

Emeritus Professor Michael Ames Builds College Programs Using His Business Acumen

Michael Ames started off selling retail real estate in a family business four decades ago. “In fact, I got my license about 10 minutes after the minimum age at the time,” says Ames, and by making a few sales, he was able to pay his college tuition and earn his doctorate degree. In 1976, he made a deliberate decision to join the business school faculty at Cal State Fullerton because, he says, “I liked the diversity of the faculty when I came over here, and it had very strong accounting and marketing areas.”

“The biggest and most beneficial change in the last 32 years, in my opinion, is the fact that Orange County was a pretty parochial place and pretty homogenous in terms of demographics,” says Ames. “Since then, we have built a very diverse community. We are serving a deserving population, and we make a difference.”

A professor of management, Ames retired on December 31, 2007, and attained emeritus status.

He continues to serve as the executive director of the Center for Entrepreneurship (CFE), which he founded in 2001, as well as CFE’s Small Business Institute (SBI). He also founded the College’s multi-disciplinary Entrepreneurial Management Masters program and brought the regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and its \$1.8 million grant to the University.

As executive director, he brings not only his academic and scholarly knowledge of management, but also his acumen as a businessman. “I’ve owned several businesses over the years, and my personal mission [with the Center for Entrepreneurship] is to advance free enterprise,” he says. “I think a really great way to do it is with this kind of institution, and I don’t think that can be done with just public money. You have to put your money where your mouth is.”

And, that’s exactly what Ames does. He has consistently supported the College with donations. “My priority right now is building the Center, and it’s really a lot of fun for me,” he says about putting his entrepreneurial spirit toward the CFE. “I look at this as my business, and for the last seven years my focus has been right here at the University.” ■

Michael Ames, professor of management and director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Institute, is passionate about free enterprise.

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