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Nationally Ranked Entrepreneurship

10.10.2007 | Business  The magazine just released the list in its November issue, which hits newsstands on Oct. 23. The list is an exclusive ranking of the 25 most exceptional undergraduate business programs in the country.

"For the second year in a row, the University of Dayton has been ranked as the fifth best undergraduate entrepreneurship program in the nation," said Elizabeth Gustafson, interim dean of UD's School of Business Administration. "This acknowledgement is a great honor and strong testimony about our commitment to developing practical wisdom in UD students."

Schools were evaluated on broad criteria including curriculum, mentoring, faculty credentials and the success of graduating students and alumni. According to Entrepreneur magazine and The Princeton Review, 900 schools were surveyed, but high-ranking programs demonstrated particular strength in hands-on learning that translates into real-world business experience.

"Our program is distinctive because we not only teach theory, we make it come alive for students in everything we do," said Robert Chelle, director of the Crotty Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Fifth Third Bank entrepreneur-in-residence. "Our curriculum 'bookends' our students with practical experience, requiring that they start a business as sophomores with capital from the Crotty Center and, as seniors, solve real-world problems at existing entrepreneurial businesses."

Outside the classroom, Chelle said the UD program offers a significant number of substantial opportunities for students to work with real businesses and entrepreneurs. Those signature opportunities include:

* The UD Business Plan Competition gives students an opportunity to compete for cash prizes as they plan and pitch the launch of a new venture. Winners of the 2007-2008 competition will compete for prize monies totaling in excess of $20,000. The competition is open to anyone in the greater UD community, provided they team up with a current UD student. http://www.udbpc.com

* The Everest Real Estate Challenge is an annual competition that pairs teams of entrepreneurship majors with a commercial real estate professional as an adviser. Teams develop plans to improve growth of a large apartment complex owned by Los Angeles-based Everest Properties, a company founded by a UD graduate, and present their recommendations to company management. Students compete not only for prize money and a great line on their resumes, but also for the satisfaction of seeing their ideas implemented by Everest Properties.

* Flyer Enterprises is a student-run company consisting of seven student-run businesses operating on campus. Opening just this year in a storefront on Brown Street, Flyer Spirit offers UD-themed apparel and items and joins other Flyer Enterprises such as cafés and coffee bars. Flyer Enterprises is the fourth largest student-run business in the country and employs more than 170 students. Only Harvard, Georgetown and Stanford boast larger student-run operations. http://www.flyerenterprises.com/

"Our challenging curriculum gives students the opportunity to examine, understand and implement most elements of entrepreneurial success," Chelle said. "Our graduates have the irreplaceable combination of judgment, enthusiasm and skills necessary to create a new venture."

In recent years, UD's entrepreneurship major has been the fastest growing and most selective major in the business school with the average GPA of 3.3. Total enrollment in the major this fall totaled 130.

"Entrepreneurial courses at UD are taught by both Ph.Ds and actual entrepreneurs, which is part of the strength of our program," said Dean McFarlin, chair of the management and marketing department and NCR professor of global leadership development. "It's really an unbeatable combination. Our entrepreneurs bring in-the-trenches examples to students while our Ph.Ds — who are world-class researchers on entrepreneurship issues — show students how to connect theory to practice. And through the Crotty Advisory Council, local entrepreneurs act as mentors to the students."

One of those entrepreneurs is community leader and alumnus L. William Crotty who has provided more than $3 million for the program. "It's no surprise that UD has achieved this honor," Crotty said. "UD's mission is 'learn, lead, serve' and that is what entrepreneurs must do every day."
The University of Dayton's undergraduate entrepreneurship program ranked fifth in the magazine's listing in 2006 and was one of the top 10 entrepreneurship programs in the country in the magazine's 2005 list of the "Top 100 Entrepreneurial Colleges." In 2004, Forbes.com and The Princeton Review selected UD as one of the country's "most entrepreneurial campuses."

Also announced this week, UD's MBA program is listed in The Princeton Review's 2008 edition of its book, Best 290 Business Schools. The school profile covers academics, admission, financial aid, campus life and career information.