

Entrepreneurial Studies at Rider

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Alumni Newsletter

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Alumni Update: Ari Bluestein 2006 Entrepreneurial Studies Graduate

Ever since elementary school, I had a huge passion for sports and the sports industry. My long dream was to become a sports broadcaster so I could talk about sports as my career. Once I got into high school, I realized that dream may be hard to achieve so I focused on more practical careers such as accounting and finance. While at Rider, I decided to double major in Finance and Entrepreneurial Studies because of my interest in starting new businesses. I thought that I could break into the sports industry by starting my own business in this field and becoming known in the industry on my own.

The Rider entrepreneurship program inspired me to explore my entrepreneurial spirit and start my own business. When I was a student in Dr. Radha Chaganti's Small Business Management course, I was motivated by the readings and lectures to start my own business as soon as possible. Hence, I came up with the idea to create Sports Fan Base.com, an interactive website for sports fans with features that were different than any other website available to the public.

In 2005, I launched Sports Fan Base.com on my own to see if the

website could function as a true business model. However, the website didn't reach its full potential until Dr. Ron Cook and Dr. Chaganti approached me about participating in the new Student Venture Experience program. With the guidance of Dr. Cook and Dr. Chaganti and the generous funding of the SVE program, I was able to re-design Sports Fan Base.com, promote it on a level I had never done before and hire interns to help in advertising sales.

(Continued on Pg. 3)

Reflections of a Student Consultant: Kwesi Vincent 2009

Taking the Small Business Institute's graduate student consulting course at Rider University was one of the most valuable experiences of my entire business school education. The consulting experience is perhaps the closest approximation to a thesis or capstone project there is for a graduate business student. The course presents a unique forum for students to examine the issues entrepreneurs and small business owners face and subsequently identify solutions for them. This process gives MBA students the chance to apply many of the topics and principles we learn about in the classroom. Along with the chance to address real world business issues, the consulting experience course also affords the opportunity to work in collaboration with other business school students and exchange our knowledge and experience with one another. Through the consulting experience course you also have the ability to learn from expert faculty like the Small Business Institute's director, Dr. Ronald Cook, whose extensive knowledge and experience in the area of entrepreneurship and small business provides useful guidance throughout the consulting process. It is this hybrid of application and experiential learning that made my experience in the consulting experience course such a great asset to both my professional and personal development.

The client my team members and I worked with during our consulting experience was the Morrisville, PA based firm Vanquish Fencing, which is a company that builds and installs animal deterrent systems for

electrical substations. The owner was looking for ways to increase the frequency and volume of the business' sales. Our team's success in this endeavor required us to obtain an understanding of the firm's customers as well as their competitors. After gathering the information on our client's market environment, our consulting team had to synthesize what we learned into strategies that would help our client increase his market share. Developing these strategies gave us the opportunity to learn more about the effective use of marketing and sales management tools such as search engine optimization and customer relationship management (CRM) software. By working on one of the most fundamental challenges facing many businesses of all sizes, my business acumen was tested and greatly improved.

The members of my team had very different backgrounds and experiences, all of which helped inform our approach to the solution we provided our client. Being able to collaborate and learn from the experiences of my team members was immeasurably valuable. The collaborative process also proved to be an idyllic opportunity to demonstrate my knowledge and skills. As a result, not only did I acquire new information from my teammates, but by sharing my competences, I was able to reinforce those attributes which helped increase my proficiencies in those areas. The ability to work effectively in a team is one the key skills a business professional must have, and the consulting experience is a great training ground for becoming an

effectual team player.

One of the great advantages of the consulting experience is that it is an actual course and not just an independent study project. The format of this course affords you the ability to receive feedback and guidance from the knowledgeable faculty of the Entrepreneurial Studies department, in particular from Dr. Cook. While not providing our team with any direct solutions, Dr. Cook served as a great resource through his understanding of the needs of entrepreneurs and his ability to effectively evaluate our work throughout the consulting process. Dr. Cook's feedback helped guide our team through a highly organized pedagogical process that resulted in our team's creation of a final report, detailing our findings and solutions, that would be competitive with any document that paid full time consultants would produce.

Having the opportunity to devise solutions that impact the bottom line of an actual business is an experience that has furthered my business erudition and personal growth in a variety of areas. I will take these gains with me throughout my journey as business professional and a productive member of society. Whether or not you strive to start your own business one day, going through the consulting experience as an MBA student is not only valuable, but also one of the most enjoyable and multi-faceted learning opportunities there is.

Cover Story, cont.

Now in 2010, Sports Fan Base.com is still up and running, but with low website traffic. But not all is lost however as my idea of using a business to vault myself into the sports industry was realized. Since the launching of Sports Fan Base.com, I have made appearances as an analyst on ESPN Radio, written articles for Examiner.com and other various websites, hosted online radio shows and podcasts for different websites and I have established numerous connections in the sports industry.

But the latest news has been the greatest achievement in my young career thus far. For the 2010-2011 college basketball season, I will serve as an analyst and play-by-play commentator for the live radio broadcasts for Drexel University women's basketball. This is a great opportunity for me and this can hopefully launch my career as a sports broadcaster.

This would not have been possible if not for the influence of Dr. Cook and Dr. Chaganti, the curriculum of the Rider Entrepreneurial Studies

program and the Student Venture Experience. I am extremely thankful for all the guidance, knowledge and skills I have acquired from the aforementioned sources as they have made my childhood dream come true.

Check out the Drexel Media Guide

<http://www.sidearmdmg.com/drexel/wbball/>

Listen to Ari's broadcasts at:

www.drexeldragons.com

New Faculty

We are delighted to welcome Lee J. Zane, our new Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurial Studies. His research interests are focused on entrepreneurship (opportunity evaluation/pursuit), social networks and cognition. He has presented his research at various conferences at the local,

national and international level; and has published in Journal of Strategy and Management, and the Journal of Management. His teaching interests cover both entrepreneurship and general business strategy. Prior to entering academia, Lee accumulated extensive sales, managerial and

consulting experience through his founding, managing and later selling a technology-oriented venture. Lee is now the faculty advisor for the Entrepreneurial Studies club and is looking forward to help expand Rider's entrepreneurial activities.

Additions to the MBA Program

Recently, the MBA program has undergone many changes. The Entrepreneurship concentration has added two courses- Green Entrepreneurship and New Venture Launch—to the curriculum. The Green Entrepreneurship course focuses on new or existing businesses developing sustainable practices. Students will learn how the technical aspects of

sustainability interact with the more practical demands of running a business while acting ethically.

The New Venture Launch helps students discover and nurture their entrepreneurial potential and enhance their entrepreneurial spirit. This course provides students with experience in the process of actually starting and running a small new

business under the supervision and guidance of faculty. Prospective student entrepreneurs can apply for seed funding in the form of a matching loan up to a maximum \$5,000. This course combines training, funding and mentoring to give students an exceptional learning opportunity.

Corporate Sponsor

The Entrepreneurial Studies program is proud to announce a new corporate sponsor of our Small Business Institute® (SBI): Grand Bank. Grand Bank is located in Hamilton Square, NJ and the president and CEO is Mark Wolters. Mark is a Rider Alum and was a member of an SBI student consulting team while earning his degree. We deeply thank him and the bank for their support of our efforts.

Grand Bank's philosophy and private banking environment sets them miles apart from the competition. They offer sit-down teller stations, a relaxed setting and a friendly staff who know that their main purpose is to offer you responsive, flexible and personalized service. It's just good business and it's what you deserve.

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Phone

(609) 514-3900 or 1 (800) 234-3459

Hours

Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Website

www.grandbk.com



Breaking news!! Both the 2010 graduate and undergraduate student consulting teams finished 3rd place nationally in the SBI project of the year competitions! (more in the next issue)



Rider is a proud member of AACSB International with dual accreditation for their Business School and Accounting Program.



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