

University News Beat

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Program aid for small businesses

Most businesses in Canada are small or medium in size, yet according to Administrative Studies Placement Officer, Ray Sturgess, only about 10% of York's MBA's elect to work as consultants or managers in small enterprises.

The Faculty of Administrative Studies is doing something to help the situation. With the aid of a \$45,000 grant from the Ministry of Industry and Tourism, Government of Ontario, the Research Division is embarking on the second year of its small business assistance program.

The program, which started last summer with a \$5,500 grant and two student research assistants, proved very successful. It resulted in an in-depth questionnaire and personal interview study to help identify the most critical problem areas facing small businesses.

This summer the program will be expanded to involve twelve students. Eleven are MBA's and third and fourth year administrative studies students, (four are women), while one is a political science major from arts. With over thirty applicants for the twelve positions, the participating students had to have a wide and varied background in business.

Several have worked for big corporations like Shell Canada or Molson's Breweries, some have been employed by accountancy firms, and others have done liaison or personnel work for the government. Many have parents who have small businesses and many have worked for large companies and were "turned off" by the experience.

Stephen Bahen was one of last year's research assistants. This year he

is Program Director. With a commerce degree from Loyola University and an MBA from York, he has received extensive management training and therefore has a managerial viewpoint.

"In a big corporation you are locked into a narrow stream", he explains. You don't get to be a manager for a long time.

PERSONAL CONTACT

In a small business, you can apply what you've learned and affect policy making almost immediately. You're dealing directly with the top man — the small businessman.

Management consultation in a small business must be handled with tact.

"A small business is essentially the extension of a man's goals and the way he thinks," says Bahen. And because everything is on a smaller scale, mistakes are far more serious than in a large company which can absorb a greater loss.

Business courses generally deal with managerial theory for large corporations, which is why most MBA's are big business bound.

Associate Dean/Students, Rein Peterson, sees the program as a way to interest students in careers in small business management.

The primary purpose of the small business program is to conduct untraditional research by getting involved and finding out what Administrative Studies can do to help.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

"The greatest single contribution that the Faculty can make, is to reach out into the community. We're a professional Faculty, and we must be involved in the community at both the



Stephen Bahen, Rein Peterson, Ray Sturgess and Margaret Styles discuss the preparations for this summer's small business assistance program. Last summer's pilot program proved very successful.

student and faculty levels," Prof. Peterson explains.

The biggest problem facing Canadian small businesses is "thin management talent". Businessmen need information about new developments in government, industry, the market, etc. Other help for small business programs generally have narrow viewpoints — they advise on tax laws, or they offer money for expansion.

York's program is unique. It's the only one with an overall viewpoint.

One point became clear to the participants in last summer's program. There is no single profile of the small businessman. Their backgrounds and

characteristics vary, but they do have one common bond — entrepreneurship. They all want to be in control of their own affairs, and they all have some business problems.

Prof. Peterson will conduct a course in the fall which will focus on management for small business. He hopes it will be a kind of post mortem of this summer's program.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE

What kind of businesses are involved in the small business assistance program? Margaret Styles, Program Administrator, says she's had enquiries from various types — from

variety shops and shoe stores, print shops and even a chiropractic office.

She views the program as "a great learning experience — not just for the students, but for those of us involved in the organization."

It is hoped that the small business assistance program will eventually lead to future internships and business education programs. An internship would allow students to work full-time in a small business for part of the year, and earn credits for the remainder of the year.

As a future job environment, small business may provide a most interesting alternative.

Human resources devp.

Students gain interpersonal skills

Interesting things happened in the Human Resources Development seminar this year.

A final year architecture student spends his work terms living in federal prisons, getting first hand knowledge of problems of inmates, guards and administrators. As a guest of the HRD seminar several weeks ago, he discussed his experiences and his recommendations for the design of institutions more conducive to improved rehabilitation programs.

This was just one of a series of guests in this class, devoted to the study of some of our major institutions and their impact on community mental health.

Through the study of theory, seminar presentation, discussion with guests and practicum experience, HRD students get a balanced perspective of some of the issues surrounding community mental health.

The HRD seminar is a direct development of the Human Resources Development program — a program offered by York's psychology department.

Conceived by Dr. Gerald Cosgrave and Prof. N. Agnew, made possible by a five-year grant from a foundation, developed and implemented by Prof. L. Rice, the program provides an opportunity for students to gain a solid background in psychology while placing the emphasis on the individual in his physical and social environment.

The goal is to meet the needs of students who may want

to maximize their awareness and exposure to a wide variety of educational experiences, but place a high value on the particular ability to relate to and understand others.

This is brought about by advocating a special core of courses in psychology and sociology and providing a close advisory system which encourages the student to take options which reflect his area of interest.

The emphasis is on developing a philosophy of awareness and way of relating to people, rather than a package of ready made skills. Yet the program inevitably enables the student to develop interpersonal skills which can be applied in a wide variety of settings.

With this background in mind it is easy to understand how the content of the HRD seminar last year ranged all the way from a critical study of the effectiveness of psychotherapy to the relative merits of television soap operas. This was the range of interests reflected by the students — which also accounted for the highly varied parade of guests who visited the class last term.

They included the man responsible for guidance programs in Ontario, a representative of the Canadian Mental Health Assoc., an expert on poverty, and two lawyers who discussed the impact of certain laws on mental health.

This year's seminar was under the direction of Prof. Mal Weinstein. The second term discussions were organized and led by E. McTavish.



York team takes award

Keith Boddaert, President of the Industrial Marketers of Toronto, presents the Canadian General Electric Trophy to captain of York's marketing team, Robert Sherkin. Entering the Industrial Marketing Institutes' third annual case competition for the first time, a York team of five undergraduate students from the Faculty of Administrative Studies were selected for the award over competing teams from Ryerson, Humber, Sheridan, Seneca, George Brown and Centennial. The members of the York team were Carmen Giordano, Carl Hayman, Ray Kurki, Ken Porter and Robert Sherkin.

Be your own boss this summer

Having problems getting a summer job? Why not work for yourself?

"Venture Capital", part of the Ontario Government's "Experience '74" summer employment program, offers students a chance to receive financial assistance in setting up their own small businesses for the summer.

The assistance comes in the form of interest free loans, up to \$1,000 per venture.

The program is administered by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities with the assistance of the Ontario Chambers of Commerce and the Royal Bank of Canada.

The idea is to select a venture and

prepare an analysis of its business potential with the help of members of the local Chamber of Commerce. The analysis is then sent to a provincial panel for approval.

Successful applicants receive an interest free (for the duration of the project) loan to cover the start-up costs of their operation. All profits made by the venture, after expenses are paid, belong to the student.

There are no restrictions on the type of business venture that might qualify, but preference will be given to projects that do not compete directly with established businesses in the area. Examples might range from cutting

firewood to taking baby pictures to house painting and vegetable farming.

The aim of the program is to give community college and university students a chance to get valuable business experience while making some money.

A business-like, organized atmosphere has to be maintained. Standard records and accounts must be kept, and periodic progress reports are expected.

Want more information and an application form for the program? Write to Venture Capital Program, Personnel Branch, Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 9th Floor, Mowat Block, Queen's Park, Toronto.