

Higher Ed Opportunities

By Charlee Beasor

Fort Wayne Team ‘Mad’ About Business Forum

Business and basketball: We’ve read many times that all professional sports are “just a business,” but the two terms don’t always share a common bond. For the Fort Wayne Mad Ants, however, the pairing makes perfect sense.

Last year, the NBA development league team established the Mad Ants Business Forum, which hosts business professionals as lecturers during a six-session series. Speakers address the crowd and network with local business leaders, young professionals and college students prior to home basketball games at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.

“At first glance, why in the world would a basketball team start this?” admits Sarah Wladecki, vice president of the Mad Ants and business forum coordinator. “There was a team in Maine that realized they had connections to some pretty powerful people in the community.”

She notes that the forum encourages the “young professional demographic” to get involved with the team.

“They are potentially in the future going to rise to leadership positions in their companies. It’s a good group of people to get involved with,” Wladecki explains. “We also have connections with a similar group of very well-known and very successful business people,” thanks in large part to the team’s ties with the NBA, investors and team majority owner John Zeglis – former chairman and CEO for AT&T Wireless.

The team is partnering with Manchester College for the program’s second year.

“We didn’t really have (a partner) last year – we were just getting started, making sure we worked out all the kinks. Once we realized it was a successful program, we started talking to some people and Jo Young Switzer (president of Manchester College) was a speaker last year,” she mentions. “We reached out to her, and one of our employees just graduated from Manchester and knew President Switzer, and realized we had a shared interest.”

Manchester students are able to take part in the forum (now known as the Mad Ants Business Forum presented by Manchester College) for free.

Switzer says, “This is a natural collaboration for Manchester and our students. The Business Forum will expand on the strong academic foundation our students receive on campus. When they meet young professionals in these Forums, they will learn ways their college knowledge translates into the work world.”

Membership to the business forum is \$300 and includes participation in all six sessions and one floor-level season ticket for the 2011-12 Mad Ants season. Upcoming speakers include Mark Heckler, president of Valparaiso University, on March 15 and Jim Falkiner, professor at Manchester College, on April 6.



John Zeglis, majority owner of the Fort Wayne Mad Ants, offers his insights during one of the team’s business forum sessions (Randy Jackson photo).

INFORMATION LINK

Resources: Sarah Wladecki, Fort Wayne Mad Ants, at www.nba.com/dleague/fortwayne
Manchester College at www.manchester.edu

New Dual Degree Program Opens Doors for Nurses

Nursing has many components. Not only do nurses take care of patients, but nurse administrators keep the health care facility running through budgeting, strategic planning, leadership, health policy and more.

That’s why Indiana Wesleyan University’s (IWU) new dual degree program (the first of its kind for the school) is offering nurses the opportunity to take the next step in their careers by getting a dual Master of Nursing Administration (MSN) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

The program, offered currently to the first cohort of 14 students, was requested by students

and developed by Dr. Debra Drake, Ph.D., RN and Dr. Barbara Ihrke, Ph.D., RN.

“We saw nurses with bachelor’s degrees going and getting an MBA because they wanted to be an administrator in the hospital,” says Ihrke, dean of the School of Nursing. “To attain magnet hospital status you have to have a certain percentage of staff with nursing degrees, especially at the master’s level. People were getting an MBA, but it wasn’t in nursing. They needed people with MBA nursing content.”

The online degree program is 60 credit hours – 30 for the MSN and 30 for the MBA – and can be completed within three years.

“We had never had a dual degree program before, and that made it very interesting trying to figure out how many credits for each. (The administration) was supportive; it just took a while to walk through and get everything in the way it needed to be in,” Ihrke notes.

“Even in writing (the curriculum) we had to follow guidelines from our accrediting bodies, and make sure we were covering that body of essentials. (We) had to meet the requirements of the university, content mapping to cover everything.”

She explains that once the curriculum was written it went through two sets of academic affairs committees and councils – and it emerged much stronger for all of the inspection. Drake, interim division chair for the graduate programs in nursing at IWU, worked closely with the faculty and administration to get the program off the ground.

Ihrke sees the degree program empowering nursing students to pursue careers as chief nursing officers (CNOs) in hospitals, long-term care facilities, health clinics and other venues.

“They would be able to understand the nursing angle and also the business angle,” she asserts. “It does open it up for people moving into leadership roles and especially for magnet hospitals – they are looking for people with nursing degrees.”

“I just had lunch with a CNO today and she really believes that is the degree of choice for the chief nursing officer in a hospital. Budgeting and operations and accounting and economics are all so very important, but understanding the nursing organization and strategic planning, that’s also critical. The dual degree really is a nice marriage of both of them,” she adds.



The development of the dual degree program for nurses at Indiana Wesleyan University is filling a critical need.

INFORMATION LINK

Resource: Dr. Barbara Ihrke, Indiana Wesleyan University School of Nursing, at www.indwes.edu/Academics/School-of-Nursing

So You Want to Be An Entrepreneur? Look Here First

Bringing new business to Indiana is an important step in keeping the state ahead of its competitors. But just as critical to that mission is fostering an environment of home-grown entrepreneurship.

For students interested in following that path, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) has a single resource that lists entrepreneurship courses and degrees at all Indiana public and private colleges and universities.

The web site, www.in.gov/che/entrinv.htm, contains a one-page summary sheet with each institution’s name, entrepreneurial program offerings and contact information. It also includes a school-specific overview that provides details such as whether or not there is a major or minor in the field, school clubs that support entrepreneurship and other information.

The drive behind the inventory is the emphasis the 2011 General Assembly placed on expanding entrepreneurship efforts in the state.

“We are following up with the legislative mandate to create this inventory and we are pleased to do so because it’s an important issue, to create a culture of entrepreneurship,” remarks CHE Commissioner Teresa Lubbers. “It’s important that we look at ways

Indiana entrepreneurship program offerings are all available on one web site.



to diversify Indiana's economy – more successful entrepreneurs create companies, which create jobs – and allows us to not have all the eggs in one basket.”

She notes that Indiana institutions were happy to share information about their entrepreneurship courses and programs.

“Some of them have actual degrees, some have classes and offerings or clubs – you can tell from the web site that different institutions are doing it in different ways. It's important to our public institutions. It gives them an opportunity to tell what they are very proud of already, and gives students an opportunity to look at this in a clear way and compare across institutions,” Lubbers acknowledges.

The inventory will be updated at least annually. A few more proprietary and independent institutions are still needed to round out the list.

Employers should find great value in this inventory, she affirms. As employers will be the ones hiring students with these entrepreneurial classes and degrees, they have a stake in how the programs are designed.

“I hope there is a willingness on the part of employers to engage in what these degrees and programs will look like,” Lubbers outlines.

INFORMATION LINK

Resource: Teresa Lubbers, Indiana Commission for Higher Education, at www.in.gov/che

Losing its Luster? Growth Slows in Foreign Students Seeking U.S. Diplomas

A number of elements – price, degree programs offered and likelihood of getting a good-paying job among them – factor into where a student decides to attain higher education. All of these aspects are heightened when the student is from another country and considering a diploma from the United States.

That's why the state of the global economy, increased competition from other countries and less attractive job opportunities are all the more powerful when a student is considering coming to the U.S. for his or her higher education.

While the number of international students in the United States increased to a record high of 723,277 in the 2010-11 school year, the growth trend is declining. That was a 5% increase from the year before, according to the Institute of International Education's *Open Doors 2011* report.

In 2010, there was only a 1.6% rise in new enrollment. Both percentages were significantly less than the 16% surge that took place between 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

It's not cheap to go to college out-of-state, let alone out of the country. So, if the economy is wreaking havoc with families affording the basics, it's more likely that students will stick close to home for school. With American unemployment around 8.6%, it's also a detriment for foreign students to attain an American degree if there aren't as many job prospects for them after graduation.

More foreign institutions are creating better higher education prospects as well, meaning more competition for American schools. Over half of the top 25 countries that sent students to America for school had fewer students in the U.S. in 2010 than they did in 2009.

The news isn't great for businesses, especially those that recruit from the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields as foreign students account for a large number of those graduates and eventual employees.

It's not all gloom and doom, however. Indiana ranks 10th overall for the top states hosting international students and experienced an 8.3% growth from the previous year. Purdue University ranks fourth in the nation for U.S. institutions hosting international students and Indiana University-Bloomington comes in at No. 11 on that list.

INFORMATION LINK

Resource: Institute of International Education, *Open Doors 2011* at www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors

International students have more higher education options than ever before.

