Investiture for the class of 2011 was celebrated in grand style by the graduates, their families and friends with the support and congratulations of JGSB staff and faculty. Principled thought leadership among our recent graduates was recognized in the 16 recipients of the Jones Citizenship Award and the 31 Jones Scholar Award winners. The M.A. Wright Awards were presented to Bonnie Claire Houston, Cathy G. Mann, Marcela Masso and David Mims. Wesley Joel Lantrip received the Lorane T. Philips Award for Excellence in Writing while the Robert E. Philips Award for Excellence in Presentation was earned by Ann Sadler Bradbury and Brett William Johnson. Student excellence was broadly evident in the class of 2011 through the recipients of Capstone Owl Awards, and participants in case competitions held throughout the world.

Excellence in faculty research and teaching remains as a hallmark of the Jones Graduate School of Business. We continue to applaud and celebrate the recognition our faculty brings to Rice University. The faculty has propelled the school into the top 10 in Businessweek for Intellectual Capital and “A” for teaching quality. We were also ranked 6th “overall quality of faculty” by Princeton Review.

For the second year in a row, the untenured Jones Graduate School of Business faculty research award was earned by Professor Scott Sonenshein. Two outstanding professors, Alex Butler and Utpal Dholakia, tied for the tenured Jones Graduate School research award.

During the investiture ceremonies, students acknowledged faculty excellence by bestowing the following teaching tributes:

- Business Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching – H. Albert Napier
- Full-time MBA Award for Excellence in Teaching – Brian Rountree
- MBA for Executives Award for Excellence in Teaching – Margaret Cording
- MBA for Professionals (evening) Award for Excellence in Teaching – Richard Price
- MBA for Professionals (weekend) Award for Excellence in Teaching – Prashant Kale

Additional faculty accolades were given to Professor Jennifer George who was elected a Fellow of the Academy of Management, and Professor Jing Zhou who was inducted as a Fellow of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

It is with great pride that I acknowledge and commend the Jones School faculty for their many contributions and insight that they provide our students, school and business community.

In April, the Rice Alliance and the Jones School hosted the Rice Business Plan Competition. This global competition received over 500 applications. Judges selected the best 42 teams from top schools throughout the world and awarded over $1.3 million dollars in cash and prizes. Teams competed by promoting and pitching their new technology business plans to over 250 judges who comprise successful venture capital investors, entrepreneurs and business leaders. This high profile event marked the eleventh year for the Rice Business Plan Competition. I am proud to say that under the direction of Brad Burke, the Rice Alliance has built this into the world's largest and richest business plan competition that provides us with tremendous global visibility.

April also marked the election of the student-run M.A. Wright Investment Fund participants for fall 2011. The elected officers and senior analysts perform research and analysis of individual stocks and provide transaction recommendations for the fund’s consideration. The members serve as portfolio managers and are responsible for the allocation, strategy, and risk-return management of equity sectors. In order to qualify as an analyst for the fund, students must compete in a rigorous interview and application process. Under the guidance of Jill Foote, CFA, Ph.D. and Director of the Fund, I believe its newly elected management including chief investment officer Steven Wilson, chief operating officer Adam Brand, and chief economist Lee Carter will guide the fund to continue generating impressive returns.
Each quarter the Jones School hosts numerous events through the Dean’s Lecture Series, Jones Partners, student forums, and other conferences and symposiums. In June, the Jones School Marketing Group, led by Professors Randy Batsell, Amit Pazgal, Sharad Borle, and Ajay Kalra hosted the INFORMS Marketing Science Conference with events in McNair Hall and downtown Houston. INFORMS (Institute of Operations Research and Management Sciences) is an international society dedicated to applying scientific methods to help improve decision-making, management, and operations. The conference occurs annually and has been hosted by universities world-wide. This year, over 620 papers were presented during the three-day period in 15 simultaneous tracks. Other Jones School event contributors included Professors Utpal Dholakia and Dinah Vernik, as well as support staff comprising Linda Werckle, Weezie Mackey, Kyle LaRue, Kevin Palmer, and J.P. Estrada.

According to the INFORMS Director of Meetings, Teresa Cyran,

“This was one of INFORMS most successful Marketing Science Conferences, with nearly 750 academics from around the world attending. They represented 27 countries, including the US and Canada as well as China, Czech Republic, Israel, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Turkey and others. Professor Randy Batsell, along with Amit Pazgal, Sharad Borle and Ajay Kalra, put together one of the best organized and executed conferences we’ve seen.”

During the closing ceremony, attendees communicated their appreciation with a standing ovation to the Rice University host team. Marketing Science president, Professor Scott A. Nelson of Tuck Business School at Dartmouth University, sent a follow up note commenting that:

“The 2011 Marketing Science Conference was dramatically successful. This is reflected in the more than 750 scholars and practitioners in attendance, but more importantly in the quality of the papers, the vitality of the sessions and the intensity of the conversations between sessions. There is much excitement in the field of marketing science today as we tackle new problems with new data and new ideas.”

This conference, in concert with the many high profile academic and student related business achievements by the Jones School family, reveal the powerful impact the school has on our global communities. I hope you enjoy the remainder of the summer as we at the Jones School prepare for our next entering classes.

Please stay engaged with the school and as always, let me know what is on your mind.