



Getting Down to Business

By Dr. Edward French and Dr. Maria Garcia

Three components make up the business program at Franklin Pierce University: the traditional undergraduate program offered by the College at Rindge, as well as the adult undergraduate and the graduate business programs, both offered by the College of

Graduate & Professional Studies (CGPS). The business program began in 1972 when the Department of Economics and Business was introduced on the Rindge campus. Since then, the program has grown to include five undergraduate business degrees (expanding to six), as well as an M.B.A. program with six concentration tracks. Based on our fall 2012 headcount data, the business programs represent an impressive 20 percent of the student population.

The business programs have a common goal, but there are differences, including reporting structures, delivery methods, and student profiles. Despite these differences, we are one University and take great pride in our ability to work together in a collaborative fashion, with the ultimate goal of meeting the mission of the University and the needs of the student.

This collaborative spirit has existed for a number of years but is now developing in more robust ways. Three specific areas of collaboration include the research, development, and launch of the Business Plus

program in 2011 and first offered to students in 2012-13; program accreditation efforts which commenced in 2011 and are expected to conclude with business program accreditation in 2014; and a new and more formal cooperation and collaboration with the first joint appointment of a faculty member to both Rindge and CGPS.

Business Plus +

The Business Plus programs are Franklin Pierce's answer to students looking for pathways to navigate college and to earn their degree in less time. These programs provide

Business majors the opportunity to complete a business degree in as little as three years, and the completion of a master's degree in as little as one additional year.

Benefits of becoming a Business Plus student are numerous. The program comes in many flavors: accelerated 3, 3+1, 4+1, and +1. An important aspect that differentiates our program is the ability of students to switch programs or return to a traditional model at any point in time. Moreover, students in the program are assigned a Plus advisor in addition to their regular advisor. The Plus advisors work with the

students to help them navigate the program and to stay on track. Students in the accelerated undergraduate program may save as much as \$34,000 (based on current rates) in tuition and room and board. Seniors may transfer up to six graduate-level undergraduate credits into their graduate program, resulting in a tuition savings of as much as 15 percent (or \$3,400 at current rates). Advisors work closely with students to develop personalized schedules to fit their needs. This is especially important to those students playing collegiate sports, working, or volunteering.

Sixteen students joined the program in 2012-13, and 17 more are expected to join this fall. One Business Plus student, **Susannah Batchelder '13**, who is already pursuing her M.B.A., shared, "The ability to start my graduate work as an undergraduate student opened up a world of opportunities for me. The program has pushed me to explore my potential, while expanding my learning and contributing to my professional experience."

Accreditation

The Franklin Pierce University Business programs took a gigantic step forward in 2011 by moving ahead with a decision to seek program accreditation. After a review of the possible accrediting bodies, the business faculty chose to pursue accreditation through the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE), a business program accreditor located in Lenexa, Kan., recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Consistent with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges standards, IACBE is an accreditor that is mission focused and outcomes based.

Franklin Pierce joined IACBE as an Educational Member in September 2011. After completion of Outcome Assessment plans for the graduate and undergraduate business programs and the submission of a comprehensive package supporting the school's request for accreditation candidacy, a representative from the IACBE conducted a candidacy site visit in September 2012. In November 2012, the IACBE Board of Commissioners approved



Small Business Advisory Group

The Small Business Advisory Group (SBA) is a great opportunity for undergraduate business students on the Rindge campus to develop direct experience in the business world. The SBA consulting group consists of a problem-solving student team and a faculty advisor that assist New Hampshire small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and special projects for Franklin Pierce University. Throughout the semester, the consulting group develops business plans, marketing plans, eCommerce strategies, advertising/public relations campaigns, marketing research, and other strategic deliverables that aid in the success and growth of the organization.

The SBA experience allows team members to learn how to work directly with a client and develop communication, team, and leadership skills. Students are highly motivated when they are engaged with hands-on business problems. Students apply what they have learned in their coursework, but also crystallize their career paths due to the insights they gain as practical consultants.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the SBA completed work for Sedona Pump Stations, LLC, which specializes in solar hot water pumps for home owners. The SBA created a complete portfolio of marketing deliverables to attract both consumers and distributors to Sedona's products, including a brochure, professional page, fact sheet, and direct mail piece, all designed and executed based on research and market analysis. A second project completed by the SBA included a research project related to the sale and distribution of community works of art on the Franklin Pierce University campus.

~ By Jason Little, Professor of Marketing



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the University's application for accreditation candidacy. We are in the midst of completing a comprehensive self-study document that addresses nine IACBE accreditation standards: Outcomes Assessment, Strategic Planning, Curriculum, Faculty, Scholarly and Professional Activities, Resources, Internal and External Relationships, International Business Education, and Educational Innovation. A site visit is scheduled for March 2014, and the IACBE Board of Commissioner's decision on our accreditation application is expected in June 2014.

Countless hours have been spent gathering the self-study data, and then analyzing and assessing this data, and reflecting on areas of success as well as those that may

need improvement. One of the early observations made during the self-study process is the need for the business programs to work together more closely.

Joint Faculty Appointment

Another highlight of the closer working relationship between Rindge and CGPS is the first joint faculty appointment. Dr. Andrea McGill-O'Rourke will start in the fall 2013 as an assistant professor and program coordinator for the new Rindge Healthcare Administration undergraduate business degree, where she will spend three-quarters of her time. The other quarter of her time will be spent with CGPS, supporting the adult undergraduate and the M.B.A. in Health Administration programs. Her responsibilities will include curriculum development, teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and the development of pathway programs to create a seamless transition for students to complete both undergraduate and graduate degrees in Healthcare Administration.

To ensure relevancy of curriculum and development of internship and networking opportunities, Dr. McGill-O'Rourke will develop outreach opportunities with industry leaders in the health field.

Dean Kerry McKeever observes, "Not only does Dr. McGill-O'Rourke bring 20 years of experience to her position, but she is conversant in the contemporary shifts taking place in

the healthcare administration field as we speak."

Mission Ready

These are just a few of the exciting things going on within the business programs. These ongoing efforts are creating greater and stronger links between the programs, consistent with the goal of "One University" and a desire to provide real and concrete opportunities for our students. As we move forward, we are focused on looking at business programming from the macro perspective. Our efforts and activities will address what is needed for the business programs to deliver on the mission of the University by preparing "students to become confident, knowledgeable individuals and leaders of conscience."



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Business PLUS Programs