Our Mission in Action

Looking over the activities and accomplishments of the previous quarter, I reflect with wonder and gratitude at the steady relevance of our mission, despite the changing world around us. To excel at developing principled, innovative thought leaders in global communities continues to resonate in the actions and words of the Jones Graduate School of Business and its community.

Thought Leaders within JGSB

The Jesse H. Jones Distinguished Associate Professor of Strategic Management, Anthea Zhang co-authored a study that has been making news even before its publication in Strategic Management Journal. The study, “Once an Outsider, Always an Outsider? CEO Origin, Strategic Change and Firm Performance,” looked at the tenure and performance history of 193 CEOs in the industrial sector between 1993 and 1998. The researchers found that in later years, internally promoted CEOs outperformed externally hired CEOs.

Shaheen Ladhani, director of alumni and corporate relations, and Michael Grojean, director of Custom Programs in Executive Education, have polished our strategic approach to the school’s corporate relations by defining its mission and its criteria for strategic partnerships with businesses. By authentically engaging our corporate partners, we raise the profile of the school, locally and globally.

Professor of Marketing Vikas Mittal is leading the health care initiative at the Jones School, as director of health care initiatives in Executive Education and champion of the Rice MBA health care concentration, which he proposed in November and was approved by the faculty. The new concentration provides students with not only a general business background in health care, but also a deep understanding of key topics driving the industry.

Thought Leaders on Campus

Two new events debuted last quarter, both of which attracted high-level speakers and the Houston business community to campus.

In October more than 200 industry professionals, alumni and students attended the inaugural Rice Energy Finance Summit, where leaders in energy and finance shared their perspectives on current issues and topics regarding the theme: Balancing Risks and Opportunities in Times of Recovery. Speakers included JGSB alumni and other industry heavy hitters:

Doug Foshee, Rice MBA ’92, president, CEO, and a director of El Paso Corporation
Bobby Tudor, Rice ’82, chairman and CEO, Tudor Pickering Holt & Co.
Jack Moore, director, president, and CEO, Cameron
Osmar Abib, Rice ’81, managing director, Global Head of Oil Service Coverage, Credit Suisse
Steve Trauber, Rice ’84, vice chairman, managing director, UBS
Fran Vallejo, Rice MBA’96, vice president and treasurer, ConocoPhillips
John Hofmeister, former president of Shell Oil Company, founder and CEO, Citizens for Affordable Energy

In December the Office of Executive Education organized the first annual Health Care Symposium, hosting several hundred health care professionals to discuss the latest developments in key topic areas, such as patient satisfaction, the role of the Internet in health care, and the impact of policy changes on patient care. JGSB faculty Paul Dholakia, Vikas Mittal, and adjunct professor and alumnus Dr. Wayne Riley ’02, President and CEO of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, all spoke at the event.

Thought Leaders off Campus

Every year billionaire Warren Buffett invites business students to visit him at his Omaha-based conglomerate, Berkshire Hathaway. He holds informal question-and-answer sessions with the students, which are closed to media and business professionals, along with lunch and personal photo sessions. In 2009, with more than 100 business schools making the request, second year students Jan Goetgeluk and Matt Kerin queried Buffett and were enthusiastically received. Twenty-seven Rice MBAs traveled to Nebraska in November for the once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Impressed by Buffett’s accessible, energetic manner, students were also inspired by his advice about principled behavior, passion for what you do, and selflessness. Buffett said about Jesse H. Jones, “Jesse Jones was a hero of the Great Depression and I not only read his book decades ago about the RFC but more recently have watched a tape about his life that the Foundation sent me. He is a real American icon.”

We couldn’t agree more.

Thought Leaders Building Global Awareness

As we enter a new year, we celebrate the 2010 Financial Times Global MBA rankings of No. 4 in the world “Top for Finance” and No. 9 “Top for Accountancy.” We also observe our mission in action as we follow the developing thought leaders who ventured beyond the hedges on international trips to China, South America, and India. Over 110 students traveled during winter break to participate in academic sessions at partner universities. They also visited national and multi-national corporations and different governmental, educational, and policy entities to gain a better practical understanding of business issues facing that particular region.

It was a first-time JGSB trip to India (Hyderabad and Delhi) and Rio and Buenos Aires and served an additional purpose to re-engage international alumni and recruit prospective students. An additional 50 students will leave during spring break for Mexico and Rwanda.
This hands-on learning, networking, and problem solving experience for our students also required them to act as ambassadors of the university. Valuable preparation for the expertise needed from tomorrow’s thought leaders.

In what ways are you accomplishing thought leadership? Let us know.

Bill Glick