

## Actions Speak Louder

The Mihaylo College has taken its vision statement and turned into a plan of action.

Five years ago, the Mihaylo College of Business and Economics took stock of the considerable services it was providing to both students and the greater business community and decided to declare its commitment to these constituencies. The College rewrote and committed itself to a new vision statement. This by itself is not unusual. All universities and businesses and, for that matter, business schools, have a vision statement – lofty promises couched in formal prose printed in a view book or posted on the front page of a college’s Web site, but otherwise ignored. Not so at Mihaylo College of Business and Economics.

“It’s not just a vision, it’s a strategy. The success of any strategic planning process is in its implementation and setting specific action goals to measure achievement,” says Anil Puri, dean of the Mihaylo College of Business and Economics. “The College is committed to program quality, balancing theory and practice, and expanding our outreach and visibility to the greater community. We’ve allocated the resources to do it. This isn’t an aspiration; it’s what we do day in and day out – educating not just our students but also the business community, and providing them with talented business professionals.”

### Mihaylo College Graduates are Leaders in Their Fields

Employers actively seek out Mihaylo College graduates. “This is my business school,” is the oft-repeated statement of Paul Folino, executive chairman of

### Our Vision:

*We will be the choice of Southern California’s businesses and governments for college graduates, business solutions and professional development.*

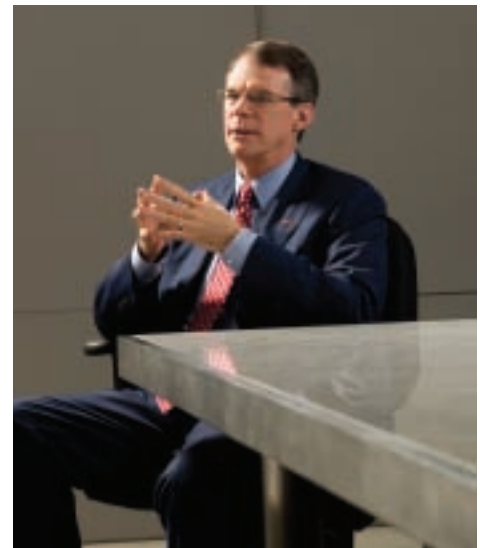
Emulex, a multinational firm in Costa Mesa. In a nod toward the College’s alumni, his firm seeks graduates whose education has prepared them to excel in the professional world and instilled a desirable work ethic. Folino, a friend of the College and member of the Dean’s Advisory Board, launched the Campaign for the College of Business



*John Cruz '75, appointments secretary in Governor Schwarzenegger's administration*

County’s Future Leaders.’ After graduation, our alumni start working and play a leadership role in their place of business,” says Puri.

One of these leaders is John Cruz '75 (Accounting), who assumed the office of appointments secretary in Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s administration



*Richard Davis '83, chairman, CEO, and president of U.S. Bancorp*

and Economics with a \$1 million investment in its future.

According to Dean Puri, more than 50,000 Mihaylo College alumni have made a significant impact on the region, in government, in large corporations and in small start-ups. “One of my slogans is ‘Building Orange

last September. He oversees the entire appointment process filling hundreds of vacancies within state government – both high-profile positions and hands-on undersecretaries, executives and directors.

“While I was at Cal State Fullerton, I started out as a political science major

then switched over to psychology. But, it was apparent to me that I would have to go to graduate school to do anything with that degree, so I switched again, this time to business,” remembers Cruz. He credits his time in what was then the School of Business and Economics with not only a strong education from which he built a distinguished law firm in Orange County, but also for the friends he made who are now professional colleagues.

Kerri Ruppert '82 (Accounting), senior vice president and CFO of Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC), agrees with Cruz, “Being in the right



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As chairman, CEO and president of the nation's sixth largest bank, U.S. Bancorp, Richard Davis '83 (Economics) describes the College as “forward-thinking and future-focused.” Like many students, Davis attended his classes after working full days – as a bank teller. “The depth and breadth of the program blew me away,” he says. “I took away knowledge that was relevant to real life and gained skills that were essential in the business world.”

The success stories similar to those of Cruz, Ruppert and Davis are repeated over and over with different names, different class years, different areas of



*Anna's Linens, a family owned business, was impressed by the Center for Entrepreneurship's consulting work and is implementing many of the recommendations.*

### **Center of Entrepreneurship Provides Business Solutions for Anna's Linens**

Michael C. Harnetiaux '75 was heading up a project on customer shopping experience and store design for Anna's Linens, a discount linens and home furnishings store headquartered in Costa Mesa, and he felt it might be an interesting project for marketing students. “Anna's Linens needed some help pulling together customer survey data,” says Harnetiaux, who graduated from Cal State Fullerton in 1975 with a degree in accounting and is currently the company's chief business development officer. Through the College's Center of Entrepreneurship, Anna's Linens was partnered with John Jackson's Marketing for Entrepreneurs class.

“Seven student teams evaluated a number of projects and picked Anna's Linens,” says Jackson, a marketing professor. Under the guidance of Jackson and a “coach,” veteran entrepreneur Bob Kreisberg, the students met with their new client, created a letter of engagement, conducted research and presented their findings to Anna's Linens. “Usually, the clients for this course are \$1 million to \$2 million businesses,” adds Jackson, but this company was much larger. “I knew a big company would have big expectations.”

place at the right time is a key factor on the road to success, and being prepared for the challenges along the way is critical. My education ensured I was able to step up and meet those challenges. The success I have experienced in accomplishing my career goals and aspirations has a direct link to the solid education that I received at Cal State Fullerton.”

study and different socio-economic backgrounds.

“We are the largest accredited business school in the state, and the fifth largest in the nation,” says Puri. “Employers seek out our graduates because they consistently perform well and have a top-notch education.”

Anna's Linens, with 250 retail locations nationwide, \$350 million in sales and nearly 3,000 employees, was larger and more complex than most of the other assignments. “[The experience] far exceeded anything we could've hoped for,” says Harnetiaux. “With very little direction and minimal impact on our resources, the group was able to deliver

a consulting report that will have a lasting and far-reaching, positive impact on our business.”

Students conducted customer surveys both in front of Anna’s Linens locations and in front of competitors’ stores. They made recommendations for improving the company’s Web site, performed “mystery shopping” evaluations and studied a number of experiential factors including how customers were greeted and store cleanliness.

“I am sure that a report like the one produced by the students would cost more than \$100,000,” says Harnetiaux. The students’ final submission was more than 300 pages with another 400 pages of background, analysis and data. “They gave us a better understanding of our customers and competitors, made conclusions and recommendations that were right on target and provided many actionable items that we can implement immediately.”

“In our corner of the College’s vision statement, our business solutions are very direct,” says Michael D. Ames, the executive director of the Center for Entrepreneurship. “Our job as the preeminent educational institution is to pull in resources from business and government to aid [business people] each step of the way to improve their operations so that they can create good jobs and have an overall impact on the community.

### **Centers of Excellence: Tools and Resources for Business**

Sustaining growth and retaining clients is a challenge for businesses large and small. The Mihaylo College’s Centers of Excellence readily provide programs and tools for businesses. Privately supported by major companies, the Centers provide workshops, seminars and one-on-one consultation to clients

and members, underscoring the College’s commitment to healthy enterprise in Southern California.

For example, the Center for Entrepreneurship and its Small Business Institute offer affordable consulting to small, fast-growth businesses and to large established businesses alike. The Small Business Development Center’s workshops – including seminars in Spanish – reach beyond Orange County into the Inland Empire and Los Angeles to serve more than 10,000 clients a year with the help of a \$1.8 million grant from the Small Business Administration.

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The Center for Corporate Reporting and Governance annually hosts an SEC Financial Reporting Conference providing auditors, accountants, board members and academics essential information about updates from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Public Companies Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB). The Center boasts both a professional

board, populated by national and regional accounting firms, and an academic board, driving research in accounting practices.

Providing professional development to family-owned companies, the Family Business Council is more than 50 members strong. It conducts workshops year-round, focusing on issues specific to family-run businesses, providing a no-nonsense approach to real concerns (one seminar is called “The Essence of Succession Planning From Owners to the Next Generation, Including In-laws and Cousins”).

As the largest insurance industry program on the West Coast, the Center for Insurance Studies regularly hosts regional symposiums, as well as domestic and international conferences for insurance professionals and consumers. The Center’s advisory board is a Who’s Who in insurance and risk management. Workshops for executives and regulators address changes in the industry. The Center’s research services include domestic and international insurance markets, joint ventures and actuarial analysis.

The Center for Economic Education promotes economic literacy in schools and the larger community. Emerging markets, the economics of healthcare, and school vouchers were the topics of study for educators attending a fall workshop.

### **Our Future is Orange County’s Future**

While the College’s Vision Statement provides a strategy for preparing business professionals and leaders, helping businesses grow, and educating businesspeople so they may excel in their careers, Dean Puri knows that actions speak louder than words on a paper. The College’s leadership in the community is vital, he says. “Our future is Orange County’s future.” ■