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# Consulting Services: Exploring the Boundaryless Classroom

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Although much has been voiced and written about the need for greater collaboration between the academic and business communities, not many innovative approaches have been pioneered. Our school decided to stop talking about such collaboration and do something. In teaching the field of entrepreneurship, we have proactively changed our paradigms about what constitutes an academic education. We have pushed the envelope and explored the boundaryless classroom.

In 1992, our school approved a new graduate M.B.A. concentration in entrepreneurship. Our objectives for the entrepreneurship concentration included: national recognition for innovative, creative, academically rigorous programs and research in entrepreneurship; greater credibility and visibility of KSC with the external business community; development of funding sources to support entrepreneurship education; and a pedagogical design of a new matrix delivery system for entrepreneurship education. We wanted this pedagogical design to foster greater collaboration between the academic and business constituents that we serve.

## New Course Offering

During last summer quarter, we offered a new course entitled Consulting Services to begin achieving our objectives. This class was our first attempt at executing a new prototype delivery system for graduate education in business that allowed participants from the business community to cross register into our M.B.A. concentration classes. We selected Consulting Services as the trial course because of its timeliness and applicability to market conditions resulting

from restructuring taking place in the economy.

The nine-week course included both featured speakers and interactive panels drawn from both faculty and invited guest consultants from the Atlanta, Georgia, business consulting community. Over 30 individual speakers with diverse consulting backgrounds participated "pro bono."

The MBA students completed a field consulting intervention project with a local area company. The companies participated as Small Business Institute cases under the Small Business Administration program. A practicing consultant mentor and a faculty member monitored each team. The teams made oral team presentations to clients, invited judges, graduate students and business executives. Following the presentations, the judges awarded fellowships to the top individual and team intervention projects.

At the completion of the course, we received positive feedback from the guest speakers, the graduate students and the business executives. Feedback included statements such as: The course has been the best I've ever been a part of in my academic experience. The combina-

tion of business community and traditional students was innovative and effective. When will the course be offered again? Statements such as these made us feel we had achieved our objectives.

## Winning Ways

Then during the winter quarter of 1994, we received a letter from Dr. Robert C. Culpepper, Dean of the College of Business Administration at University of Arkansas. He stated we had won the Program Innovation category of the Southwest Business Deans Association's Innovative Achievement Awards. We felt this was a tremendous honor not only for us but for Kennesaw State as well.

Everyone wins with this class . . . the graduate students, the business executives, the companies participating in the field interventions, the faculty, the invited speakers and panelists, the Small Business Development Center, the Michael J. Coles School of Business, future students of KSC's entrepreneurship programs, and ultimately, the general economy as more and more individuals seek out business opportunities.

Graduate students and business people learning together.. .what an innovative concept!!



## Why Do I Teach?

**Al Panu, Associate Professor of Chemistry. Six years at KSC.**

*"Through teaching/learning interaction, the lives of both the teacher and student are often positively impacted for a lifetime. So, for me teaching is a privileged responsibility and service for which I feel adequately equipped and that I thoroughly enjoy performing."*

**Michael Reiner, Associate Professor of Psychology. Three years at KSC.**

*"Teach? My wife says I'm a missionary! I'm passionate about trying to provide students with the gift of a quality education great teachers gave me."*