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Entrepreneurial Studies at Rider



Alumni Newsletter

M.B.A. Students Take Fourth Place in National Competition

A team of MBA students recently received fourth place in the Small Business Institute® Association’s Consulting Project of the Year competition, which awards the best student consulting projects from around the country.

“This is the fourth year in a row that our M.B.A. team has come in the top five in the country,” said Dr. Ron Cook, professor of Entrepreneurial Studies, and Rider’s Center for Entrepreneurial Studies and Small Business Institute® director.

“Having been a competition judge in different categories from my entries, I can appreciate the quality of the projects submitted and the effort the students must make to reach this level of success. I could not be

prouder of these students.”

Jared Butcher ’11 of Princeton, N.J., Kevin Lawton ’11 of Chesterfield, N.J., Phil Simon ’12 of Trenton, N.J., received fourth place in the *Graduate Specialized Project* category for their work with the Spruce Industries, a family firm located in Rahway, N.J., that sells janitorial supplies for commercial and industrial cleaning needs. The owner is Hank Josephs ’71, and his son and general manager,

Dan Josephs, was the client contact.

The graduate students investigated the feasibility of entering the consumer market for green cleaning products, and produced a report as part of Cook’s *Consulting for New and Small Businesses* course that he taught in Spring 2011.



Undergraduate Team Recognized in National SBI Competition

A team of undergraduate students from Rider University recently placed in the top 10 of the Small Business Institute® Association's Consulting Project of the Year competition, which awards the best student consulting projects from around the country. This is the fourth year in a row that Rider's undergraduate SBI team has finished in the top 10 in the nation. Steve Spaulding '11, Business Administration and Entrepreneurial Studies; Shawn Pontoriero '10, Entrepreneurial Studies; John C. Latshaw '11, Entrepreneurial Studies; and Brenden Hellyer '11, Finance and Entrepreneurial Studies; were recognized for their work with United Way of Greater

Mercer County (UWGMC). President and CEO Herb Klein was the company contact. The team researched local organizations to determine if they were potential prospects for UWGMC, and then recommended ways to partner with the organizations. They also conducted an analysis of Rider University's employee contribution campaign. The students produced the award-winning report as part of the *Seminar in Small Business Consulting*, which was taught in fall 2010 by Paul Belliveau, an adjunct professor of Entrepreneurship. In this course, students act as consultants to small firms/organizations in the area.

Dr. Ron Cook, who is Rider's Small Business Institute® director and the head of Rider's Entrepreneurial Studies Program, said that Rider students have enjoyed a history of substantial success in this national competition over the years.



Alumni Update: Vincent Padalino, 2009 NJ Student Entrepreneur of the Year

Few people nowadays can say that their working experience started at 16. For me, however, working and finding new ways to keep myself busy has always been a part of my lifestyle. My first job experience began at my family's restaurant, Palermo's, where my father gave me my first job as a server. From that moment on, the concept of being an entrepreneur, while vague and unrefined, took a significant hold within me. Working in the service industry as a waiter and all around manager bolstered a different outlook on understanding what consumers needed, and what I in turn, could provide. As I went through high school, this understanding took shape when I recognized a specific trend in the wants

of my peers. During early college years, a demand for customized clothing emerged. Students were seeking to choose, not only what they wanted to wear, but what their items would say. When I realized that both students and faculty were interested, I knew an opportunity when I saw it.

In 2009, I was honored to receive 1st place in the NJ Student Entrepreneur Competition for my startup company Vestewear LLC., following a 4th place finish the preceding year. That first year, I began modestly, by selling custom made T-shirts out of the trunk of my car, and showing samples of self-made designs to fellow students and teachers alike. While it

was time consuming between my school work, and waiting tables at the restaurant, Vestewear took on a life all its own. This was my first real taste at being an entrepreneur, and I found it much to my liking. Rider University's Entrepreneurial Studies Center was a great starting point for me and my business career. My time spent there helped guide me through different steps of running a business and showed me how to refine my approaches and strategies. As I attended marketing, economic, and small business classes, new ideas for Vestewear emerged. An exciting business opportunity presented itself while attending Rider, and I was able to garner a partnership as
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(Paladino— cont.)
Palermo's expanded to incorporate three locations. As part owner of the third location, alongside my father Giulio Padalino, I never lost sight of the lessons taught to me at Rider. Vestiwear has expanded in my time at Rider and beyond. We still sell custom apparel, but have branched out to both printed and marketing materials. Through an initiative born of my time at the Entrepreneurial Studies Center, and Dr. Ron Cook's expert guidance, we have recently expanded to offer social media marketing. By building a network of diverse and trusted companies and business partners, we are expanding the reach of our

restaurants to offer catering services to nearby businesses, as well as offering restaurant apparel through Vestiwear. Recently, with the aid of other partners, I expanded my outlook into a marketing company, Green Peppers Marketing, where we offer consulting services to small local businesses. While it seems that my life has always incorporated some form of entrepreneurship, I must say it wasn't until I met Dr. Cook, and became part of Rider's Entrepreneurial Studies program, that I was able to refine and consolidate my expanding ambitions. What I gained at Rider was the ability to explore new ideas, and cultivate a great source of priceless guidance.

I've always kept in touch with Dr. Cook and the Entrepreneurial Studies Club, and have been invited back to talk with current students about their own business ideas. Even now we are discussing a possible internship where students learn to hone their marketing abilities. As the old adage goes, "you learn something new everyday," yet the quality of each lesson is what is really important. With the help of Rider, and Dr. Cook's encouragement, my experiences are irreplaceable and I look forward to new lessons still to come.

- Vincent Paladino, '09

Rider University Student Hatchery (RUSH) Completes its First Year

The Rush program finished a successful pilot year by helping its first tenant: Right Energies. Tenants can stay in the Hatchery for up to a year and then transition to another location. We are now looking for other existing or potential businesses who would like to take advantage of the inexpensive office space.

To recap, the Hatchery provides: physical space for ventures created by entrepreneurial studies (ES) alumni. Many of you may be familiar with an incubator concept. An incubator provides private office space for a firm in a building that has shared conference space, shared office equipment, etc. It allows companies to reduce startup costs as this space is typi-

cally cheaper than regular office space. A hatchery is similar to an incubator except there is no private office space, as it is a shared environment. RUSH will provide participants with office space that has internet access, parking, office furniture, a computer workstation, and printer. RUSH is located in the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies; 226 Sweigart Hall, on Rider's campus. It is available when Sweigart Hall is open—typically until 10 pm during the week. Conditions for participants include: space is available for up to one year, and participants agree to be involved in the Entrepreneurial Studies program. RUSH was created to help Rider's ES alumni as we believe our pro-

grams should help our alumni wherever possible. After all, an alum who decides to open a venture six months after graduation is likely not that much different than they were as a senior or graduate student.

For example, Right Energies, owned by alumnus Sean O'Hare, was an established firm that needed transitional office space while changing its business model. RUSH was able to help.

So if you are an established firm like Right Energies, or one that is just starting out, and your needs fit what we can offer, contact Dr. Ron Cook at 609-895-5522 or cookr@Rider.edu.

2012 NJ Collegiate Entrepreneur-of-the-Year Competition

Two Rider University undergraduate students were recently named finalists in the 2012 NJ Collegiate Entrepreneur of the Year Competition. Andrew Westfall '12 of Allentown, N.J., earned second place for his company Plutomic LLC.

Stephen Johnston '13 of White House Station, N.J., received third place honors for his company, Tabhair Records & Music Publishing, LLC. Westfall and Johnston, both students in the Entrepreneurial Studies program, com-

peted against student entrepreneurs in colleges across New Jersey, including Caldwell College student David Reeth, who won first place for his Awesome Auto LLC. company, a mobile detailing service business.

Rider's Center for Entrepreneurial Studies ran the 2012 competition and held an awards banquet on May 4 to honor the first, second, and third-place winners, which were selected by an independent

set of judges. Evaluation criteria included entrepreneurial spirit, obstacles overcome, success of business, concern for quality and customer service, and estimated potential for future success.

Go to www.rider.edu/entrepreneurship to see photos of the event. The Entrepreneurial Studies Center is already planning to run the 2013 competition. If you would like to help, contact Dr. Zane at lzane@rider.edu.

The Entrepreneurial Studies Club

The Entrepreneurial Studies Club had an active second semester.

We kicked off 2012 with two guest speakers, alums Lisa Teach and Sean O'Hare, who discussed the ups and downs of their business ventures, a Five Guys franchise and Right Energies, respectively.

We concluded with an appearance by reality TV stars Albie and Chris Manzo, from the Real Housewives of New Jersey show, who spoke about their new beverage company, BLK Beverages, and the guerilla marketing campaign for its product: black water.

In the new academic year, we

will be looking for alums who are business owners and who would like to come back and share their story. If you have a venture and would like talk at a club function, please contact Club advisor Dr. Lee Zane at lzane@rider.edu.

Stay Connected:

Do you need interns for your company and want to give Rider students that opportunity? We are always looking to help Rider students, so if you are aware of any internship openings, please let Dr. Cook (cookr@rider.edu) know.

Would your company benefit from being involved in the SBI program? We are looking for firms to participate in our award-winning student consulting program, for spring 2013. Contact Dr. Cook (cookr@rider.edu) for details.



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