

The Willamette University MBA
Atkinson Graduate School of Management
Dean's Report, Spring 2007

Directions

Perfecting Partnerships

Synergy. Sharing. Success.



LETTER FROM THE DEAN

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Creating communities by working together.

By design, the Atkinson Graduate School of Management creates an environment of collaboration and teamwork. The mission statement guides students to “identify and convey principles of management shared by successful business, government and not-for-profit enterprises.” Courses, projects and professional organizations encourage students to work together and pool knowledge for the common good.

The effects of this collaboration continue to be embodied by our alumni as they move into their respective professions. They call upon one another, partner in business opportunities and build relationships with their communities through volunteerism and philanthropy. This report highlights representatives from the Atkinson alumni who are making an impact through their partnerships.

For nine years, our PACE program has partnered our students with non-profit organizations, offering real-world experience for our students in exchange for valuable consulting services for the non-profits. As one of the most challenging aspects of our curriculum, PACE both stretches and bonds the students, teaching them the value of being part of a team and the importance of their roles in success.

The Professional MBA program, now in its second year, embodies the idea of partnerships through its cohort setting—encouraging students to meet and network with each other. The students of the first class represent this and are featured in this report, sharing the experiences and connections they’ve found over the past year and a half.

Indeed, like life, Atkinson provides a multitude of opportunities to make a difference as an individual. It is our hope that when each of us leaves at the end of the day, we’ve seen the value in making that difference together and for one another. We are proud of the way our alumni make a positive impact on our institution and in the world. We celebrate our partnership with you!

Best Wishes,



DEBRA J. RINGOLD
Ph.D., Interim Dean and Professor
of Marketing, Atkinson Graduate
School of Management
Chair, American Marketing
Association Board of Directors

FACULTY DIRECTIONS



KEN MURPHY, PH.D
Associate Professor of Information Systems

Ken Murphy

Forming real-life relationships that last outside the classroom.

In Ken Murphy's "Managing Processes and Systems" class, students have the opportunity to partner with area businesses to solve real management challenges. "The students receive valuable experience by addressing real issues that come up at client sites versus just book/classroom learning," Murphy explained. This year, his class is part of the PACE not-for-profit program—partnering with Goodwill Industries, Mercy Corps Northwest, Salem Art Association and Salem Citadel Salvation Army. In previous years, his students have worked to bring valuable business solutions to a variety of for-profit corporations.

Sometimes his students work to improve clients' business processes by implementing information systems, but not always. "Students need to use whatever management skills they can to solve the client's problems," Murphy said. In the case of working with not-for-profit clients, "The goal is to deliver value that's broader than just making more money." Students not only gain experience, they establish personal and professional partnerships that often result in opportunities for employment in the real world.



GARY CONKLING
Affiliated Instructor
Atkinson Advisory Board Member
Partner, Conkling Fiskum & McCormick

Gary Conkling

Effective communications creates great partnerships.

The link between management and successful partnerships involves effective communications. That's exactly what Gary Conkling advocates in his public relations firm, Conkling Fiskum & McCormick (CFM), and his class at Atkinson. "Thinking about 'you' doesn't get you very far," Conkling explains. "It's best to think in terms of partnerships—by listening to your target audience and getting them involved through interactive communications."

In Conkling's class, communications is viewed as a strategy integral to organizational success much like finance and operations. Through case studies of real organizations, some of them his past clients, he challenges students to prepare for crisis situations. "Everyone faces a communications crisis at some point," Conkling says. "The key is being prepared to deal with it so you can turn a potential disaster into an opportunity to strengthen your reputation and your brand." Strategic communication relies on research, empathy, curiosity and engagement. "It's not just about looking at the economic consequences of particular actions," he explains, "it's about doing the right thing for everyone and understanding a situation with enough peripheral vision that you can find a solution. That's the kind of partnerships people admire."

ATKINSON CORPORATE PARTNERS

Just a few of the dozens of companies Ken Murphy's students have partnered with to gain real-life experience:

Landmark Ford
Gold Beach (OR) Lumber Yard
Salem Outreach Center
Salem Friends of Felines
Salem Statesman Journal
Reruns for Kids
Yellow Cab Company
Cascade Cardiology
Milgard Windows
Boys and Girls Club
Salem Hospital
St. Vincent DePaul
Puddin' River Chocolates
Law Office of Eden Rose Brown
YMCA
City County Insurance Services
Ram Steel
Columbia View Health Clinic
Meals on Wheels
Multnomah Athletic Club
American Red Cross

"Students need to understand that management is about leading; leading involves communicating and good communicating involves partnerships. It's an iterative, horizontal process where you may find yourself listening more than speaking."

— Gary Conkling, Affiliated Instructor

Conkling Fiskum & McCormick provides valuable tips, trends and best practices through its online newsletter, *Tips & Trends*, at www.cfm-online.com/tipsandtrends.cfm.



STUDENT DIRECTIONS



JOHN OLINGER
MBA '07
Salem, Oregon

John Olinger

Experiencing international management through Atkinson's French connection.

Rather than selecting a series of elective courses on campus, John Olinger spent the fall semester taking thirteen different courses at the Bordeaux Business School in France. As part of Atkinson's exchange agreement with the school, Olinger experienced European management first hand through courses like corporate governance, e-commerce and strategy in the wine sector. "I wish every MBA student had the opportunity to go abroad," John explains. "It broadened my perspective regarding working in multicultural teams—not every system is the same."

John's most memorable experience about the trip was living like a normal French citizen, in the middle of a traditional French city, participating in all the "normal" activities a French student would be involved in. "I walked everywhere, didn't have a cell phone, and was just able to live and enjoy the country and the people without a lot of worries." John said. "Plus, the food in France was incredible, and it was all around me."



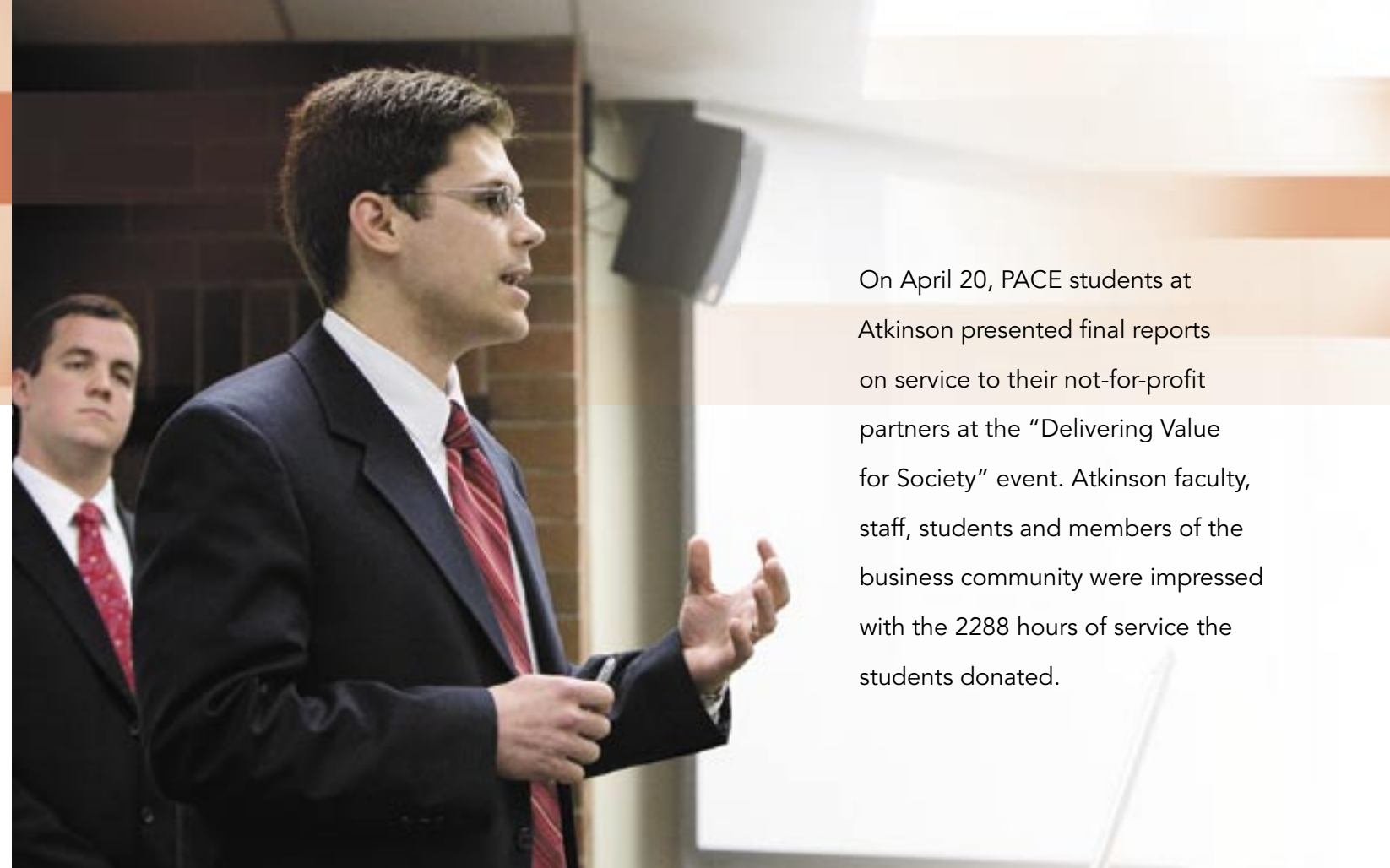
KIOMARS QAHIR
MBA '08
Kabul, Afghanistan

Kiomars Qahir

Fulbright Scholar from Afghanistan looks forward to being "an ambassador for peace."

Kiomars Qahir grew up surrounded by war. "There was so much bloodshed," he explains. "Being a 12-year-old kid and living with it, I got used to it." His family fled to Pakistan, but he returned home and received his degree in Journalism from Kabul University. Shortly after, Osama bin Laden and the Taliban attacked New York's World Trade Center. He calls the Taliban regime "the darkest, darkest page of history for our country." Qahir decided he wanted to go back to school and get an MBA in America. He applied for Afghanistan's competitive Fulbright Scholarship Program, and was one of only about 25 chosen to go to the U.S. After obtaining his MBA, he plans to return home to work in the Afghan government's public administration sector, to share what he has learned.

Qahir says he has been happy to share his culture with Americans. "There are people in Afghanistan just like the people you know from your hometown. I'm looking forward to being an ambassador for peace."



On April 20, PACE students at Atkinson presented final reports on service to their not-for-profit partners at the "Delivering Value for Society" event. Atkinson faculty, staff, students and members of the business community were impressed with the 2288 hours of service the students donated.



"The PACE program is very intensive, but also incredibly rewarding. It has been an invaluable experience in preparing for my career and acquiring real-world experience—especially working in partnership with not-for-profit organizations."

—Simona Bucur, MBA '08



Perfecting Partnerships

Synergy. Sharing. Success.



Collaboration and cooperation. Synergy and sharing. No matter how you describe it, creating a partnership between two or more individuals or organizations makes good business sense. Whether one of the nearly 2.6 million legal partnerships in the U.S., or one of the millions of informal partnerships around the world, forming relationships helps organizations share resources, knowledge and skills. At Atkinson, one thing always holds true—alumni and students know that working together helps better serve the needs of consumers and constituents—ultimately leading to the achievement of business success.



Julie Brandis

Business assists government through credible information, solid partnerships and creative strategy.

As a statewide business organization, Associated Oregon Industries (AOI) focuses on public policy issues, lobbying at the state level for their customers—about 2000 employers statewide. “Lobbying is all about credible information, solid partnerships and creative strategy,” explains Julie Brandis, a lobbyist with AOI. “AOI’s success comes from our ability to build coalitions and work as a team with coalition partners.” The key to success includes information, partnerships and strategy—it takes many people to bring the right ingredients to affect good public policy.

Brandis recalls how her Atkinson education pushed her to work as a team. “I had my job when I went to Atkinson, and I wanted to improve my professional skills,” she said. “We were forced to dissect assumptions and rebuild those assumptions into credible statements or research. I never would have made it through if the leaders at Atkinson hadn’t encouraged us to share our strengths and rely upon our colleagues to fill in where we had weaknesses. We learned that working together produces the best results. I’ve grown professionally because of the skills learned at Atkinson.”

Brandis said that her Atkinson professors wanted education to be a personal experience. She learned how important market/survey research is to her line of work. And Atkinson stressed solid research and strong analytical skills. Skills that she uses to this day. Brandis says she gets to work with some amazing people—lobbyists who are well-educated, hard workers and quick thinkers. “Lobbying is very important work. Legislators make decisions on thousands of issues, and they rely on lobbyists to provide information on how those decisions impact our constituency. Partnering is everything.”

JULIE BRANDIS
MBA '96

Executive Director of the
AOI Foundation

Leading Issues Editor

Features Editor, AOI Business
Viewpoint

Legislative Representative: Energy,
General Business, Retail



Jus Singh

Forty Under 40 Award Winner—Successful partnering makes the difference between career success and failure.

Early on in his management consulting career, Jus Singh understood that leveraging other team members' strengths with his own dramatically increased the odds for success. "I realized that we could provide a holistic solution to clients and exceed expectations by pulling in the expertise of partners and collaborating on deliverables," Singh said. "We've found that the synergies created from partnering lead to exponential results. The mantra is 'one plus one equals three'."

At Resources Global Professionals, where Singh is Managing Director, they pull in the expertise of outside firms when they cannot provide a niche service that a client needs. "Often, those companies are better equipped to develop solutions on the fly. The resulting success to a client is a strategic win for us."

Singh recalled that during his second year in the Atkinson MBA program, the majority of coursework was set up in a team environment. "During the course of that time I started to recognize my areas of strength and weakness, and had ample time to hone my partnering skills prior to entering the workforce," he said. "In a partnership, planning, effective communication and leveraging complementary skills ensure success in execution."

"In my field of work, partnering, collaborating and teaming are not options," he explained. "Partnering definitely supports my goal of providing consummate client services."

The Portland Business Journal recently highlighted Jus as one of its top Forty under 40. This award recognizes professionals under the age of 40 in Portland who are making a significant impact in the business community.



JUS SINGH

MBA '94

Managing Director, Resources
Global Professionals

State Department of Education
Business Advisory Team Member

PROFESSIONAL MBA DIRECTIONS

First Class Students



Pioneers. Innovators. Partners. The inaugural class of Professional MBA students created a new tradition at Atkinson. Coming from different industries, companies and professional backgrounds, the first class of students, based in the Portland Center, share the impact the program has made in their professional and personal lives.



"Willamette professors have exceptional professional and academic experience. Cohort courses integrated learning exercises with career related events."

—Kevin Phillips



"The PMBA program has greatly enhanced my professional skill set and led to great friendships as well."

—Linda Mann

"Through Willamette's PMBA Program I've developed a vision for my professional future and developed the knowledge to execute that vision. I've gained confidence in my capabilities, and built relationships that will last a lifetime."

—Mac Rinehart

"The best part of the Willamette PMBA program has been the people I have shared this experience with. My classmates have become great friends and business resources, and I know we will be in touch in the years to come."

—Judy Hutchison

"The Willamette MBA program has offered a wide variety of classes that have been applicable in furthering my career."

—Dan Reichenbach

"My experience in the Willamette Professional MBA program has been both personally and professionally rewarding. I've very much enjoyed the opportunity to learn from top professors and from fellow students who bring a wealth of real-world business experience to the class."

—Meyer Freeman

"The material we have covered in this program has an impact on the businesses I run and the civic work I'm involved with. I can honestly say I am a better businessman and civic leader because of what I have learned during my time at Willamette."

—Andrew Frazier

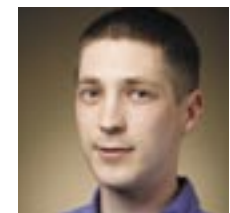
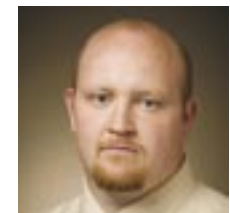
(P)ut work behind you for the day. Argue your point in a venue where you won't get fired!

(M)ind the dinner break. Seriously, we get cranky when we're hungry.

(B)est reason to get to Henry's after 10 p.m.

(A)pply what's learned at work... maybe not the next day, but when you least expect, you've already learned it.

—Amanda Stanley



PROFESSIONAL MBA DIRECTIONS



"It has been a privilege and an incomparable experience to serve as a sort of pioneer with my classmates to establish the Willamette MBA program in Portland. It is my hope and expectation that the adventurous spirit which successfully brought Atkinson to the Rose City will fuel the growth and evolution of the program to provide the best education to Portland's brightest business minds."

—Chris Littrell



"We have such a diverse group of students with expertise in every background, that networking has been a huge success for me. We truly do learn a lot from each other as a class."

—Charlie Fought



"The Willamette Professional MBA program has been a challenging and rewarding experience. I have particularly enjoyed developing relationships with my fellow classmates and being welcomed into the Willamette community."

—Raime Merriman



"The Willamette University MBA—the name brought us together, the experience will keep us together. The professors are wise and their teachings are valuable, but it is my peers that provide the greatest insight, opportunities and support."

—Ericka Kingsbury



"The people met, ideas formed and knowledge learned in the Willamette MBA program will continue to influence me throughout my career."

—Ryan Langdon

"The Willamette PMBA Program has made me feel like an insider. I can now articulate strategy, ideas, systems and concrete reasons to my coworkers and boss better than before. But beyond that, the support system from other students and the Willamette faculty and staff is amazing."

—Minda Hedges

"The Professional MBA program has provided me with exceptional resources for growing my business."

—Trevor Frank

"I believe the most memorable part of the Professional MBA program at Willamette is the passion and knowledge the instructors have for their fields of expertise. This truly contributes to the excellence of the program."

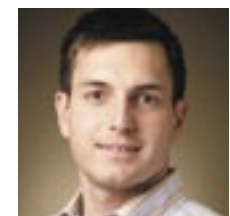
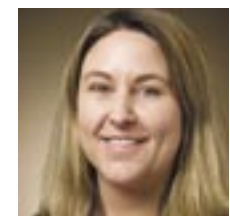
—Angela Childers

"The PMBA program offered by Willamette University offers a tremendous curriculum, exceptional faculty, and an overall flexibility that allows me to work, live and learn with a balance. Most importantly the experience leaves me with professional colleagues, mentors, and personal friends that I'm confident will last a lifetime."

—Bill Douth

"I've been very pleased with the professionalism and high level of education offered by Willamette's Professional MBA. I feel the relationships that I have developed in such a small cohort are invaluable—I look forward to growing these relationships, which is very important in Portland's tight-knit business community."

—Charlie Wolff



DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS



DENISE M. CRAWFORD
WU '95, MBA '00
Director of Development
& Alumni Relations



The Essence of Partnership: Working together leads to largest gift in school's history.

The JELD-WEN Foundation has no shortage of opportunities for their charitable giving. Each year they receive several hundred requests, all for very worthy causes. Late in 2004, the Atkinson Graduate School began discussions with the Foundation and a partnership of common benefit was born.

Over the course of the next 25 months, we worked to perfect a proposal for an endowed Chair in Free Enterprise. This Chair, which is unique among our peer institutions in the Northwest and much of the nation, provides Atkinson with much needed support in the form of a new faculty position. Beyond that though, it provides an opportunity to impact future business leaders and important constituencies outside the classroom as well. Like Atkinson, JELD-WEN believes that management education is incomplete without an understanding of the motivations for, implementation protocols of, and impacts of government interventions in the marketplace. A pledge in the amount of \$2.5 million was made by the Foundation in December of 2006 in support of this project.

The culmination of this gift came as a result of teamwork by individuals representing the staff, faculty and even the alumni body. The representatives of JELD-WEN listened closely to our needs and our aspirations, as we did to theirs. The outcome is a partnership between Atkinson and one of the largest private companies in the nation. It is a partnership that will benefit students for years to come.

This generous pledge, which is the largest gift in Atkinson's history, propelled Atkinson to over 50% of our campaign goal. The campaign, which is slated to end in approximately two years, contains an ambitious goal of \$8.5 million total for Atkinson and is focused on increasing the endowment in the areas of academic excellence, scholarship and annual giving. As we continue to work together and build relationships with our supporters, our chances of success will grow. We are proud to be supported by such a prestigious organization as the JELD-WEN Foundation and look forward to the wonderful opportunities this Chair will bring in the future as we reach out beyond the walls of Willamette and engage the world.

Recruitment of this Chair will begin at the time of pledge payment. For a full press release on this gift, please go to www.willamette.edu/mba/forum/jeld-wen.htm.

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WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY MBA

Perfecting Partnerships
Synergy. Sharing. Success.

Dean's Report, Spring 2007



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