



A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

DEAN GIBSON ON THE
25TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Focus: How has the mission of the School of Business changed and evolved over the last quarter century?

Gibson: The school's mission to offer high-quality education in business to our students has not changed over the years. But the way we have organized ourselves to accomplish this mission has changed considerably. Business education today demands faculty who are academic professionals, committed to scholarly research and to service in society.

Focus: What else should students expect of 21st-century business educators?

Gibson: Faculty must be technologically proficient, foster critical thinking in the classroom, and be up-to-date in their respective disciplines. They must be able to relate to today's students and they must be good communicators. Most of all, they must be able to mentor our students as they develop their professional and personal lives.

Focus: So how has the school kept up?

Gibson: We've kept our curriculum current and relevant.

For instance, in 2004 we instituted the BBA in International Business in response to the economic realities of the global business community. In preparation for the change to the semester system, we totally revised our MBA curriculum to respond to changes we observed in graduate business education. As members of the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), we are continuously improving our business curriculum through conversation with the AACSB and receipt of its guidelines and recommendations.¹

Focus: What have been some of the major challenges the school has faced over the years?

Gibson: The biggest challenge has been to find academically and professionally qualified faculty to teach in the School of Business. Each of our current faculty members has come, in my opinion, as an answer to prayer. There are so many opportunities for doctorally-qualified business faculty in general, anywhere in the world, that to have individuals choose to come to Michigan to share their talent and commitment for private business education is a wonderful thing.

A second challenge is to find funding to support our fac-

ulty to pursue their scholarly interests at conferences and professional meetings. It is essential that faculty maintain currency in their disciplines so they can teach students well and keep up with an ever-changing business world. We need funding for additional endowed chairs for the faculty, which would assist in providing research and service support. Our first endowed chair was established in 1996, and we have just received word that another endowed chair is coming to the School of Business this year! Ultimately we need an endowed chair in each of the six disciplines that comprise our BBA degree (accounting, finance, international business, information systems, management, and marketing).

We also need more scholarship support for our students, particularly for our graduate students.

Focus: Does the School of Business encourage a distinctly Adventist system of business ethics?

Gibson: We have the advantage of a church-related educational institution--we can forthrightly and without apology present the importance of ethics and moral behavior to our students. The most noticeable way we do this is through the requirement of an ethics class (preferably the Christian Business Ethics course) as part of the BBA curriculum. It is important that students understand not only that ethical dilemmas exist in business (a fact acknowledged in all business curriculums), but that approaching these dilemmas from the Christian worldview provides them with a biblical basis for ethical behavior. We integrate ethics and ethical issues into every class, irrespective of the major. By engaging ethical issues and principles within the major, students can learn to respond appropriately to the dilemmas they will encounter in the work-world.

Focus: Speaking of the work-world, where do graduates of the School of Business typically find jobs?

Gibson: Our graduates end up literally working everywhere! They are employed in numerous for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, and I can hardly think of a state in the U.S. or a country in the world that does not have a School of Business alumnus working in it. Let me share a couple examples.

Recently, I received an email from an alum from the late 1990s who started out at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in New York, spent some time with Ford Motor Company (including a stint in Italy) and has now returned to the area to be a senior financial analyst at Whirlpool Corporation.

This past week, Adventist Health Systems sent recruiters to interview our current students for internships and permanent jobs, and a number of their

recruiters and key corporate personnel were graduates of our school.

And in connection with our 25th-anniversary celebration, we enjoyed visits from several alums who have chosen to work in academia and are engaged in professorships at state institutions in several locations around the U.S.

Focus: And you haven't even mentioned the extension programs yet.

Gibson: Right! We just started an MBA extension program at Portland Adventist Medical Center in Portland, Oregon. While a number of the individuals who are enrolled in this program work at church-related organizations in the Northwest, others are entrepreneurs who own their own businesses or are employed by major corporations. Soon we will have a number of MBA alumni in that area!

Our extension program in Trinidad has produced a number of alumni, most of whom are employed by major corporations in that part of the world. And finally, over the years we have had a number of extension programs in Asia. As a result, we have many loyal alums living and working in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Focus: What are some short-term goals for the School of Business?

Gibson: Because the global marketplace of the 21st century demands excellence in business education, here at Andrews we are attempting to deliver a powerful and rare combination of serious academic preparation and Christian spiritual development. We want to be the most recognized and respected training center within Seventh-day Adventist higher education. To accomplish this, we need to do the following:

1. Earn AACSB International accreditation. This accreditation is the premiere business-education accreditation available.
2. Strengthen scholarship by the development of professional competence and a clear understanding of basic business knowledge in our students as a foundation for capable leadership, whether in corporate or church-related organizations.
3. Enhance spirituality by promoting Christian values and an active faith in our students so that they will seek to glorify God in their personal and professional lives.
4. Develop service by stressing the importance of serving and leading through "giving back" in the workplace and in all elements of their personal lives.

Focus: I notice you haven't mentioned classes per se ...



Gibson: We must also enhance the curriculum through investments in technology, globalization, and partnering with the business community through internship opportunities for students, serving as consultants, and involving business leaders in the educational process. To stay current we must integrate technology with instruction and must have sufficient resources for replacement, repair, and upgrading of our present computer labs and classrooms.

Focus: So you're preparing graduates for the real world?

Gibson: To ensure that we are, we must engage in cross-cultural learning opportunities both within and outside of the U.S. The present Student Solutions Consultant (SSC) internship program places students in internships in Berrien County organizations on a year-round basis. For example, over the past 18 months we have placed students in internships at Whirlpool Corporation, Krasl Art Center, Council for World Class Communities, Southwest Michigan Symphony, and others. This program needs to be expanded so that all qualified students may be involved in an internship prior to graduation.

Another example is our present involvement in SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise). Through this program our students have the opportunity to do projects in the community that enhance the understanding of business and economics principles to those they serve. Each year SIFE students have the opportunity to tell Fortune 500 executives about their projects through regional and national competitions. Our students have won awards at both the regional and national levels over the past seven years.

Focus: And longer-term goals?

Gibson: In the longterm, we must strengthen teaching

excellence and program development through investment in faculty enrichment and research, and by funding endowed chairs in each of the six disciplines offered in the BBA degree. Faculty growth and development require opportunities for research and renewal, as well as participation in national and international conferences and similar professional development opportunities. We must also harness the talents, business expertise and wisdom of outstanding business practitioners by creating and fostering (1) an innovative executive-in-residence program, (2) a dynamic, high-profile guest-lecture series, and (3) a "current-issues in business" senior-level course which exposes students to the latest business and church thought-leaders and their activities.

Focus: Sounds exciting. Anything else?

Gibson: I dream of establishing a Center for Executive Development to advance the study, development, and practice of business management and leadership within Seventh-day Adventist organizations and institutions. This Center would serve as a distinctive trademark of excellence for the School of Business. It would provide for (1) student and faculty research projects at the undergraduate and graduate levels that will identify and disseminate the critical skills and ethical values essential for Church business leadership throughout the world, (2) publish books, articles, and training materials for Church business professionals, and (3) host an innovative Web site to serve as a resource for students, faculty, and Church leaders interested in improving business management and leadership within Seventh-day organizations and institutions.

¹ Although a member institution, Andrews University's School of Business is not yet accredited by the AACSB.