Learning That Lasts

Learning through service was a critical part of several marketing classes at the University of Minnesota, Crookston in fall 2009. Classes in marketing research and integrated marketing communication had the opportunity to synthesize current research and develop plans to address the specific needs for several businesses and organizations in the region under the guidance of business instructor Rachel Lundbohm.

The marketing research class, a senior level course, worked with the Northwest Minnesota Area Health Education Center (AHEC) on some research that addressed high school students’ perceptions of career choices in general along with healthcare related careers. The class conducted focus groups in high schools, in-depth interviews with guidance counselors, and developed surveys that were sent to every high school covered by the Northwest Minnesota AHEC.

In the integrated marketing communications class, students were divided into two groups. One of the groups worked with Shawn Balstad from Pembina Trail Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) to help raise awareness and knowledge about RC&D. The students worked on a campaign that covered all marketing channels to develop one cohesive message for the RC&D.

These two groups of students, both engaged in projects for a not-for-profit business, were involved in what is known as service-learning. Service Learning, a method of teaching, learning, and reflecting where participants learn and develop through active participation, is an important part of the classroom experience at the U of M, Crookston. It combines the academic classroom curriculum with meaningful community service.

The other group of students in Lundbohm’s integrated marketing communications class met with Paul Blomquist from C & M Ford Sales in Hallock, Minn., to create a marketing campaign that integrates traditional print and broadcast media with Internet, direct marketing, and personal selling. The students developed a plan that addressed marketing needs for the dealership located in Hallock as well as Roseau County Ford located in the Roseau, Minn.

Lundbohm knows the experience will benefit her students in the classroom as well as the workplace.

“The students enjoyed the hands-on learning opportunity in marketing provided by these projects,” she explains. “I set the standards high in the class because they were working for real-world clients and I wanted them to get the most from this experience.

“The students took different approaches and used different strategies to meet the needs of the clients and they were able to provide service to businesses and organizations in the region which has given the projects more meaning.”

More meaning that adds up to more learning and equals the best for everyone involved.

Pictured above, class members include: Seated (l to r): Cynthia Weber a senior from Crookston, Minn.; Marketing Instructor Rachel Lundbohm; Northwest Minnesota Area Health Education Center Executive Director Joan Tronson; Thomas Melhorn, a senior from White Bear Lake, Minn. Standing: Kyu Tae Kim, a junior from Seoul, South Korea; Jessica DeBoer, a senior from Crookston, Minn.; Matthew Heier, a junior; from Ray, N.D. Brett Wright, a senior from Cortland, N.Y.; Alyssa Jensen, a senior from Cameron, Wis.; David Bawdon, a senior from Harrisburg, S.D.; Abby Tosh, a senior from Climax, Minn.; Stephanie Onken, a senior from Round Lake, Minn.; Chansoua Rattanavong, a senior from Warroad, Minn.; Jared Handrick, a senior from Owatonna, Minn.; Adeboye Adeyeye, a junior from London, England; Treasure Clemmons, a junior from Minneapolis, Minn.; Wilfred Kooser, a junior from Omaha, Neb.; Jacob Karras, a senior from Janesville, Wis.; and Benjamin Welch (not pictured), a senior from Edina, Minn.

Did you know the U of M, Crookston began offering two new bachelor’s degree programs in business in spring 2010? The Bachelor of Science in Marketing and the Bachelor of Manufacturing Management in Quality Management were recently approved by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents and both of the degree programs will be available online as well as on site. To learn more about the programs, visit www.umcrookston.edu/academics.