What does it take to really succeed in business? Over the decades thousands of Rutgers MBAs have craved and crammed for the answers. And those accepted into the Rutgers Executive MBA program are likely to get the very best answers.

The Rutgers EMBA has been making news lately, winning top rankings from the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal and Business Week, where the program increasingly is cited as among the best nationally and internationally. The most recent of these prestigious rankings, by the Financial Times of London, placed the Rutgers EMBA program as 27th worldwide, in the excellent company of Cornell, Georgetown and NYU.

As Rutgers EMBA Director Farrokh Langdana celebrates his 10th year with the program, those wishing to succeed in business might do well to study his own recipe for success.

Define your niche
Successful businesses need to define their niche to build their brand and their market position, Langdana maintains. Creating the Rutgers EMBA niche has largely focused on keeping the classroom constantly relevant to new business trends. Too many business schools, including the elite ones, Langdana says, are tied to old course models. At Rutgers, a program of one-credit course modules, which supplement more traditional course material, is key to keeping the classroom constantly refreshed. The modules, which change each semester,
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are taught by a faculty of scholars and practitioners who are “the best in their field,” adding up to an EMBA program that Langdana says is “at the top of the game.”

Success breeds more success

The success of each class of Rutgers “embas,” as Langdana affectionately calls them, builds stronger and stronger classes and contributes to the program’s growing reputation. In turn, the rankings are critical in recruiting the best students and the best faculty. A dedicated EMBA staff, directed by Langdana and Assistant Dean Kathleen Connelly Harmon, keeps students informed with news of the program’s external rankings, contributing to a highly effective word-of-mouth advertising campaign.

Provide personalized customer service

Another ingredient in the Rutgers EMBA’s winning recipe is Langdana’s warmth and personalized approach toward the program’s student “customers.” His personal approach starts in the classroom, where he teaches macroeconomics, and where he is more likely to reach for today’s Wall Street Journal than a textbook. The personal attention and warmth also extend to his and his staff’s communication with alumni, offering them frequent news, reunions, refresher courses and networking opportunities.

Be innovative and flexible

Key to keeping up with the pace of change in the business world are flexibility and constant innovation, Langdana says. “This semester’s on fire” is how he described the impact of the rollercoaster of world financial markets on the classroom in late 2007. His 10-year track record of introducing new educational and classroom approaches helps to ensure that Rutgers EMBAs are among the most agile and prepared of tomorrow’s business world leaders.
Casting Buddhist Sculpture in a New Light

For several weeks last fall, visitors to Manhattan’s China Institute Gallery had their artistic perspectives altered, thanks to Annette Juliano. The visual arts professor curated a provocative exhibition of Buddhist sculptures that aimed to “change the dialogue about Buddhist art,” and judging from critical reaction, she succeeded.

“Buddhist Sculpture from China: Selections from the Xi’an Beilin Museum” was hailed by the New York Times as “a superlative exhibition” of some 70 pieces ranging from the 5th through 9th Century, many never before seen outside China. The pieces were all loaned by China’s Xi’an Beilin Museum.

“I wanted to broaden the awareness of the wide range of Buddhist sculpture,” says Juliano, an Asian art expert, who proposed the show a decade ago. She spent some four years selecting the pieces, and was given access to sculptures never before exhibited. Many “mosted but beautiful” pieces had been made for private homes or small shrines, others for the court or wealthy aristocratic families, the type of work usually displayed in Buddhist art exhibitions.

Juliano also wrote the 154-page, fully illustrated catalogue for the exhibition, which is available for purchase by calling (212) 744-8181 x147.

The Fed Challenge Team Scores Another Hit

When it comes to brains, the Rutgers-Newark Federal Reserve Challenge team still has what it takes. The 2007 R-N Fed Challenge team placed second in the New York Federal Reserve District Finals of the seventh annual College Fed Challenge, and was awarded $10,000 in scholarship money from the Moody’s Foundation.

To reach the finals, the R-N students first had to beat four other schools in the Nov. 5 first round, then defeat Princeton University in the Nov. 16 semifinals. Then, during the Nov. 16 district finals, the Rutgers students came in second to SUNY-Geneseo, which lost to Rutgers in last year's challenge.

The team was again coached by Professor John Graham of the Economics Department. The five team members were: senior Billy Joseph of Jersey City, an economics major; senior Sagar Kadakia of Elmwood Park, a biology and economics major; senior economics major Jared Mijares of Teaneck; junior economics and finance major Shabzab Rajvani of Edison; and senior Andrew Verdon of Marlboro, an economics and mathematics major.

Of the $10,000 awarded to this year’s team, $3,000 goes directly to the students and $7,000 to support undergraduate programs of the Economics Department.

Five Good Neighbors Honored

For many years, the City of Newark and faculty, staff and students at Rutgers-Newark have taken part in a diverse array of opportunities for urban renewal, civic engagement, and the promotion of research, teaching and learning across northern New Jersey. To honor and recognize the partnerships the R-N community has forged with Newark and its neighbors, Provost Steven Diner last year launched the Provost’s Awards for Community Engagement. At a ceremony on Dec. 4, the first awards were presented to:

• Patricia Bender, director, Faculty of Arts & Sciences-Newark Writing Center, who is now in her second term as president of the Friends of the Newark Public Library, where she promotes literacy through outreach programs.

• Tynesha A. McHarris, an R-N senior, who has fostered the development of a strong community through participation in organizations focusing on education reform, voter registration, academic enrichment and community activism.

• Rachel Jones, assistant professor, Rutgers College of Nursing, who has created video vignettes to reduce HIV sexual risk behavior in young, urban women, as she has demonstrated how to transform nursing knowledge into public health applications.

• Jennifer Austin, assistant professor, Spanish and linguistics, Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures, for her research focusing on how the linguistic abilities of minority populations affect their access to educational opportunities.

Newark Public Schools, accepted by Newark Public Schools Superintendent Marion Bolden, for being an outstanding partner in the ongoing collaboration with R-N to revitalize Newark through community and service-learning programs.
An Interview with Asela Laguna on Diversity
By Kathleen Brunet Eagan

Professor and Chair of the Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures, Asela Laguna recently was appointed chair of the Provost's Advisory Committee on Diversity and as faculty advisor to the provost on diversity. While Rutgers-Newark takes great pride in being ranked the most diverse national university by U.S. News & World Report since 1997, Provost Steven Diner's vision is to expand upon that distinction to ensure the campus remains accessible to diverse populations and to heighten the value of that diversity. Here Laguna shares her thoughts on how Rutgers-Newark can further distinguish itself as a community that embraces diversity.

Q. How do you define diversity?
A. For 11 years, we have had an edge with the national ranking showing that we are the most diverse university campus in terms of countries of origin and where our students come from. That certainly is a huge success especially for such a small institution. But diversity is not only about nationality and ethnicity; it's also about acceptance and awareness of different ways of being in terms of gender, sexual orientation, religion and class. What we have to care about here is that diversity in the broadest sense is important and that no matter what our differences may be we share certain values and aspirations.

Q. What are the goals of the Committee on Diversity?
A. The challenge for us moving forward is how do we equate diversity with excellence in teaching, scholarship and research? We need to map out how we can take advantage of our diversity to add value to the student experience, promote scholarship and research that deals with different aspects of diversity, and develop a system of education where diversity enriches the curriculum. We also need to promote our diversity in everything we do, from our alumni website to our programming, and we want to bring more diversity to the faculty.

Q. Any particular ideas you would like the campus to pursue?
A. I believe Rutgers-Newark could play a significant role in diversifying the pipeline of doctoral students. Rutgers-Newark has developed a reputation as an excellent research university that appeals to students who are looking for an affordable, first-rate education, many of whom are first-generation college students. By mentoring our best students and encouraging them to enroll in graduate school and earn their Ph.D., we could be helping to promote diversity in another critical way.

Q. Why is promoting diversity and tolerance of importance to society?
A. Just look at today's workplace. There are so many different cultures and religions represented, and today's world is a global world. Students who attend Rutgers-Newark are able to develop an awareness of an ability to communicate with and an acceptance of diverse populations.

Q. How have you personally benefited by being part of a diverse academic community?
A. Rutgers-Newark has enriched my life in so many ways. It has been my window to the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds. My father was a teacher in Puerto Rico and I was from a middle-class family. I did not have to work or support myself in college, not even when I was earning my doctorate. Through the students here, I have come to understand their journeys, experiences and stories. They are primarily first-generation students, who have one or two jobs to support themselves, who need to take care of younger brothers and sisters, and who are the translators for their families. From them, I have learned about perseverance, determination and hard work.

Keep Connected
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