yet as a result of their trip to China. “However,” he notes, “I now know the Chinese food we are served in Chinese restaurants in the U.S. bears no resemblance to the real McCoy!”

The companies explored India and China’s cultures, as well as their markets, during the trade missions. Many companies have little international experience and they hesitate to venture globally because they fear they don’t know enough about other countries’ cultures. AC/I’s experienced staff removed this barrier and eased the company representatives into new cultures and markets. Jeannie Jansma, marketing director of Sebright Products and Bright Technologies, whose recycling and waste water processing equipment was offered in China, said the prospect of actively marketing globally had been overwhelming. “Although China’s pulp and paper mills were calling us directly, we were hesitant. The trade mission opened our eyes to the vast opportunities and new markets for our products in a non-threatening way. Our experience with the AC/I team was very positive and professional. They really cared.”

AC/I grant staff organized the trade missions, and they also traveled with the companies to India and China. Sonja Johnson, director of the VAGTC, orchestrated pre-departure activities, research, meetings, travel, and local logistics. Sri Sundaram, professor of finance, and Carol Sánchez, professor of management, were the faculty links that connected the business experience to research and the classroom. Sundaram wants to develop a mechanism for helping small companies manage foreign currency export transactions, and Sánchez wants to learn why some West Michigan companies seem reluctant to export.

Jansma said the trade mission drove home how critical it is to teach young people the importance of working comfortably in a global marketplace. In many other countries, students must learn second and third languages, and they are exposed to cultural practices from other countries. “The way AC/I and other Seidman programs, such as its BBA degree in International Business, attempt to bring this to the West Michigan community really starts to close the gap,” she said.

So far, the trade missions have produced results—and orders. Stemler reports that because of the visits, APEC is working with a company in India to provide equipment for their new manufacturing facility, and one in China for sales and service to APEC’s Asian customers. Sebright is working to advance relationships made during the trade mission, one with a parts and service distributor, and the other with a customer looking to become a consultant who advises Chinese pulp and paper mills customers on environmental issues. “We would have never made these connections without the face-to-face meetings,” Jansma adds.
"Google" Business Collaboration

Google is an impressive organization, and through the collaboration between the Seidman College of Business Alumni Association, AimWest, the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Michigan Small Business and Technology Center, it was possible to bring in representatives from Ann Arbor to learn more about Google's Business tools.

Michael Lorenc, Google's Online Sales and Operations Manager, guided nearly 400 attendees at a lunch to utilize Google's suite of business tools to promote their businesses and organizations. Those participants who came in with a basic understanding of how to implement Google Analytics and run Ad Words Campaigns left with new appreciation for the importance of fitting it all together strategically to maximize positive online exposure.

Students from Seidman's Entrepreneurship Minor took advantage of the Google luncheon to not only learn how to leverage Google to support their ventures, but to network with marketing and I.T. professionals from throughout West Michigan. Following the event, several students joined AimWest, one of the sponsors of the event, which supports and promotes digital and interactive companies in the area. (Rob Huisingh, AimWest Board Member and Partner in Foxbright, was featured in the Spring 2007 issue of the Seidman Update.)

Business Serves Seidman

The Seidman College of Business Department of Finance is pleased to announce the formation of a Finance Department Advisory Board. Dr. Sri Sundaram, chair of the Finance Department, in discussions with faculty and a few Seidman Finance alums, formulated the idea to create an Advisory Board for the Finance Department. The partnership will provide dialogue on issues related to curriculum, staffing, internships, employment, and community outreach that could impact faculty, students, and alums.

The first meeting was held over breakfast on March 26, 2008. With fourteen board members, the Finance faculty, and four IPO students in attendance, the meeting was a very strong and encouraging start for this board.

Inaugural board members include (L–R) Boomer Hoppough (Independent Bank), Bob Frey (GVSU), Mark Redfield (Redfield & Irish Finance Group), Jim Walsh (Meijer, retired), Matt Cinco (Wadell & Reed), Jim Gillette (CSM Worldwide), Kathleen Vogelsang (Van Andel Institute), Mike Metzger (JSJ Corporation), Brandon Finnie (Adamy Valuation Advisors), Scott Setlock (Mercantile Bank), Joe Nowicki (Herman Miller), Mark Mossing (Steelcase), Rob Jamula (Fifth Third Bank), and Mitch Stapley (Fifth Third Asset Management).
In a unique high-level collaboration, a group of leaders from West Michigan’s largest employers and the Seidman College of Business have begun work on a project that may have a significant impact on the region’s economic fortunes for years to come. In less than a decade, rapid development and adoption of information technologies has brought tremendous change to the business environment. More than ever, businesses and not-for-profit organizations of all sizes are finding that in order to remain competitive, they need leadership and employees with not only traditional business savvy, but an understanding of technology as well. Faced with the need to continually optimize operations to reduce cost and with customers whose information expectations are shaped by MySpace and Amazon.com, the ability to put technology to use in the business world is vital to meeting those challenges.

The Chief Information Officers (CIOs) of the dozen West Michigan ventures with billion-dollar-plus revenues, many of whom hold key business responsibilities in addition to their technology role, have collectively recognized this need. In February, these executives turned to the Seidman College of Business as the first step in helping them develop these skills in the region’s talent pool. New college graduates will be a major source for the 1,000 to 1,500 salaried positions they collectively expect their organizations must fill in West Michigan in the next five years. This effort is expected to require coordination across the community, starting with science and technology education prior to college. And people with the right skills will need to be enticed to come to and stay in West Michigan. Industry chose West Michigan’s premier undergraduate business school, the Seidman College of Business, as the place to plant the seeds they’re counting on to sustain and grow their organizations tomorrow and beyond.

With its ERP Initiative focusing on the recognition and integration of business processes across previously stove-piped business functions, and the use of SAP’s enterprise software as the tool for achieving that integration, the Seidman College of Business was the CIO group’s partner of choice. “Seidman is getting it right,” explained John Dean, Vice President of Strategic Alliances for Steelcase, while addressing the leaders gathered at the project kickoff meeting.

With the support of GVSU’s Provost, Gayle Davis, and Dean H. James Williams, a core task force of senior faculty and five of the business executives have begun working on the details of the collaboration. These efforts are broadly grouped into those that shape and refine Seidman’s undergraduate business curriculum, those focused on exposing Seidman’s students and faculty to real-world business challenges in the classroom, and those that expand the opportunities currently available for student learning in the business environment outside the classroom. The task force is scheduled to present its recommendations for action to the entire leadership group on June 4th, an extremely quick turnaround in the education community, but the speed at which companies must operate to stay competitive in a world of change.

Simha Magal, Director of Seidman’s ERP Initiative and the key facilitator in bringing the College’s leadership and West Michigan CIOs together, sees the project as a model for future collaborations. “It’s all about Seidman partnering with business to be the preferred provider of the talent business needs to grow and prosper.”

Companies Participating

- Multi-industry base
- Retail
- Food Service
- Health Care
- Consumer Products
- Direct Selling
- $40+ billion annual revenue
- >150,000 total employees
- >14,000 salaried employees in West Michigan
- 1,000–1,600 estimated local new hires (salaried) over next 5 years
In today’s increasingly complex healthcare industry, Stryker has set itself apart in the field of medical technology. By advancing meaningful innovation to create cost-effective solutions for its customers, enabling caregivers to deliver proven clinical outcomes, and ultimately by helping patients lead full and active lives, Stryker has created a class of medical products and services that stands by a promise: Delivering Exceptional Results.

A diversified medical technology company, Stryker’s products span a broad spectrum. The bulk of its portfolio contains implants used in joint replacement, surgical tools, and patient handling and emergency medical equipment. Stryker’s 12 divisions are located around the world and headquartered in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

As it continues to gain market share in each of the product lines, Stryker invests significantly in research and development to provide the right product for the right procedure at the right time and place and for the right price. Stryker’s 20 plus years of 20% EPS (earnings per share) growth has created investments in job expansion and has funded technology and innovation opportunities. In fact, Stryker is listed by USA Today as one of the only 25 companies whose stock, if bought 25 years ago, would have yielded a 25.38% return. Stryker President & CEO Steve MacMillan speaks to Stryker’s driven yet humble company character:

“Our solid, consistent performance doesn’t often generate headlines, but it does generate great results for our customers and shareholders. And while we haven’t made a lot of headlines in recent years for blockbuster acquisitions or hyped-up product launches, we have quietly doubled the size of our Company from $2.8 billion in sales in 2002 to $6.0 billion in 2007.”

All in all, Stryker’s character reflects five core principles: Innovation that Endures, Service Ethic, A Winner’s Intensity, A Culture of Accountability, and Constant Improvement. With roughly 17,000 employees worldwide and the projection to double in size every five years, Stryker is successful because it can attract, grow and retain the most talented individuals on the market.
Stryker Develops Exceptional Leaders

…and the team with the best leaders wins.

For a company, being the best starts with the best people. Having received the 2006 and 2007 Gallup Great Workplace Award for having one of the most engaged and productive workplaces in the world, we place a huge emphasis on finding and fitting the right talent to Stryker.

In recent years a select few Michigan colleges have contributed unequivocally to Stryker’s success on the recruitment front. According to Greg Johnston, Senior Tax Manager at the corporate division of Stryker, the Seidman College of Business has served as a significant asset to Stryker, and has developed a reputation of producing outstanding Stryker employees.

“Over the last few years, Stryker has hired a significant number of students [interns and full-time] from Seidman,” he states. Johnston joined Stryker in 1991 and acquired a master’s degree in tax accounting from Seidman five years later. He currently acts as chairman of the corporate internship committee, which oversees the hiring of accounting and finance interns at Stryker’s Corporate Division.

“We have been very successful in attracting the top students at Seidman,” says Johnston. He attributes much of this success to the excellent relationships that Stryker has been able to build with Seidman representatives.

Johnston also sees Seidman as a top performer in the realm of career preparation: “The College goes out of its way to prepare the students for internships and life after college. It’s one thing to get into the college, but after that there are only a handful of jobs for a bunch of students. Seidman helps differentiate students and helps them find jobs.”

The partnership between Stryker and Seidman is win-win: By developing first-class students who are ready for the working world, Seidman has greatly and directly contributed to Stryker’s continuous success. Likewise, Stryker takes immense pride and pleasure in growing and developing tomorrow’s leaders in medical technology out of today’s young business professionals.
Troy Roller ’03
Clinical Manager, Stryker Medical
Major: Business Management & Entrepreneurship – With Stryker since 2003

Seidman provided a great foundation for my professional experience. The facilities are state of the art, and Grand Rapids has one of the best business climates in all of Michigan. Grand Rapids is a hotbed for entrepreneurs, which makes it similar to the environment at Stryker, which is full of entrepreneurial-minded people.

Katie Nichols ’06
International Tax Accountant, Stryker Corporate
Major: Accounting – With Stryker since 2006

I loved GVSU. The class sizes were small, my opinion mattered, and I could develop one-on-one relationships with professors. They took the extra step to contribute to my success. Seidman allowed me to develop the skills to handle myself in the business world. You are accountable for your own success both at Seidman and at Stryker.

John Behrens ’08
Accounting Intern, Stryker Corporate
Major: Accounting & Entrepreneurship – With Stryker since 2007

Seidman offers a professional development series that I feel is particularly helpful in preparation for the business world. They provided me the foundation of accounting knowledge I’ve been able to build on through my internship and also the professional awareness important in any business setting.

Julie Braseth ’07
Marketing Product Associate, Stryker Medical
Major: Marketing – With Stryker since 2007

I had fun at Seidman, especially during my last year when I could take the marketing classes that I was really interested in. The professors were really engaging—they made me want to go to class. The School has gotten more competitive in recent years, and being a college athlete I like that type of culture. It’s very similar to what we have here at Stryker.

Matt Regnery ’06
Marketing Product Associate, Stryker Medical
Major: Marketing – With Stryker since 2006

The resources at Seidman really set it apart. The DeVos Center, the labs, the library, availability of professors, small class sizes—you never felt lost if you took advantage of the resources. It’s something that makes them similar to Stryker. We have great managers and mentors, just like Seidman with its great professors who are willing to go above and beyond to grow students.
Alumni Notes

1970s
Carlson, Steve V. (B.B.A., ‘78), was recently promoted to the position of global director for customer services at GE Aviation (formerly Smiths Aerospace).

1990s
Adams, Steve (M.B.A., ‘91), joined NuVescor Group as managing director.

Cleveringa, Ronald J. (M.B.A., ‘95), was recently appointed as vice president of sales delivery partners, the Food Bank of Michigan.

Fritz, Robert D. (B.B.A., ‘92), graduated from the Ferris State University College of Pharmacy in August of 2007. He is now employed at Spectrum Health – Butterworth, as an inpatient pharmacist.

Gahsman, Cory J. (B.B.A., ‘97), received a teaching certificate in secondary social studies, history, and political science from GVSU’s Graduate Teacher Certification (GTC) program in April of 2007.

Hildereth (Harris), Christina L. (B.B.A., ’92, M.B.A., 2007), was promoted to senior financial analyst at Priority Health in Grand Rapids. She has been with the company since 2002.

Kendra (Ferenz), Debra K. (B.B.A., ‘90), joined JSJ Corporation in Grand Haven as an accounting associate. She comes to JSJ after thirteen years as the law office administrator at Lague, Newman, & Irish.

Osborne (Bilek), Teresa M. (B.B.A., ’93), joined the staff of United Way of Greater Battle Creek as director for public relations. For the past six years she has been the director of food sourcing and community relations at one of the United Way’s program delivery partners, the Food Bank of South Central Michigan.

Rick, Mandece (B.B.A., ’97), was promoted to commercial portfolio manager at Huntington Bank in Grand Rapids. She has been with the company seven years, most recently as manager of the Grand Rapids commercial credit department.

2000s
Adcock, Torrence A. (M.B.A., ’03), is a business analyst for Sony Music Group in Fresno, CA.

Cox, Kyle C. (B.B.A., ’05), joined PNC Multifamily Capital in Louisville, KY as an acquisitions analyst.

Federspiel, Dorothy K. (B.B.A., ’00), is an executive assistant at Beecken Petty O’Keefe & Co., an equity firm in the healthcare industry located in Chicago, IL.

Korzecki (Sedlacek), Erin E. (B.B.A., ’04), is a senior auditor for Gaintner Bandler Reed & Peters, PLC in Phoenix, AZ.

Kujawa, Michael K. (B.B.A., ’04), was promoted from ticket sales consultant to senior ticket sales consultant and special events coordinator for the West Michigan Whitecaps.

Miao, C. Fred (M.B.A., ’02), has been appointed assistant professor of consumer and organizational studies in the Clarkson University School of Business. He recently obtained his Ph.D. in marketing from the University of Missouri - Columbia.


Ritsema, Aaron M. (B.B.A., ‘04), is a financial consultant for Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. in Ann Arbor.

Sadowski (Pawlukiewicz) Beth A. (B.B.A., ’02), joined the sales department at Select Staffing in Chicago, IL.

Videtich, Michael J. (B.B.A., ’02), is an operations consultant for Qwest Communications, where he has worked for seven years. He recently completed his Master of Science in administration at Central Michigan University. A portion of his research was published in the 2007 issues of International Academy of Business & Economics Review of Business Research.

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Mildred Johnson, B.B.A., 1998, and M.B.A., 2001. Mildred has served on the Seidman Alumni Association Board and was most recently employed by Beaumont Hospital in Troy, Michigan.

Please send us news about you! Send your information via e-mail to busalumn@gvsu.edu

Both Lisa Pohl (B.B.A. ’04), left and Deborah Ann Gaiefsky (B.A. ’06), right, share similar experiences in their studies and careers. Both students recount that their Seidman experiences were vital to prepare them for work and graduate school. Lisa, who recently graduated from Michigan State University’s School of Labor and Industrial Relations graduate program, will be returning to Houston to work for Shell Oil Company in Houston, Texas as a Human Resources Analyst, where she earlier completed an internship. Deborah is planning a recruitment internship with Shell Oil Company this summer before continuing her studies at MSU.

They now appreciate more than ever that professors at Seidman pushed them to work harder than they ever thought possible. They are both indebted to Business Law Professor Star Swift and Human Resources Professor Marie McKendell for dedication to their classes and for expecting nothing less than that same dedication from their students. As Lisa put it, “I often called those classes ‘the ones I loved to hate.’ We were expected to perform work that is as close to a real-life setting as a college course could possibly allow and were given detailed feedback to further our learning. Their enthusiasm and support inspired me to stop placing limits on myself and to begin setting higher goals.”

Deborah notes, “I have already had the opportunity to interview and network with some of the largest companies in the country and world. Doors have been opened that I never thought possible. In a time with so much job uncertainty, I am grateful to have had the training at Grand Valley and Michigan State that I need to be successful.”

www.gvsu.edu/business
2008 Alumni Award Recipients

**Beverly Wall, Professional Achievement**
Languages International—M.B.A. 1987

Beverly Fishell Wall is the CEO of Languages International Inc., President of Fishell Properties, and President of Timely Greetings & Stamps. She has been honored by many organizations over the years for her contributions, influence, and vision and has held many positions of leadership in the community including the Alliance of Women Entrepreneurs, the Michigan Women’s Business Council, ATHENA, and GROW.

**Brian Small, Up and Coming Professional**
Whirlpool Corporation—B.B.A. 2005

Graduating almost three years ago, Brian Small is now in charge of the Best Buy account for the Whirlpool Corporation. He is involved with training deployment and development and represents Whirlpool at key industry and internal Best Buy events. He worked in Phoenix and Los Angeles before being transferred to Minneapolis where he directs the Whirlpool Field Sales Organization to increase sales at Best Buy.

**Gordon Oosting, Professional Achievement**
Senior Vice President, Merchantile Bank—B.S. 1972, M.B.A. 1980

Gordon Oosting has served as Senior Vice President and Commercial Lender since Mercantile Bank’s inception in 1997. He was one of its six founders and has over 30 years of commercial lending experience. Gordon also was Vice President of Finance/CFO at Alofs Manufacturing Company for 6 years. The bank has grown from $0 to $2 billion in 10 years. He has taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Seidman Finance Department. He also teaches personal finance classes and does volunteer work in Central America through his church.
Erin Healy was one of many honored students, faculty, and alums at Seidman’s Annual Recognition Dinner held at the Ambassador Ballroom of the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel. Erin is the 2008 Outstanding Student for the Accounting Department and Delta Sigma Pi Scholarship Key recipient. Erin is a member of the International Honor Society, Beta Gamma Sigma; The National Honors Society for Accounting Professionals, Beta Alpha Psi; and the GVSU Honor’s College. Erin has served the Seidman College of Business and the Accounting Department as an Accounting Tutor. She cites among her goals to keep learning and to make positive contributions to the business environment and community through her work. Following graduation, she is planning to attend graduate school to complete either a Master of Science in Taxation or Juris Doctorate.

Marketing Professor Paul Lane (below, left) was honored by the Seidman Alumni Association for his dedication and service to the Seidman College of Business students and alums. Dr. Lane has impacted many Seidman students as they make career choices and engage in entrepreneurial activities. His “24-7” availability has served the special needs of many budding entrepreneurs. Professor Lane teaches classes in Marketing Management and Entrepreneurship including New Venture Feasibility. In the past five years he has traveled to Nicaragua to create innovative and sustainable projects that can improve the lives of the Nicaraguans—part of an interdisciplinary program he helped found. Dr. Lane has served as Master of Ceremonies for the Seidman Recognition Dinner. He is also involved with many community organizations including Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women, Paws for a Cause, Smart Zone, the Boy Scouts of America, and the World Trade Association.

Carol Lopucki was recognized as one of the 50 Most Influential Women in West Michigan by the Grand Rapids Business Journal at a recent lunch at the J. W. Marriott. Carol serves as the State Director of the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center in the Seidman College of Business.

Carol Sánchez, Ph.D., Professor of Management, was one of two recipients of this year’s Women’s Impact Awards. The Women’s Impact Award is an annual award presented by the GVSU Women’s Commission to recognize people who have made outstanding contributions for the advancement of women at Grand Valley and in the community.

Dante Villarreal, the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center’s Region 7 director, was recognized as the Hispanic of the Year for 2008 by the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce at its annual dinner.

James Wolter, Ph.D., Professor of Marketing, was recently appointed to the Board of Harding Energy, Norton Shores, Michigan. Harding Energy is an industrial battery solutions company. He was also appointed to the board of MiCTA in Saginaw, Michigan. MiCTA is a member-owned group purchasing organization specializing in telecommunications contracts for non-profits.

Jitendra Mishra, Ph.D., Professor of Management, was recognized for 35 years of service at Grand Valley State University at a recent Faculty Awards Convocation.
Fred Keller has distinguished himself as a business and civic leader who ascribes to the “triple bottom line,” creating economic, environmental, and social capital, as he runs his businesses and provides community, state, and national policies and initiatives.

His undergraduate study in the field of materials science at Cornell University and master's in business management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute helped him eventually launch Cascade Engineering, which today is a global leader in the field of plastics solutions for the industrial, automotive, and solid waste industries. From its small beginnings as a plastics parts manufacturer, Cascade has grown into a solutions-based organization with 17 customer-focused business units comprising 1,200 employees and 12 facilities worldwide.

Keller's social capital emphasis includes recognizing the potential impact that each individual employee in his organization can make. These individuals are part of a work environment that includes his model “Welfare-to-Career” program, serving more than 600 employees since its inception in 1997. Cascade Engineering provides under-employed individuals with education, jobs, and a support system that allows them to move from dependence to economic self-sufficiency and self-worth, while saving the state hundreds of thousands of dollars in welfare payments and reducing the company's cost of employee turnover. Simultaneously, his workforce learns about cultural differences and social sensitivity.

This program was followed up by his “School-to-Career” progressions program dealing with at-risk kids in the Grand Rapids Public Schools, which Keller started in 2000 to provide accelerated work to help them graduate from high school. And more recently, he recognized that there are many men and women coming out of prison who cannot find employment. Keller’s efforts have resulted in securing a $500,000 federal grant to assist ex-offenders in finding employment.

His company's emersion into “green practices” and achievement of the highest LEED Certification from the
U.S. Green Building Council is one more example of Fred Keller’s passion to make the world a better place. His efforts last fall to manufacture roof-mounted wind turbines developed by the Scottish company, Renewable Devices, may prove to be a wise business decision, but it also clearly exemplifies his desire to improve the environment and to protect the world’s dwindling natural resources. And not to be ignored was his collaborative efforts with International Aid in Spring Lake, Michigan in the past year, which utilized Cascade Engineering-manufactured Portable BioSand Filters for use in developing world countries. This simple and affordable unit has the potential for addressing the impending global water crisis.

When Fred Keller contacted the Seidman College of Business last summer to discuss what the University might do to strategize and bring awareness in the Alternative and Renewable Energy front, an Energy Summit was planned. Through collaborative efforts both within the University and with other organizations, West Michigan manufacturers, technology developers, and supply chain providers met to understand more fully the market opportunities Alternative and Renewable energy provides for West Michigan’s economy.

It is no surprise that Fred Keller has received many rewards for his leadership and innovation in many areas. Among them are Chrysler’s Technology Role Model Award, the White House’s Ron Brown Award for Corporate Leadership, and the National Governors’ Association’s Distinguished Service Award. In 2004, Keller was named to the U.S. Department of Commerce Manufacturing Advisory Council, where he was appointed chairman in May 2008.

Anyone who works with Fred quickly recognizes that he is authentic; he acts with integrity; and he will perform his due diligence before engaging in a new activity or venture. These attributes help make him a prime target for service to many organizations, including as a director of Meijer, Inc. and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the National Advisory Board of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP).

We can attest to the fact that Fred Keller’s service on the Seidman Dean’s Advisory Board makes a world of difference to our success and outreach.
CELEBRATING FACULTY ACHIEVEMENT
PEW AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

In keeping with the University’s Mission that promotes excellent teaching and active scholarship, Seidman faculty were recently honored at a Faculty Awards Convocation.

PEW TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Aaron Lowen, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Economics
Joined Grand Valley in 2003

Dr. Lowen’s economics courses are both challenging and engaging. He promotes active learning in his classroom where students are often involved in games and hands-on activities, discussion, and presentations. He is able to make the abstract theories of economics clear and concrete through frequent, effective use of current events and related issues. Dr. Lowen provides continual challenges to his students to hone their critical thinking skills along with the development of their disciplinary knowledge.

Parag Kosalge, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Management
Joined Grand Valley in 2003

Dr. Kosalge nurtures his students’ intellectual curiosity by using a vibrant mix of theory and his extensive industry experience to keep his courses current and relevant. He is dedicated to ensuring student learning, as evidenced by his ready availability for consultation, prompt and detailed feedback on assignments, and advanced use of technology and real-life business problems in the classroom. Among the multiple effective approaches to teaching that Dr. Kosalge uses are innovative business games and other creative project assignments.

UNIVERSITY AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTION IN A DISCIPLINE

Ashok Kumar, Ph.D.
Professor of Management
Joined Grand Valley in 1992

Professor Kumar enjoys a worldwide reputation in operations, quality, and supply chain management. His individual and collaborative research with other renowned scholars in North America, Asia, and Europe has resulted in top-tier contributions to his discipline that set him apart among his peers. He has published over 60 well-received articles in top journals, served as an editor for six prestigious journals, organized and served as program chair for the International Conference on Mass Customization, designed 11 new courses for the Seidman College of Business, and has won numerous awards for his research and teaching. He serves as a collegial, strong role model for others as he continually works to develop his courses and scholarly contributions in his ever-changing field.

OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARD

Maris (Star) Swift, J.D.
Associate Professor of Business Law
Joined Grand Valley in 2000

Associate Professor Swift focuses her publications and teaching on mediation and arbitration and teaches courses in labor employment law. She has also served as Chair of the Michigan Employment Relations Commission. Students and peers note how skillfully she uses her life experiences to effectively present material and concepts. In their very favorable critiques, students describe her teaching as well organized and planned, creative, and challenging—challenging enough that one of them created a group, “We Survived Swift and Love Her for It.” A tangible measure of her teaching effectiveness is the many students she has motivated to pursue a career in law.
Siedman College alumni, students, and business community members packed the house to hear Mark Murray, former Grand Valley State University President and current President of Meijer, Inc. Murray’s remarks for the annual Ambassador Secchia Lecture Breakfast were directed primarily to students and focused on the skills needed to return Michigan to growth.

Murray contended that two phenomena have fundamentally and irreversibly changed our world, creating different challenges and opportunities: globalization and sequencing the gene. Regarding the former, he noted the perfect interception of improved transportation, information technology, and lower trade barriers; and he cited the incredible opportunities for improvements and changes as a function of sequencing the gene. To realize these opportunities in a world of declining trade barriers and where half to two-thirds of students in some countries pursue degrees in science and related fields, the U.S. and Michigan will need to focus much more on science and entrepreneurship.

Noting the relationship between the economic vitality of a state and the proportion of its citizens with college educations, Murray observed that big business seeks out areas with smart people, and small businesses flourish in such environments. He reminded the audience that Michigan falls below the national average for college-educated citizens. On the positive side, he pointed out that Michigan is a friendly environment for entrepreneurs.

Murray challenged students to achieve competitive advantage by focusing on skill development, and he elaborated on those skills necessary for students to get a “toehold” in the economy and those needed to realize transformational capability. He contended that the “toehold” step requires traditional skills acquired in college, and he emphasized quantitative skills, noting that business and industry are increasingly measurement oriented.

Essential for competitive advantage following entry into the workplace include skills in intercultural understanding and capacity, a healthy skepticism of the status quo, and integrity. Intercultural understanding is best attained through study abroad and other ways students challenge themselves beyond their comfort zones. Skepticism is distinguished from cynicism as a healthy questioning of the status quo solely for the purpose of improving. A liberal arts approach through history, literature, and philosophy develops this skill. Murray pointed out that integrity is a distinct competitive advantage in that it removes obstacles and expedites transactions, and that West Michigan has a culture of trust; people are good for their word. These skills should be applied entrepreneurially to get Michigan back to growth. Entrepreneurship is a vibrant part of who we are, and we need to continue if we want to succeed.

Murray also admonished higher education to encourage cross-disciplinary approaches and to give students more choices to enable them to pursue their interests. He suggested that businesses hire more interns to tackle the many worthwhile projects that regular staff are unable to accommodate due to higher priorities, and that companies look for generalists for entry-level positions when possible. Finally, he challenged government to push forward by investing in the future and ensuring an environment friendly to entrepreneurship and risk-taking. At all levels, expecting of ourselves world-class performance is essential for moving Michigan forward.

Special Events

Meijer President Addresses Seidman
Despite Michigan’s economic woes, Birgit Klohs, President of The Right Place, Inc. shared her optimism regarding West Michigan’s economy and her insight into factors creating and impacting the challenges faced by Michigan’s business and government leaders. The annual West Michigan State of the Economy address was presented to a full house of alumni, students, and community members at Grand Valley State’s DeVos Center.

Legislator term limits were cited by Ms. Klohs as the most significant factor affecting Michigan’s long-term economic success. She noted that the 6-year term limit has created short-term vision in Lansing. Substantive positive economic change in Michigan will take 10 to 15 years, and decision-makers must align their goals accordingly.

Ms. Klohs noted that, contrary to rumor, manufacturing is not dead, nor is the automobile industry. The automobile is the most complex consumer product in the U.S.; every job in the auto industry creates 7 others; and most of the automobile R&D in the world is happening in Michigan. Michigan has a highly skilled work force, and the state must ensure that its young people develop the expertise required of the new manufacturing environment, an environment in which needed skills have changed dramatically from Granddad’s time.

Michigan has 20% of the world’s fresh water, which is a unique natural resource. Shortages elsewhere are threatening Michigan’s ability to preserve its water, and the audience was encouraged to keep the pressure on legislators to ensure Michigan’s collective voice is heard in Washington where water usage policies will be made.

The move toward life sciences in Grand Rapids was jump started with the Van Andel Research Institute 12 years ago. The subsequent cluster of medical buildings, including Grand Valley’s Cook Health Services, Michigan State University’s College of Human Medicine, and significant new hospitals and hospital additions have changed the conversation in West Michigan, noted Ms. Klohs. She pointed out that a life sciences corridor now runs from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo, reflecting regional collaboration critical for global competition. The opportunity to play a key role in renewable energy industry also exists, according to Klohs, and Michigan is challenged to establish renewable portfolio standards to attract this industry.

Ms. Klohs cited positive factors for Michigan including one of the finest systems of higher education in the world, a skilled work force, and an innovative spirit. West Michigan needs to maintain and sustain infrastructure essential to support industry, strong K–12 education and other quality of life features to attract and retain talent, and local risk capital to leverage capital infusion from elsewhere to support commercialization and leverage innovation.
As Dean of Howard University’s School of Business in Washington D.C., the largest Historically Black University in the United States, Dr. Barron Harvey has gained an appreciation for diversity as he interacts with students from around the country and the world. Dean Harvey shared his own perspective with students, faculty, staff, and the business community at a recent celebration of Black History Month. He recounted that Black History Month began as an expansion of Negro History Week, established in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson.

Woodson, born to former slaves, enrolled in high school at the age of 20 and subsequently went on to earn his Ph.D. from Harvard University. His strong belief that African Americans were denied their history led him to educate African Americans about their history. He selected a week in February that embraced the birthdays of both Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

Dr. Harvey recalls that his own history classes were very ordinary with no mention of Black History except for George Washington Carver and his experiments with the peanut, as well as the American Civil War and slavery. Most history books and many other textbooks were devoid of any positive images of black people and their struggle for equality.

While many other nationalities and ethnic groups celebrate their own heritage, African Americans are the only group that was brought to this country as slaves. Harvey contends that today’s youth need to be inspired and educated through commemoration of Black History Month. African American youth need to know more about their history, its struggles and triumphs, in order to better understand themselves. Others need to be aware of the many contributions that African Americans have made to this country. We also can strive harder to understand each other’s culture which can help break down barriers and provide a smooth transition into the broader society. By embracing diversity we can all help to find different and varied solutions to today’s problems.

While strides have been made to level the playing field for African Americans seeking a quality education and securing equitable employment opportunities, many must still overcome decades of challenges that included discrimination and lack of opportunities to build wealth.

Why Celebrate Black History Month? Dr. Woodson wisely stated that “If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.”

“If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.”

— Carter G. Woodson
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