Fairfield University

Accelerator and Mentoring Enterprise (FAME) launches
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Message from the Dean

Friends,

The Bloomberg Businessweek rankings for “Best Part-Time MBA Programs” was recently released, and we were gratified to be recognized, ranked number 30 among 78 national business programs. This is the first time we’ve applied to and been ranked on this list, which was based on a survey of recent graduates and academic quality measures, like GMAT scores, class sizes, and post-MBA outcomes.

I was especially pleased to see that our students gave our graduate program an ‘A+’ for “Teaching Quality.” This letter grade appropriately recognizes our excellent faculty. DSB professors balance their experience in real world businesses with their knowledge of current trends and skills. They are able to convey to students what is essential to business careers, because they have worked in hedge funds, advertising firms, major accounting firms, and information technology firms, among many others. They also balance their “knowledge leader” status in their areas of research expertise with a real concern for their teaching — conveying their knowledge in an experiential, dynamic, and — dare I say it? — fun way. I think that’s what students meant by their responses to this survey.

Rankings are one way to be recognized in the marketplace; another way is when the media pay attention to what you’re doing. Our launch of the Fairfield University Accelerator and Mentoring Enterprise (FAME) attracted the attention of media outlets from Yahoo! Finance to Newsday to WNPR, Morning Edition to the Connecticut Post to the Houston Chronicle. It’s a great story: we’re working with the Town of Fairfield and the business community on helping entrepreneurs develop their business ideas and plans. Faculty, alumni, and community mentors have been lining up to lend their help to potential new business owners.

And that’s the real message. It’s nice to be recognized, but it’s even better when the recognition is for helping and teaching others.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Gibson, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor
Dolan School of Business

Bloomberg Businessweek ranks DSB’s MBA among best

Bloomberg Businessweek has named Fairfield University Dolan School of Business’s part-time MBA program among the best programs of its kind nationwide. The selection comes after the Jesuit institution applied to be a part of this much-anticipated list for the first time.

The Bloomberg Businessweek ranking is based on a survey of recent graduates, an academic quality measure that combines six school-reported data points — including GMAT scores, class sizes and completion rates — and a calculation of post MBA-outcomes.

The feedback that stood out most to administrators was that Dolan School students gave the faculty an “A+” for “Teaching Quality.” The Dolan School also did well in the “Student Survey” feedback section (ranked 25) and in "Academic Quality" (26). Its MBA program was rated the best fit for “Career Advancers” and “Job Changers.” The average class size was noted to be among the lowest on the list, at just 16 students, while the completion rate was among the highest, 97 percent.

Working with a strong and diverse faculty, along with staff, alumni, and a top-notch business community in the New York City metropolitan area, Dean Donald Gibson is over-seeing a school focused on cultivating career-ready students in a vibrant learning community that is respected by impor-tant stakeholders.

Earlier this year, Bloomberg Businessweek named the Dolan School among its top 100 undergraduate Business Schools in the country. The selection also came after the school applied to be a part of that key list for the first time. Just last month, the Princeton Review again named the Dolan School and its MBA program one of the best (see page 11).
The Dolan School welcomes new director of internships

Tara Rupp was chosen as the new director of internships at the Dolan School of Business (DSOB). She took over the position when Kathy Tellis retired after nine years as director of internships and 25 years at Fairfield.

Rupp began her position in August and will promote and encourage student participation in internships, for-credit and non-credit, a critical aspect of the DSB’s career-readiness emphasis. She will also help coordinate the DSB Professional Development Series, a program of events and seminars aimed at preparing students for careers throughout their four years at Fairfield. “She has just the right combination of corporate experience and student experience,” said Dr. Don Gibson, dean of the Dolan School. “She can communicate with employers and help prepare students for internships, which are vital to students’ careers.” Rupp worked for three years at J.P. Morgan Chase and four years in the media and public relations field. She has experience in working with and advising students as former Area Coordinator and Assistant Director of Residence Life at Fairfield. Her educational background consists of a B.A. from Boston College, an M.A. in Television-Radio-Film from Syracuse University, and an MBA in management from Fairfield.

Rupp said, “As somebody who has had a very unique career path, I relish the opportunity to have conversations with students about what their post-college futures might hold.” In my first few months as the Director of Internships I have met with hundreds of students in all stages of the job search process, and it is exciting to help them navigate different paths on their career journeys. Internships are an ideal way to begin to discern what types of companies, positions, and responsibilities will best complement one’s strengths and passions. For this reason we hope that every DSB student will have at least one internship during their time at Fairfield. We have a wide variety of excellent opportunities for students that I hope to make even better by working with the Career Planning Center and our alumni to create strong partnerships with local businesses and corporations.”

Advisory Council welcomes Lisa Cowell Shams

The Dolan School of Business Advisory Council, a group of business leaders who advise the Dean on trends in business, connect students to career networks, and work on enhancing resources available to the school, is pleased to welcome Lisa Cowell Shams as their newest member.

Lisa Cowell Shams serves as Executive Vice President, Government Affairs for the Westfield Group LLC, one of the world’s largest publicly listed real estate companies with world headquarters in Sydney, Australia and its United States headquarters in Los Angeles, Calif. At Westfield, Shams serves as the senior executive responsible for government affairs in the United States. Prior to joining Westfield, her professional background has spanned senior roles with a number of political campaigns, service as a United States Senate staffer as well as with the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), and as founder of a strategic consulting firm.

Her political experience includes service as Deputy Finance Director of the DSCC under the leadership of the Chairman, Senator Bob Kerrey (D-NE), Vice Chairman Senator Bob Toricellir (D-NJ) and then-Democratic Leader Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD). Sham’s campaign background includes the re-election campaign of Senator Frank Lautenberg (NJ) and Senator Chris Dodd (CT), as well as a US Senate race in Missouri and a number of other statewide and local races in Connecticut. She worked in the U.S. Senate on the staffs of Senators Lautenberg (NJ) and Max Baucus (MT).

In 2012, she received recognition as a “Woman of Achievement” by the Century City Chamber of Commerce. Lisa Cowell holds a Master of Arts degree with a concentration in Survey Research from the University of Connecticut. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Politics with a minor in Religious Studies, from Fairfield University. A native of Connecticut, Lisa Cowell currently resides in Los Angeles, California with her husband, Ray Shams.

When it came time for Jenna Slowey ’15, a marketing major, to apply for an internship, she looked for one that would relate to her interest in sports and marketing. She found the perfect match through Octagon, one of the industry’s leaders in sports, entertainment, and lifestyle marketing. Read below for her account of what she’s learned during her time with the company.

Why Octagon?
Sports have always been an integral part of my life; I play on the Women’s Lacrosse team here at Fairfield so a marketing agency that has a specific focus on sports (among other things) seemed like a great fit.

What do your duties include?
I work exclusively on the MasterCard Global account. I am in the culinary division, supervised by Fairfield alumna Jaime Bivona ’06. Although I am working on the culinary platform, I am able to see how all the divisions of this client work, including sports, music, and entertainment.

My specific duties include: to provide support for MasterCard related to its significant investments in culinary; analyze effectiveness of client programs, review proposals, and provide research for presentations; assist with the administration of the MasterCard account; conduct research on the competitive landscape for clients; and assist in preparation of execution guides, program summaries, and other deliverables.

What classes helped prepare you for this position?
“Consumer Behavior,” “Marketing Research,” and, most significantly, “Global Marketing” have assisted me in succeeding in this internship. Consumer behavior has allowed me to define and evaluate different target markets and demographics desired by the client, while marketing research gave me the skills to gather and analyze information pertaining to those specific markets. Global marketing has helped me the most with this internship, because I am working on the MasterCard Global account. It has allowed me to understand the “why” and “how” of different international markets working together for a client’s common goal.

Practical experience with a marketing agency

What’s the most important thing you’ve learned?
The most important thing I have learned so far from participating in this internship is less specific to Octagon itself and is more of a general attribute one must possess in the business world: that taking initiative and responsibility on your self is not only beneficial to the company, but it is beneficial to you. Hard work and self-motivation never go unnoticed or unappreciated.

Fun fact:
I got to work MasterCard’s “Food Truck” booth at the New York City Wine and Food Festival on behalf of Octagon.

Lisa Cowell Shams

Tara Rupp
Business incubator in October, held at the FAME Suite in downtown Fairfield. The event was attended by governmental officials, business leaders, and the Fairfield University community. An effort to nurture start-ups and foster economic development, it is a collaboration of Fairfield University’s Charles F. Dolan School of Business, the Town of Fairfield Economic Development Department, and Kleban Properties.

“Welcome to the Connecticut innovation ecosystem,” Catherine Smith, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, said at the event. “I applaud Fairfield University for taking this bold step, and for being a part of this exciting initiative to accelerate the creation and growth of innovative companies and industries in our state.”

Fairfield University Accelerator and Mentoring Enterprise (FAME) opens its doors

Meet FAME’s first three client companies:

Daphne Dixon, of Fairfield, Conn., got her business idea when she was just ten years old. “I founded ‘Conscious Decisions,’ a socially responsible business venture, to educate the public on sustainable and eco-friendly living practices,” said Dixon, a UCLA graduate who describes herself as an eco-entrepreneur.

Nicole Juliano Peranick, of Stamford, Conn., attended the Dolan School of Business and the French Culinary Institute, and has a background in corporate brand marketing. She plans to establish “Watt Up, The Cupboard,” in Westport. She describes it as “a ‘baked to order’ dessert purveyor that unlocks old world, secret family recipes to deliver truly customizable service and enchanting flavors with the comforts of home.”

Jamie Ramerini, of Fairfield, Conn., a 2013 graduate of Fairfield University, and Diego Mamani, a senior at Fairfield’s School of Engineering, are collaborators on BluStrip by Watt U Control, a smart power strip to coordinate home automation. The company can be described as an electronics design firm with a low cost home automation solution. It had its origins in the student Business Plan Competition at Fairfield. “We seek to make affordable home automation a part of everyone’s life,” said Ramerini, a finance major who now works for Merrill Lynch.

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Update

David Mezzapelle spreads optimism with best-selling book series

David Mezzapelle ’90 has always prized optimism and loved listening to other people’s stories about overcoming struggles and finding success. His new book series, Contagious Optimism, compiles these uplifting, personal stories of positive forward thinking, which were written by professionals in fields like business, medicine, and more.

Mezzapelle said, “When I look back, I notice that all those stories have three common elements: They start with adversity or some type of obstacle; there is perseverance along the way; and they all end with wisdom that was gained and ultimately shared with others.”

Over the past 23 years, Mezzapelle believes he has used many of the lessons learned from the School of Business. “The School of Business taught us that real life experience is just as important as what we studied in books,” he said. “This was reflected in class projects brought to our marketing and finance classes from local companies.”

Conlisk Irish Scholarship is heaven sent

For Bernadette Liston, an e-mail from Fairfield University couldn’t have come at a more pivotal time. In May, the twenty-three-year-old from County Limerick, Ireland learned that she had been awarded the Rev. John M. Conlisk Irish Scholarship to attend Fairfield University’s Dolan School of Business. “The School of Business taught us that real life experience is just as important as what we studied in books,” he said. “This was reflected in class projects brought to our marketing and finance classes from local companies.”

“Knowledge is a powerful tool in the business world,” said Liston, who is now enrolled in the MBA program with a concentration in accounting. She hopes to begin her career in America, working for one of the Big Four accounting firms. “Each scholar I have worked with has seen this opportunity as a life-changer,” said Dr. Mark Ligas, associate dean and director of graduate programs at the Dolan School. “In addition to sharing an international perspective in class discussions—especially with regard to the European Union—they offer a fresh perspective on an individual’s expectations of what our graduate programs should or could do to develop a successful and marketable graduate,” he said.

Business plan competition heats up in fall semester

Following the success and growing excitement of the Dolan School of Business’ 2nd Annual Business Plan Competition (BPC), students across campus eagerly attended events designed to help them develop their own innovative business ideas in preparation for the 3rd BPC Finale in April.

The BPC Kick-off event for 2014 was held in mid-September. More than 100 students across campus attended the event, which gave them the opportunity to meet with past BPC student competitors and learn about the parameters of the program.

One month later, in October, students gathered for the new Elevator Pitch Contest, where experts taught them how to deliver an exciting but succinct business pitch. Seven student teams were each assigned a lengthy business plan for a fictional company. After less than two hours of study and preparation, each team delivered a 2-minute pitch presentation making the case for investing in their assigned plan. To further complicate matters, they had to deliver the presentation without notes and without any props or visuals. “We were delighted with the results,” said Dr. Christopher Huntley, associate professor of Information Systems and Operations Management. “The final three teams were all very polished presenters and surprisingly diverse, drawing students from Engineering, Business, and Arts & Sciences.”

In November, student teams had just a few minutes to pitch their ideas for new products, services, and companies at Startup Day, the third BPC event of the fall. A team of judges—comprised of business leaders and Fairfield University faculty members—decided the winners at the fast-paced event in which undergraduates vied for $2,000 in prize money.

The prize for best overall pitch and $1,000 went to Robert Garrone ’14, an electrical engineering student, for an idea for a wearable wireless device that uses infrared light to monitor bone density. “It has the potential capability of transmitting the data from the device to an Excel spreadsheet, an email, or some other form of media,” he said. “We hope to market this to osteoporosis patients as an alternative to hospital visits with specialists.”

Garrone worked on the pitch with Dolan School of Business seniors Ralph Belfiore and Bernardo Navarro, an accounting and economics major.

The finals for the university-wide Business Plan Competition will be held on April 15, 2014, during which teams will contend for prizes and sponsorships totaling $20,000. Find out more at www.fairfield.edu/businessplan.
The Dolan School welcomes two new faculty members

Rebecca Bloch assistant professor of accounting
Rebecca Bloch comes to Fairfield University from the accounting doctoral program at Rutgers Business School. She is interested in governmental accounting and reporting, specifically GASB's Statement No. 34 and its impact on the municipal capital markets. She was the 2012 recipient of the GASB Gil Crain Memorial Research Grant. In addition to governmental accounting and reporting, Professor Bloch is interested in non-profit reporting, auditing, and voluntary disclosure. She currently teaches “Introduction to Financial Accounting” and will teach “Introduction to Managerial Accounting” in the spring.

Prior to pursuing a doctorate, Professor Bloch practiced accounting in both the public and private sectors. She has worked for firms including Ernst and Young, the Council on Foreign Relations, and Industrial Realty Group. She received her B.S. in accounting from Binghamton University and holds a CPA in the State of New York.

Iman Naderi assistant professor of marketing
Dr. Naderi joined the Dolan School of Business as an assistant professor of marketing after earning his Ph.D. in marketing from the University of North Texas in 2013. His main area of research is social psychology of consumer decision making with his current focus on social exclusion, sustainable consumer behavior, and narcissistic consumers.

His work has appeared in the Journal of Applied Social Psychology, International Journal of Consumer Studies, and International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis, among others. Dr. Naderi has won the Emerald Highly Commended Paper Award in 2013 and the Best Paper in Consumer Behavior Award at the American Marketing Association Conference in 2012. His teaching experiences include principles of marketing, business-to-business marketing, marketing research, product and brand management, and electronic retailing.

Faculty Newsbreakers

Dr. Katsiaryna Sabavei Bardos, associate professor of finance, published two articles in top finance and real estate journals. Her research paper, "Litigation Risk and Market Reaction to Financial Statement Restatements" was published in Journal of Financial Research. The paper was coauthored with Joseph Golec and John Harding. Her research paper, "Expansions and Contractions of Major U.S. Shopping Centers" was accepted for publication in the Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics and co-authored with John Clapp and Tingyu Zhou.

In October, Dr. Ahmed Ebrahim, associate professor of accounting, presented a paper titled, "Corporate Governance and Initial Compliance with IFRS in Emerging Markets: The Case of Income Tax Accounting in Egypt," at the American Accounting Association, Northeast Region Annual Meeting, in Hartford, Conn. The paper was co-authored with Joseph Golec and John Harding. Her research paper, "Expansions and Contractions of Major U.S. Shopping Centers" was accepted for publication in the Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics and co-authored with John Clapp and Tingyu Zhou.

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The Dolan School snapshots

The Marketing Club: On October 30, Alison Muench, Senior Director of Global Marketing and Merchandising at Ralph Lauren, spoke to 170 students about her career path and her views on entering the business world. The event was sponsored by the Marketing Club. Muench, a Fairfield Alumna, spoke about her career, which includes brand management positions with Vera Wang, L’Oreal, and Nike. Muench gave advice to students about “finding your passion” and tips for successful interviewing. Rachel Banoody, a student, said, “Listening to Alison speak about her hard work and dedication to every company she worked for was inspiring because it showed me that hard work does indeed pay off. Her presentation influenced me greatly because at the end she gave great tips on how to be successful in the business world that has led me to be more active in communicating with companies that I have a strong desire to work with.”

The Management Club: The Management club hosted a panel to discuss talent management and how human resource managers lead, recruit and promote talent. Panelists included Sharon Budds, director of HR at the Bank of Ireland; Pat Nazemetz, former head of HR at Xerox Corporation; and Deb Gross, People’s Bank, representing the Society for Human Resource Management. Dr. Lisa Mammiero, professor of management, said, “The speakers all provided insights as to how the human resource function has changed and become more strategic. They also answered student questions about recruitment and how they can stand out in a pile of applications, as well as offered interviewing tips for the students.”

Princeton Review: The Princeton Review has again named Fairfield University’s Charles F. Dolan School of Business one of the most outstanding business schools in the country. The education services company features the Dolan School of Business and its MBA program in the new 2014 edition of its book, “The Best 255 Business Schools” (Random House/Princeton Review, 2013), which is based on the opinions of students.

Career Night: In October, the Charles F. Dolan School of Business Advisory Council sponsored the annual "Career Night for DSB Juniors." At this event, business leaders, mostly Fairfield alumni, meet with students in small groups to discuss how they should prepare for their careers as well as how to build effective resumes, internship opportunities, and interview skills, among other topics. Following mentor-facilitated discussions during dinner, breakout sessions organized by student majors were held, followed by an informal networking gathering. Business leader mentors participating in the event included Kevin Cannon ’80, Richard Cerrone ’76, Hugh Davis ’95, Christopher Desmarais ’93, William Greenwood ’81, P’14, ’11, Michael Garvey ’89, Philip Herr, Elaine Hughes, Jennifer Jennings ’00, Paul Lukas ’89, Margaret McLaughlin ’89, John Neal, John O’Neill ’71, P’08, Kimberly Supersano, and Kevin Walsh ’82.

The Dolan School Advisory Council members spoke to students about career paths.
Dolan School of Business’ MBA program ranks as one of the best!

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