Proposal for a

Professional Enrichment and Development Program

A New Pillar of the Undergraduate Experience

SUMMARY

The present document describes a proposal for a *Professional Enrichment and Development Program* advanced by the Student Development Committee and endorsed by the CEPC at its last meeting of the AY 2009/2010.

The *main objectives* of the program are: (1) to enhance the readiness of Silberman College of Business undergraduate students to succeed as business professionals upon graduation; (2) to foster the development in our students of a set of skills, capabilities and knowledge essential for success upon graduation that complement the academic and technical foundation provided through the curriculum; (3) to build students’ confidence and maturity as they transition from the role of students to that of professionals; (4) to enable our students to benefit from the University’s co-curricular resources and opportunities for professional enrichment and development; and (5) to enhance the overall quality of SCB undergraduate students’ experience.

The proposed program will involve *activities in seven key areas of development*: (1) job-search preparation; (2) pre-graduation work experience; (3) understanding business and specific industries; (4) global and multi-cultural understanding; (5) communication and interpersonal skills; (6) leadership skills; and (7) professional ethics. There will be both required and elective activities.

The program will be *implemented in three phases*. In the *first phase*, specific program activities will be promoted and/or required in SCB courses with which they exhibit close affinity in terms of objectives and content. The Student Development Committee will engage in a process of consultation with the departments and faculty to identify suitable matches between program activities and courses. The decision to associate a given course with program activities will rest with the department responsible for the course. The program activities will primarily take place outside the classroom. In the *second phase*, SCB will promote and increase the offering of program-relevant extra-curricular activities for our students on both campuses. Student participation will be encouraged through various means, with the goal of increasing student interest and involvement in activities of this kind. Finally, in the *third phase*, students will be required to complete a certain mix of required and elective activities in the seven key areas for development prior to graduation. A suitable system and administrative resources for tracking and monitoring participation will be put in place. Given its implications, prior to implementation of the program’s third phase, an addendum to this proposal outlining its specific features will be brought to the CEPC for review and will not be implemented without additional approval.

It is important to note that, in developing this proposal, the SDC conducted extensive benchmarking with our peer schools as well as with other institutions. Based on this, the SDC believes that—in addition to all student-related benefits—the program proposed here will offer a point of distinction for the college’s undergraduate offering.

It is proposed that the Professional Development and Enrichment Program be adopted as an integral component of the Silberman College of Business undergraduate program.
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Introduction

Students who graduate from the Silberman College of Business have passed courses in all departments and have been exposed to issues in every major discipline. We know, however, that to successfully launch a career (or in some cases, to continue one), a graduate must possess broad awareness of the business world, be savvy about building a career, and develop the capability for leadership in the world of work. SCB already offers a variety of outside speakers, career development help, and global exposure. Regrettably, these resources are woefully under-utilized.

This document describes a proposed program for Professional Enrichment and Development that will encourage and eventually require participation in a broad range of developmental activities. When fully integrated, these activities will involve students in cross-disciplinary issues, career advancement tools, and leadership experiences. After extensive benchmarking and discussions inside and outside the university, the Student Development Committee thinks that upon completion of this program, our graduates will be appreciably better equipped to take their place as fully prepared professionals. Another consideration is that while not unique, this type of program is quite distinctive among SCB’s Competitive, Comparable, and Aspirant Peer schools. As a result, carrying out this program will allow SCB to become even more effective at attracting excellent students and producing highly successful alumni. Below is a description of proposed objectives, program content, and suggested administration procedures.

A. Objectives

1. To enhance our undergraduate students’ readiness for success in the world of professional work.

2. To assist in the development of skills, capabilities and knowledge that complement the academic and technical foundation provided through the curriculum, in areas deemed essential for success upon graduation. These areas include, but are not limited to:
   a. Job-search preparation
   b. Pre-graduation work experiences
   c. Understanding business and specific industries
   d. Global and multicultural understanding
   e. Communication and interpersonal skills
   f. Leadership skills
   g. Professional Ethics.

3. To build students’ confidence and maturity as they prepare to leave school and enter the world of work.

4. To increase students’ awareness of and accessibility to the co-curricular resources and opportunities available to them through the university.

5. To enhance the overall quality of SCB undergraduate students’ experience
B. The PDP in the Context of Related Offerings within the University

SCB and other units within the University currently offer a range of activities and resources that may be regarded as similar to or as potential components of a PDP. These include activities and programs organized by Career Services, student clubs and societies, SCB’s institutes, Honors programs and similar special tracks for selected students.

By design, the PDP seeks to:

1. Constitute an integrated program of professional development, rather than a set of independent activities
2. Reach all Silberman College of Business students, ensuring that every graduate of our baccalaureate program has participated in a minimum set of activities conducive to attaining an acceptable level of preparedness for professional work.
3. Take advantage of and complement — rather than compete with or replace — existing offerings.

C. Design Principles of the PDP

1. Balanced Coverage of Key Skill and Knowledge Areas
   - Because of the importance of the areas identified in A.2 above, it is critical that the design of the PDP take into consideration the inclusion of developmental opportunities in all or most of these areas.

2. Flexibility
   - To the extent possible, the PDP should enable students to complete program requirements through a variety of activities that better suit their interests. While this may not be feasible in every area (e.g., every student should be able to prepare a professional-looking résumé), every effort should be made to ensure that students participate in activities that actively interest them.

3. Cooperation and Resource-Sharing
   - Given the numerous resources already dedicated by the University to activities suitable to the PDP, an effort should be made to draw upon such resources, enhance their utilization, and propose their redirection to more beneficial areas as needed.

4. Simplicity
   - To the extent possible, the PDP should be designed to minimize unnecessary complexity. The program design should be transparent to students and easy to administer.

5. Perceived Value
   - The PDP should be designed, promoted and explained in ways that maximize perceived value for all parties involved—students, faculty, administrators, and potential employers. In particular, the possible perception that it simply represents an added imposition upon students’ time must be minimized by ensuring that program activities are engaging and truly beneficial.

6. Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement
   - The program should include mechanisms to evaluate its quality and success, incorporating the input of key constituencies.
D. Program Activities

The program activities we recommend represent seven key areas of development:

- Job-search preparation
- Pre-graduation work experience
- Understanding business and specific industries
- Global and multi-cultural understanding
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Leadership skills
- Professional ethics

Appendix 1 outlines a Preliminary List of Activities.

E. Program Requirements

We recommend certain minimum levels of activity in each key development area, and distinguishing between “required” and “elective” activities. Appendix 1 illustrates this idea.

a. *Required Activities* are those deemed so critical that every student should complete without exception. As an example, some activities in job-search preparation (e.g., résumé preparation and critiquing, and mock interviews) might be regarded as such. In addition, students should achieve pre-established minimum levels of activity within certain categories, such as Job Search Preparation, Pre-graduation Work Experience, Understanding Business, and Leadership.

b. *Elective activities* are selected by students from a menu of options that fit their preferences.

Appropriate activities should be identified to be completed at different points during the four years of undergraduate studies such as at the conclusion of six semesters.

F. Organization and Administration of the PDP

The organization and administration of the PDP will be simpler if, to the extent possible, it is hinged to existing structures and processes within the College. Relatively few new activities might be originated over time to augment current offerings.

1. Program Administration

- An individual should be assigned to implement the PDP program and activities based on the principles determined by the SDC. The individual will report to the Office of the Dean and will be in charge of coordinating some of the activities involved in successfully carrying out the program. These include, among others, ensuring the offering of appropriate programs and activities (whether internally organized or in coordination with other units, such as Career Services, ISE, Rothman, and so on).
- The administrator will also coordinate the maintenance of records for the PDP. A computerized system (ideally, Datatel) should be used for tracking student completion of activities. Students should have easy access to their records to confirm their participation to date. Also, periodic notices can be sent to students, reminding them of the need to engage in program activities and publicizing upcoming qualified events and opportunities.
- An Advisory Board should be formed consisting of faculty from several departments and students. The Board can meet periodically to discuss concerns and student feedback and provide counsel to the administrator.
2. Program Delivery

- Many of the required activities may best be channeled as requirements in some of the current 18 business core courses.
  - Some BUSI courses do currently require that students complete some activities similar to those listed in Section D. above for credit. It would be necessary to evaluate whether other activities can be channeled through other courses (other BUSI as well as courses in other disciplines). This will require cooperation from faculty and therefore, a structure should be developed to minimize the additional effort required from faculty.
  - To the extent possible, faculty will not be burdened with organizing these activities. However, care should be placed in not overburdening the individual administering the program either.
- A system will be developed to keep track of the elective activities. Different verification systems may be appropriate depending on the activity.

3. Potential New Activities

- One means of promoting greater student awareness of today’s business world would be to begin periodic discussions of current business affairs and topics. One or two faculty from several departments over time could chair each one. The professor might first lay out some conceptual background and bring up a current topic from the business or political news. Then an interactive discussion could follow. These sessions on both campuses could include such things as recent strategic moves (e.g., Google advancing onto Microsoft’s turf), financial regulatory issues (implications of investigation of corruption at Goldman Sachs), sustainability management (Wal-Mart’s publicizing its Sustainability Index for vendors), health care reform (implications for small businesses and large) and the like.

- Another activity that would be fun and would complement the current affairs discussions would be to offer a “Current Business Quiz.” It could bring students together at one of several times, have a brief discussion, and then give them a closed-book quiz of current events. Sample items could be about recent mergers announced, the approximate level of the DJIA yesterday or its percent change since January 1st, matching prominent CEO names with their companies, etc. Debriefing it immediately would be a teaching moment. We could give out small prizes for good scores. The emphasis would be on having fun while learning more about the business world.

- Another way of enhancing the program offerings would be to arrange for many more outside speakers. Selected faculty and the program administrator would need to coordinate arrangements and publicity for events, which must be keyed to times of the week amenable to student schedules (currently some of our best speakers appear at 8:00 AM).

- The program could also serve as another way of motivating our students to exhibit desirable behavior. For instance, we could reward a student for bringing a high school student to visit the campus or motivating others to enroll at FDU. Some colleges have a well-developed program by which students serve as mentors for underclassmen. The mentoring students themselves learn valuable leadership lessons on coaching others.

G. Program Implementation

Implementation of the program will tentatively proceed in three phases.

In the first phase, specific program activities will be promoted and/or required in SCB courses with which they exhibit close affinity in terms of objectives and content. The Student Development Committee will engage in a process of consultation with the departments and faculty to identify suitable matches between program activities
and courses. The decision to associate a given course with program activities will rest with the department responsible for the course. The program activities will primarily take place outside the classroom.

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Based on the CEPC’s endorsement of the program at its May 2010 meeting, actions have been taken to initiate the first phase of the program during AY 2010-11.

We may consider how we could develop an appealing branding of the program so everyone can see all pertinent activities as part of an integrated whole.

H. Competitive Implications

We should note that programs like this are not unique, but online research reveals that relatively few other colleges of business offer such well-articulated programs.

- Of SCB’s 10 Competitive Peers, three appear to have something similar to the program being proposed here.
  - William Paterson stands out with an extremely comprehensive and institutionalized program, the apparent result of several years of use.
  - The College of New Jersey requires all freshmen and sophomores to participate in the Business Professions Program, featuring career development work and required talks by outside speakers. Upperclassmen are invited to a group of other activities and an unusually broad array of student clubs.
  - Monmouth requires students to complete an Experiential Education unit for one semester with a Career Advisor and Planner. Then, as almost all schools do, they simply publicize their other offerings of study abroad, coop education, and career services.

- Other Competitive Peers describe the ambition for a kind of Professional Development Program, but these tend to be tied to various courses with no formal tracking of participation outside of classes.
  - Seton Hall University
  - Rider University

- Of the 8 other Comparable peers, only St. Joseph’s University offers something similar, and it too is primarily a combination of course-related activities and encouragement for coop education.

- Of the 6 Aspirant Peers, only Marquette has an extensive professional development program like this.

As a result, it appears that in developing this program for professional enrichment and development, SCB will not only markedly enrich the experience of its students but achieve a distinctive dimension of what an SCB degree represents. Over time this emphasis on broad-gauge exposure, leadership opportunities, and career readiness should enhance our ability to recruit and retain excellent students.
## Appendix 1

### Preliminary List of Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Search Preparation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Resume, cover letter, &amp; references preparation *</td>
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<td>Mock interview practice *</td>
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<td>Business card preparation *</td>
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<td>Informational interviews, with follow-up written report</td>
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<td>Additional resume critiquing</td>
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<td>Career information &amp; counseling sessions</td>
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<td>Portfolio planning and preparation</td>
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<td><strong>Pre-graduation Work Experience</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring through BUSI 2160 *</td>
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<td>Additional mentoring, including shadowing (1 semester, documented with written report)</td>
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<td>Internship (with or without faculty supervision)</td>
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<td>Field studies</td>
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<td><strong>Understanding Business &amp; Specific Industries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance at presentation by senior business executives (including Rothman Institute, Institute for Sustainable Enterprise, Sands of Time) *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance at day-long conference on business topic.</td>
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<td>Field trips to companies and major business institutions (e.g., NYSE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in periodic faculty-led discussions on business topics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passing score on periodic “Business Quiz”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial or small group session in library learning essential skills for researching companies and industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation of brief reports on the activities listed above for this key development area</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Global &amp; Multi-Cultural Understanding</strong></td>
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<td>Semester studying abroad, including Wroxton, Vancouver, other approved institutions</td>
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<td>Foreign experience (e.g., 1-2 weeks) for study or community service (e.g., Costa Rica)</td>
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<td>Participation in UN Pathways and other UN activities</td>
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<td><strong>Communication &amp; Interpersonal Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminars on topics such as dining etiquette, electronic communication etiquette, etc.</td>
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<td>Individualized sessions on effective presentations or business writing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular participation (not leadership) in a student organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership position in a student organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in business school competition (e.g., business plan, business simulation, Rothman Small Business Prize)</td>
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<td>Participation in community service trip out of the area &gt;= 5 days (e.g., Katrina rebuilding)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in community service &gt; 8 hours per year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance at seminars on teamwork, leadership, etc.</td>
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**Professional Ethics**

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<th>Subscribing to Honor Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>Company visit to ethics officers *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance at presentations or conference on ethics-related issues</td>
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(*) Activities required of all students

There will be a presentation at the March CEPC meeting where a progress report will be made.