

Like the little train that "thought it could," the University of New Brunswick in Saint John is about to take on an immense new challenge. It is about to launch a unique new Masters of Business Administration program scheduled to begin August 1997. By incorporating an innovative academic curriculum involving Atlantic Canadian business perspectives, quality faculty support, international recruiting strategies and leading-edge co-op learning philosophies, UNBSJ is about to compete with some of the top MBA pro-

grams in the world.

"Our new MBA program is the result of extensive research and planning," says Dr. Rick Miner, vice-president of UNBSJ. "Our business faculty and advisory council took a hard look at MBA programs from around the world when developing this program. As a result they combined the best aspects of leading programs, added some new elements essential to a well rounded business education, and packaged them into a concise, modular MBA program.

UNBSJ's program is so unique,

that many members of New Brunswick's business community are heralding it. Large and small companies are lining up to participate in and support it. Miner is very excited and confident of the MBA program's success. "We have broad-based support for the MBA from businesses such as NBTel, Simms, McCains and the Irving companies right down to small local insurance firms."

He believes the program has an edge over most other universities offering similar programs. In Saint John "we have the convenience of being *one* insti-

UNBSJ

The Little University that 'Thinks it Can' Go Global

by Brian McLaughlin

L-R: Michael Chan - MBA Graduate from UNBSJ and Sharon Lockery - Masters graduate. The MBA program will offer international experience for students from various parts of the globe.
Photo courtesy of CCL Group.



tution in *one* business community." Before joining UNBSJ, Miner was dean of the business faculty at St. Mary's University. He states that Halifax's business community has a limited interest in fostering extended partnerships with its post secondary institutions. "It was a very competitive field for all schools trying to acquire business community involvement. It was difficult there." In New Brunswick, and in particular Saint John (the province's largest urban and economic centre), UNBSJ can offer students a strong and committed private/public and post-secondary partnership.

Comprehensive 11-month learning

The UNBSJ MBA will be an 11-month accreditation program encompassing co-op work terms, international focus and cultural immersion. Courses and seminars will be offered from a wide spectrum of disciplines and philosophical approaches, covering a variety of trends in global business and economic studies. The program includes management, applied statistics and research, management accounting, economics and policy,

international marketing, production and operations, finance, information systems and technology management and project management. Students also have the option of participating in special topic seminars.

"The MBA at UNBSJ will require a student's total commitment," states Dr. John Chalykoff, dean of the university's business faculty. He is confident UNBSJ's MBA "ranks with the best in the world."

Moreover, he asserts UNBSJ's MBA is so "intensive and innovative" it is designed to produce graduates ready to deal with challenges of a modern business emerging in the global economy. The program provides more content and managerial skill building than most conventional two-year programs.

"We went literally all over the world and modelled this program from world-class examples," Chalykoff continues. "We went to many European, US and Canadian universities. We were particularly impressed with the Warton MBA program at the University of Pennsylvania. Consequently we've designed an 11-month program that mir-

rors the Warton program which allows students to work in industry."

Chalykoff says an especially appealing feature of their MBA is the integrated learning experiences which include "high level, executive seminars in special topics. UNBSJ already has specialists from MIT, Michigan State and the University of Toronto booked to speak." Many other guests are being scheduled.

The innovative workplace learning process is something the university's vice-president says will "provide students with a whole new dimension. It will give them a whole new way of validating what they are learning." The co-op placement schemes will provide students with more realistic and relevant global business and cultural perspectives. International students will receive placements with Atlantic Canadian businesses while Canadian students will be placed overseas.

The university means serious business with the high-profile MBA program. "Students must dedicate 11 months. They had better plan to work hard," stresses Chalykoff. At the end of the program "students will be able to run their own business or operate a sizable business unit of a larger company. I guarantee it!"

UNBSJ's top brass and the local community has spent over a quarter of a century developing a reputation as a progressive univeristy. Currently the fastest growing university campus in eastern Canada, UNBSJ is the fourth largest PhD granting institution in the Atlantic provinces. They have so much confidence in this new MBA program that they are willing to stake their hard earned reputation on it.

Overcoming historical stigmas

UNBSJ is determined to stand on its own merit as a *quality* small, but continually evolving, institution. Over the past 15 years, this 252 acre hillside campus overlooking the Kennebecasis River, has undergone tremendous external and internal developments. It now houses an expanded new co-ed residence, new academic and student facilities and modern athletics and sports centres. It offers over 30 undergraduate and graduate degree and certificate programs in arts, business administration,

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Establishing this latest MBA is consistent with UNBSJ's goal of creating new programs that are in demand academically. It would have been insufficient to simply duplicate traditional two-year MBA programs. Dr. Miner states that "It had to be something where we could show off our distinct area of competence and expertise. One of the areas was in the 'co-op' which we've been doing for a while now and we know how to do it well!"

This "marketable" MBA also accomplishes the university's mandate of increasing the international student population by 20 per cent.

World-class faculty

Dr. Chalykoff credits the concentrated involvement of the business sector and world-class faculty support for the program's integrity and value. "We see corporations as a partner in the delivery of this integrated program. From individual effectiveness through the work-term, and through sponsoring candidates it's a full partnership in the educational process."

The university also consulted industry locally, regionally and nationally when conducting research before designing this MBA. Chalykoff says it was paramount in the process "to consult the business community and develop from there."

There are 23 faculty members who will be instructing courses and stimulating the "olympic-style learning" process. Dr. Henryk Sterniczuk and Dr. Gregory Irving are two of the key professors who possess considerable experience in their fields.

Dr. Sterniczuk from the Polish Academy of Science, is a professor of management and international business. He has authored numerous articles and texts in his field and is also founder and operator of eight training centres for economic transformation scattered throughout the former communist bloc countries of Eastern Europe (Belarus, Kazakstan, Poland, Russia and Ukraine).

Dr. Sterniczuk was one of the principal faculty members who master-minded and developed the UNBSJ

MBA. He observed that the top European business schools offering MBA programs are pro-actively attempting interactive, progressive learning experiences. "The trend is to make the learning process more flexible yet more intensive. They create a kind of learning community where they move out of the normal teacher/student relationship. They try to be responsive for the learning process." It is no longer a one dimensional communication from professor to student. Rather the newest trends attempt to organize interactions through various forms of learning.

Olympic-style learning

"The Swiss MBA program makes you feel like you are in the Olympic training camps. People are simply trained for business there. Students use this time to load themselves. They take a one-year break in their careers to get the degree."

Subsequently, this is one style of learning process that UNBSJ's MBA will model and develop even further offering students the flexibility to incorporate advanced learning into their existing career objectives. It also will appeal to employers and industry who do not want to lose employees for an extended period of time as they would with traditional two-year programs. The Multilingual Polish professor says the "enormous competitive market" for both business schools and business communities were catalysts that forged these new "customer focused" trends in educating business executives. This small, remote university will be competing with top business schools around the world. Nonetheless, he is confident that UNBSJ's world-class MBA is marketable in Eastern Europe and South East Asia.

However, Sterniczuk admits that "price will be difficult for the (Russian) market" initially. And the MBA will not attract the new breed of adventurer "risk takers" that operate quasi legal activity in some parts of the former Soviet republics. "Eventually the surviving successors of these entrepreneurs will come to us." Yet immediate appeal and interest in the program is coming from the opposite end of the world.

Dr. Gregory Irving, is assistant professor of human resources and man-

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Dr. Irving oversees the recruitment and application process for UNBSJ's MBA. Thus far, he says: "Inquiries have been coming in from all over the globe." Despite the fact that the program was delayed a year due to prob-

lems obtaining an official designation, it appears as though the inaugural registration and enrollment slate will attract a sufficient contingent of international and national participants. "The response has been quite good. I've recently sent letters out to people who inquired from the US, India, Mexico, The People's Republic of China, Vietnam and Colombia - and this was just in one day!"

Inquiries are also coming from Halifax, Charlottetown, throughout New Brunswick, parts of Ontario and Western

Canada.

International Appeal Growing

Dr. Irving states that so far the majority of responses have been from international prospects. There is no limitation on the ratio of international versus Canadian students vying for the program. "It's basically first come, first serve." The only prerequisite? "We want people who have the capabilities to be successful and graduate." Qualified applicants must possess a degree in business administration, commerce or suitable equivalent. Essentially, the program will appeal to full-time professionals who want to pursue progressive career objectives and business education.

Consensus of UNBSJ's top administrators and key faculty is that it will successfully meet the immense challenges faced. Says Dr. Irving: "The strength of the UNBSJ MBA will be in allowing people to develop international contacts. Classmates will become contacts in other parts of the world." Attests Chalykoff, "It's very much geared to doing business in the global environment." States Dr. Miner: "[UNBSJ] is very committed to the growing internationalization of its campus . . . It's essential!"

Dr. Sterniczuk agrees. "Look at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. From that small town, they started the first MBA program in North America at the beginning of the century. They are still leaders in this area often attracting students who are in travelling distance to competitive larger universities in Boston, New York, and surrounding areas." He strongly believes UNBSJ's MBA "will find a niche" by offering quality, student-oriented education. "Based on that, I have complete faith in our program. I trust we will grow."

And seeing that UNBSJ is currently the fastest growing university in Atlantic Canada, the horizon looks very promising. "What we're offering, aside from the work experience, is a good, quality educational experience. One that is leading-edge," concludes Dr. Miner.

If you would like more information on UNBSJ's MBA program, contact the Faculty of Business at (506) 648-5682. Or you can reach them via email at mba@unbsj.ca. Tuition cost is \$18,000 Cdn.



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