

Making Headlines

News stories featuring the Neeley School of Business at TCU

Star-Telegram

October 14, 2010

Prepare now for possible foreclosure moratorium – by *Teresa McUsic*

Home buyers and sellers in today's market have a whole new range of factors to consider, given growing regulatory scrutiny after recent disclosures that mortgage lenders and servicers have mishandled foreclosure paperwork. "Bottom line, it will further slow an already weak market," said **Mauricio Rodriguez, professor of finance and real estate at Texas Christian University**. Money for mortgages could slow to a trickle if investors in mortgage-backed securities refuse to take on more risk by not being allowed to foreclose if the investment goes sour, Rodriguez said. "That means less money for mortgage brokers to lend," he said.



October 13, 2010

Tom Hicks Feels the Bankruptcy Burn - by *Mitchell Schnurman*

Investors have been betting on distressed debt for decades, but the Rangers' case put a spotlight on a new breed—hedge funds playing on another level. As their targets meander toward failure, they buy up bonds on the cheap, challenge management, and go toe-to-toe in court, usually armed with a war chest. "I write textbooks for a living, and I'm going to have to rewrite the chapter on bankruptcy," says **Stanley Block, a long-time finance professor at Texas Christian University**. "Everything's changing."

Star-Telegram

October 20, 2010

Founder emeritus - *Shlachter, Nishimura & Baker*

David Minor, the first director of the **Neeley Entrepreneurship Center at Texas Christian University**, has been named its founder emeritus. Minor is leaving his position as William M. Dickey Entrepreneur in Residence to spend more time with his business, The Landscape Partners, the school said. Minor said he is honored by the recognition. "Although I will be pursuing new ventures of my own, I definitely plan on staying involved with TCU and the entrepreneurship program in a voluntary capacity for many years to come," he said. TCU's entrepreneurship program has been recognized by *Entrepreneur* magazine, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Fortune Small Business* and Nasdaq as one of the best programs in the country.

Neeley in the News - continued



October 27, 2010

TCU-based MBA consultants apply classroom lessons to workplace – by Betty Dillard

When companies are unable to define business strategies or resolve certain issues because of limited time, personnel or resources, they often have to seek outside consultants to do the work. To save added expense, **the Neeley School of Business at Texas Christian University** created **Neeley & Associates Consulting**, a group of MBA students with prior business experience who apply lessons and processes learned in the classroom to real client projects. Going into its fifth year, the graduate consulting program is attracting more students looking to gain experience and advance their careers, and a growing list of clients with a variety of projects ready to be tackled.

“The students learn business development skills, and working with clients, find out what the problem is and what needs to be done,” said **Neeley’s Director of Experiential Learning Ed Riefenstahl**, who created and manages the program.

A veteran of the management consulting industry and owner of a peer board leadership firm and executive coaching organization, Riefenstahl developed the MBA program with **Larry Peters, professor of management**.

“Everyone has something they typically don’t have time or the money to get to. With our students, they’re able to get it done, using young, high-quality talent from the outside who have a fresh perspective,” Riefenstahl said. “Because it’s a low three-tier fee program, it’s cost-efficient for them. They don’t have to hire an expensive outside consultant. They see talent in action at little risk to them.”

Each MBA team delivers 200 to 250 consulting hours per project, providing assistance that includes evaluating new markets, distribution channels, products or services; evaluating effectiveness of existing processes; assessing and recommending branding strategies; measuring performances against benchmarks; and feasibility studies. Projects have ranged from assessment of supply chain best practices for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co.’s F-35 Joint Strike Fighter team, to building a model for sustainable eye care in a developing country for Alcon Inc., to evaluating Sabre Holding Inc.’s meta search travel market for revenue potential.

The consulting program is a perfect match for second-year student **Karthik Srikanta**, a software engineer from India studying supply chain management.

“This, for me, has been totally new,” he said. “We’re involved in everything – research, market analysis, leveraging our contacts. It’s been a good learning experience and going forward in our careers we definitely hit the ground running.”

During key stages of a project, corporate consulting partners are brought in to provide input and insight. Both **Neeley faculty/staff** with significant consulting experience and external consultants from global consulting firms who volunteer their time to serve as resources review and evaluate each MBA consulting team’s progress, approach and application.

“We wanted a course that could impact the professional development of our students. We wanted them to have a business experience in which they could apply what they’ve learned in the classroom to a real issue,” Peters said. “We touch the lives of students in ways that few university courses can, in part because we turn over the course to our students to manage with our guidance and support.”

Tim Bludau, also a second-year TCU MBA student, was a project manager before returning to school to study corporate finance and accounting. He said the program is helping him discover options and opportunities in different fields and corporations.

“It was another internship for me to gain some experience in certain types of jobs,” Bludau said. “It also exposes people to a particular company itself. If you’re interested in a company like Pepsi, for instance, you can see the culture without really having to commit to a full-time job.”

Some of the second-year MBA students are selected to be principals, or team coaches. They identify and recruit new clients and take more of a leadership-mentor role, Riefenstahl said. Currently, there are eight principals who are evaluating 10 to 12 project clients that will be invited to campus for interviews. The principals will vote on which clients to add to the program.

“The students’ interest is what drives this,” Riefenstahl said. “They want to show what they can do and prove themselves.”

Riefenstahl said **Neeley & Associates Consulting** is looking for more nonprofit organizations to become involved in the program.

Neeley in the News - continued

“The beauty of this is if a nonprofit doesn’t have the money, we won’t turn them away,” Riefenstahl said. “We’ll work with you if you’ll just contact us with your problems.”

Past projects for nonprofits have included an endowment fund project for SafeHaven of Tarrant County and a marketing plan for a new service offering of Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth Inc. Catholic Charities Executive Director Heather Reynolds said the MBA consulting team exceeded the expectations of the board of directors.

“I know that if we had engaged a commercial marketing consulting firm, our fees for the marketing plan alone would have been at least three times what we were charged,” Reynolds said. “An additional benefit was our knowing that the team was supported by consulting professionals and **Neeley** subject matter expert faculty.”

Peters said one of the program’s goals is to have the students work to please a client rather than to work for a grade.

“We want students to learn first-hand what it means to work effectively with others when working together effectively matters most, and we want them to live the risk of failure versus the concern for whether they get an A or B,” Peters said. “We also want them to have a memorable experience that they’d have a hard time forgetting years after they graduated.”