

Business schools rethink their roles

By ADAM BIEGELAND
DAVID SIMANOFF

The Emory Wheel, Emory U.

Perhaps fictional character Gordon Gecko of "Wall Street" best summed up the 1980s by saying, "Greed is good." Business schools used to churn out class after class of Geckos, each with aspirations of private parking spaces on Wall Street and a flashy BMW parked in it.

But the 1990s have ushered in a new philosophy in American business education. More emphasis is being placed on practical management and interpersonal skills in addition to the staples of number-crunching and finance.

"Business schools, especially graduate business schools, are being asked to do more things than they've done before," said Jim Schmotter, associate dean of Cornell U.'s Johnson School of Management.

Schmotter pointed to the challenges of the global marketplace, new technology and the need for pragmatism as the reasons for schools' changing curriculums.

By the end of the '80s, businesses began to see MBA students as technical experts and risk-averse managers, according to a widely circulated report by business professors at the U. of California-Irvine and the U. of Oklahoma. The MBA was no longer the "golden passport" to a successful career.

In the 1990s, "Student attitudes and values have shifted," according to Andrea Hershatter, assistant dean for students at Emory U.'s Business School. "Banks aren't hiring. Wall Street has cut way back, and the service industry is growing," she said. "People aren't thinking, 'How much money can I make?' They are more willing to learn through experience rather than to think about the fast track into management."

At the U. of Michigan School of Business Administration, for example, teams of first-year MBA students will spend seven weeks as



KEVIN THOMASON, UNIVERSITY JOURNAL, U. OF VIRGINIA

consultants to local businesses.

There is a new emphasis on getting people working in teams to solve problems in addition to traditional disciplines and work in the classroom, said Paul Danos, associate dean of Michigan's Business School.

"Businesses want people with the ability not just to understand specific disciplines, but work across them and solve problems as total quality managers," he said.

Procter & Gamble has teamed up with the business school at Emory U. to study the relationship between business and the customer. The company hired eight first-year students as interns last summer to work in teams. That experience formed the basis of discussion and research for a marketing class taught on campus last fall.

Business schools are faced with another challenge in the '90s — competition with each other. Armed with popular rankings, such as those in U.S. News and World Report, students must evaluate the schools

and decide which one offers the most for them. "If anything positive can be said about the rankings, which are very subjective and unreliable, they have forced schools to pay attention to what the market wants rather than forcing a product on the market," said Emory's Hershatter. Some students say they like the rankings, though.

"The administration is much more willing to listen to students," said David Andis, an MBA student at Michigan. This past year, the school instituted mid-semester course evaluations at the students' request.

A recent seminar at Emory dealt with student understanding of ethics in business. Said Emory senior David Weisberg, "The cases we studied about business decisions were the basis of discussion."

Schmotter countered, however, that business schools cannot force ethics upon students. "I think it is naive to think that something taught in one course will make student a more ethical person," she said.

Students get paid to evaluate professors

Rensselaer teachers think new method will improve classes already in progress

By RICHARD WALLNER
The Rensselaer Polytechnic, RPI

Many students dread them, some students look forward to them, and some students could care less about them. But teacher evaluations are something every student will have to fill out at one time or another during college.

At Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, a chosen few will have the privilege of evaluating their professors over the course of the semester for cash.

For their time and patience they get paid \$100.

The newly formed program, which was the brainchild of Undergraduate Dean Herbert Richtol and the faculty at RPI, was established last fall after RPI professors told him they wanted a program where students could come to them with their suggestions and complaints.



THANH NGUYEN, THE RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC, RPI has made evaluations a part-time job.

Two or three students in each of 10 classes meet with their professors once a week to discuss how the class is going and what can be done to improve the course.

In return for their time, they receive \$100. Richtol set up the program and allowed

the faculty members to decide when the meetings would take place. "I wanted to let students and faculty set up their own ground rules," he said.

The program began on an experimental basis last fall.

So far, Richtol said, all of the professors who are involved in the program have reported very positive results.

He said they enjoy the opportunity to improve their classes during the ongoing semester.

"It's very helpful to provide a vehicle for midterm corrections, because even if the professor has taught the course before, each class is different," Richtol said.

Harry McLaughlin, associate dean of science and professor of mathematics, was part of the program last fall.

He is also a believer in Rensselaer's new program. He said students helped teachers to adjust to problems in the courses as well as point out things that were good in each class.

"We made some significant mid-course corrections," McLaughlin said of the student evaluations. "When things needed changing, they told us."

Trying to get a handle on this 1040 tax thing

By AMY YUHN

The State News, Michigan State U.

Midterms, finals, summer jobs — just when you thought your stress level had peaked, the government put the icing on the cake.

Tax time is here.

Taxes can be a frustrating experience, but IRS officials say a little time and preparation can make filing taxes easier.

Students must file tax returns if they fall into one of two basic categories, said Valetta Rose, office supervisor for H&R Block Executive Tax Service Division in East Lansing, Mich.

"They would have to file if they have unearned income over \$550 and are being claimed as a dependent by their parents, or if they have withholdings and want to get it back," Rose said.

Unearned income is money received from investments, interest or dividends, and withholding is money taken from job earnings.

Ely Maccani, public affairs specialist with the Internal Revenue Service said students should file the easiest form possible. Most students will file either a 1040EZ or a 1040A form. The long 1040 form is used when your itemized deductions are greater than the standard deduction.

"The easier the form is for us to process, the faster you get your refund," Maccani said.

Forms were mailed out just after the new year. Additional forms are available at local IRS offices, most libraries or by calling the IRS' Forms and Publications hotline at 1-800-829-3676. Maccani said most campuses have forms available and many offer volunteer preparation assistance.

But she said most students should be able to file just by using the instructions booklet provided by the IRS.

What to have when filing:

- A W-2 form from every place of employment for 1991.
- Interest statements from any savings accounts.
- Income statements from all investments.
- A correct filing form.
- A copy of last year's form for reference.

"And a calculator isn't a bad idea either," Maccani said, adding math errors are among the most common mistakes made on tax returns.

This year's filing deadline is fast approaching.

Returns must be postmarked by midnight, April 15, and many United States Post Offices will remain open later to accommodate late filers.

Maccani said the quicker someone files, the better. It will take about four to six weeks to get refunds from returns filed April 15, she said.