

CAMP B-SCHOOL



Summer camps that focus on financial skills are designed to introduce high school students to the potential thrills of a business career.

BY SHARON SHINN

Summer camp at the University of Colorado at Boulder isn't about soccer and swimming. High school students who attend the Business Leadership Program research a local company, solve a business problem for the firm, design a mock print ad, and make a video of a sample commercial as they compete in an advertising campaign competition. If their project is judged the best, they don't win a trophy; they win a scholarship to the Leeds School of Business.

Like Leeds, a number of business schools are devising summer camps designed to get teenagers excited about the possibilities of a career in business. Camps can range from a one-week on-campus experience for students who come from hundreds of miles away to a summerlong commuter program for local teens. All administrators have the same goals: to show rising juniors and seniors how important it is to pursue post-secondary education, whether or not they choose careers in business.

"At our school, the idea is to get students interested in entrepreneurship as a career path," says Steve Mueller, assistant professor in the management department at the M.J. Neeley School of Business, Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. "It's a choice. 'I want to be a doctor. I want to be a lawyer. Or I want to be an entrepreneur!' The earlier you get them thinking about this choice, the better chance they'll have to be successful."

According to Aswad Allen, director of diversity affairs at the Leeds school, his No. 1 priority for summer camp is to teach high school students that "college is not an option, it's a necessity." In addition, he says, "I want students to consider how acquiring business skills can improve their knowledge, which improves their power to make informed decisions and create better opportunities for themselves."

By the time students have finished camp, Allen says, “I want them to understand how money works and how it can work for them. I want them to understand research skills and glimpse how they might be used in the next level in higher education. I want them to recognize that there is relevance in business for all people. And I really, really want them to know that they can have fun doing this.”

Of course, Aswad and other camp directors have yet another goal: They want students to have such good memories of summer camp that they seriously consider enrolling in the school that sponsored it.

Student Search

The first hurdle camp directors must clear is finding the right students to fill their summer programs. Most use a combination of direct marketing and personal appearances to find high school students who might be interested in business camp. At TCU, the business camp is open to all high school students in Texas; therefore, the school sends recruiting posters to all the high school counselors in the state, says David Minor, TCU’s William M. Dickey Entrepreneur in Residence and the director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies.

The Leeds camp, a statewide program designed to attract minorities, is publicized through mass mailings to more than 400 schools across Colorado. Allen also makes personal visits to as many high schools as is feasible to promote the program. Since the money to fund these visits is limited, says Allen, “we have to be very strategic. This year we’re shifting away from visiting the schools where we already have strong relationships, because I believe we will get applicants from these schools. Now we’re looking at other schools where we don’t have strong ties but where I think we might see good results.”

To some extent, this means changing the focus from suburban schools to metropolitan schools. Although the goal of his program is to reach minority students, many of whom are in the inner cities, Allen wants rural students and students with international experience as well. He says, “I do want to attract underrepresented minority students, but I want them to get into a program that is rich and broad in scope. While the program is called the Minority Business Leadership Program, I promote it as a business leadership program out of the office of diversity affairs. My philosophy is to be more inclusive in our outreach efforts.”

Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, holds an E-

CAMP CURRICULUM



Kazoua Kue of Detroit’s Cass Technical High School works with her internship supervisor at the City of Detroit.

■ The E-Commerce Summer Camp at Wayne State University is a ten-week program designed to attract minority students, primarily from Detroit’s urban schools. The number of participants has gone up from 25 in the first year to 36 this year. The curriculum covers technical skill development such as Web design, PowerPoint, and Excel programs; business skill development, such as personal finance and business plan concepts; and behavioral skill development.

While some of the students who enroll in camp are top achievers, more are in the 3.0 range of grade point average, says Wayne State’s Thomas Anderson. In fact, his goal is to recruit “middle-of-the-road” minority students who might not have given much thought to going on to college. At the end of the program, Wayne State holds a graduation ceremony where the keynote speaker is usually a political figure or corporate executive who’s a minority.

■ The weeklong Business Leadership Program at The University of Colorado in Boulder was founded more than a decade ago to attract minority students to business education. At the moment, the program accepts about 30 students per year, though Aswad Allen hopes to increase that to 45 in the next few years. Students are selected based on their academic per-

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formance, their participation in school activities, their recommendation letters, and the way they present themselves in their application essay.

Students accepted into the program enjoy an all-expenses-paid week living on campus, learning business basics, attending skill-building workshops, and visiting summer business school classes in which the day's lecture is tailored to a topic they can understand. They're also divided into teams where they can put their new skills into practice designing an advertising campaign competition.

■ TCU's Neeley School of Business has offered its weeklong summer entrepreneurship camp for three years. The program—called Frog Biz after the school's frog mascot—is designed to teach 24 high school juniors the basics of entrepreneurship. During the classes, students learn about the characteristics of entrepreneurs, how to determine opportunity and recognition, feasibility analysis, marketing principles, funding, the various legal forms of business, how to negotiate, and how to design a business plan.

While TCU is looking for a good ethnic and gender mix, the camp is not specifically aimed at minorities. "Because students have to apply to get in, there's a prestige aspect to the program," says program director Steve Mueller. "So we tend to get the fast-track students, the high achievers. Part of our criteria for selection is to find those who have expressed specific interest in entrepreneurship or owning their own businesses."

■ Business is only one of the summer options offered by the Julian Krinsky Camps and Programs, which also have provided sports camps for about ten years. Program founder Julian Krinsky currently runs summer business camps for the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, and Haverford College, all in the Philadelphia area. Krinsky's camps, which range from three- to four-week programs, often draw students who are budding businesspeople in their own right. "More than half have small portfolios themselves, and another portion have started their own businesses," says Krinsky.

Although Krinsky puts together a slightly different camp for each university, each camp is built around a business plan. Teams of five or six students form a business and assign themselves roles such as spokesperson, CFO, or head of research and development. As the kids create a product and decide how to bring it to market, they learn the basics of accounting, entrepreneurship, and leadership. At the end of the camp, the students present their plans in a judged competition.

Commerce Summer Camp that is decidedly local, as it concentrates on interesting inner-city kids in IT-oriented business. To recruit students, the school relies heavily on members of the steering committee who work at or have close ties to the urban schools. "We tell them what kinds of kids we're looking for, and we emphasize that they have to be willing to make a commitment to the ten weeks of the camp," says associate dean Thomas Anderson, who runs the program. After the school reps identify promising candidates, Anderson meets with them and their parents to discuss the demands and benefits of the program.

By contrast, word of mouth is the most effective method used to promote the Julian Krinsky Camps and Programs, which have been held for about ten years and are well-known throughout the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, area. Founder Julian Krinsky conducts business camps for The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, The Fox School of



Detroit public high school student Christie Young with her supervisor, Ben Clarke, at Ford Motor Company, where she completed a ten-week internship as part of the E-Commerce Summer Camp.

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—Steve Mueller, TCU’s Neeley School of Business

Business and Management at Temple University, and Haverford College, and he expects the schools to market the programs as much as he does. He has found that one extremely successful advertising vehicle is the Internet. Information posted on Krinsky’s and the schools’ Web sites draws the attention of high school students looking ahead to college careers. Because of the international reach of such sites, the programs have successfully drawn participants from as far away as Venezuela, France, and Hong Kong.

Backed by Business

While finding the right students is essential, finding the money to pay for the camps is also a critical job. The camps at Leeds, Wayne State, and Neeley are all free to the participating students. The schools look to corporate sponsors to help pay for teachers, field trips, and room and board—and the college scholarships that are offered to some students who complete the camp program.

The first two years of TCU’s business camp were funded by the Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, which sponsored EntrePrep camps all over the country. When Kauffman’s funding strategies changed, TCU took over the cost of running the program; it is now looking for more corporate sponsorship.

Originally funded by one backer, the Colorado program now enjoys multiple corporate sponsorships from companies such as Key Equipment Finance, which committed \$75,000 to the program for a three-year period. Other companies, such as IBM, State Farm, Accenture, Level 3 Communications, and Sun Microsystems, have also served as corporate sponsors. “We get a little from a lot of companies to reach our operating budget,” says Allen.

The Wayne State program is entirely funded by outside sponsors. The first year, Anderson had about \$40,000 in seed money from a Ford Motor Company grant. SBC Communications and Compuware have also become major donors. In addition, local companies participate in the camp

GOING OFF TO CAMP

For school administrators interested in setting up their own summer business camps, these program directors have a few words of advice:

Make sure the programs appeal to teenagers.

Seventeen-year-olds don’t want to study dry textbooks; they want to work on the computer, play interactive games, and learn by doing. “Don’t make summer camp like school,” Julian Krinsky warns. “Translate the learning into their language. You will lose them otherwise.”

Eliminate barriers for the students who want to attend. Anderson anticipated that his minority students might not be able to afford daily transportation, so Wayne State pays for their monthly bus passes. The school also issues IDs that act as debit cards, and charges the cards with enough money to allow students to buy meals on campus—an important consideration for students from lower socioeconomic families.

Similarly, Aswad Allen of the University of Colorado at Boulder points out that administrators should realize some of the students might have other summer commitments that would interfere with business camp—and find a way to work around them. “Many are taking care of younger brothers or sisters, or they’re working. Some may be involved in sports. The students might not be able to convince themselves that it’s worth it to take a week out of those activities. So you

have to find ways to generate that engine,” he says.

Know how you’ll fund your first year. According to Wayne State’s Thomas Anderson, it’s crucial to make the first year a success, so schools should do whatever they must to raise funds for the original program. Allen recommends starting the first program with seed money from the school. “Corporate sponsorship will come once you’ve demonstrated success or have an actual product to show,” Allen says.

Hire the right staff. “Find someone who has a passion for youth entrepreneurship to run it,” says David Minor of TCU. “The person also needs to be detail-oriented, because there are a lot of details related to putting on a camp like this.”

Anderson adds that some staff member must always be available as a contact person in case someone is trying to reach the school about a student. “Someone has to be there to answer the telephone,” he says.

Plan early. In fact, it’s never too soon to look ahead to next year’s camp, says Allen, even if you’ve just waved good-bye to this year’s students. “It’s OK to start a year in advance,” he says. “In particular, begin your sponsorship calls as soon as possible. You can’t have too many requests out there.”

Never underestimate your students. “You don’t want to overwhelm them, but as soon as you underestimate them, they become underachievers,” says Anderson. “Give them an opportunity to prove themselves, and you’ll be amazed at what they can do.”

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—Thomas Anderson, Wayne State University

by offering internships to the high school students, who work part-time during the first six weeks of the program and full-time during their last four weeks. Companies that have offered internships through the camp include Ford, Budco, Crain Communications, the *Detroit Free Press*, the city of Detroit, the university, and smaller high-tech firms.

Anderson is forthright when he approaches businesses to ask them to offer internships, explaining what skills the students have and don't have. He also emphasizes that the company's financial commitment is not extreme—about \$2,400 per student. The kids are paid \$7.50 per hour for a maximum of 280 hours; the companies also must pay a mandatory payroll tax, but no benefits.

The donations to Wayne State also pay for the school's parting gift to the participating students: a high-grade personal computer and access to the university's dial-up service. Anderson feels that these computers are a vital part of the program, particularly since most of his participants are inner-city kids from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who can't afford such items on their own.

“The assumption I made was that if we could give them this tool, the computer system with Internet access, they would be no different from any other kid who had the tool,” Anderson says. “Then the playing field would be leveled between these kids and the kids growing up in suburbia.”

In addition to paying for room, board, administrative expenses, and computers, the corporate donations often also cover scholarship costs. At Colorado, students end the week with a business plan competition. They are told beforehand that each member of the winning team will receive a \$1,000 scholarship to attend the Leeds School of Business. In truth, any program participant who decides to attend Leeds will be given an identical scholarship.



Students from the Business Leadership Program at the University of Colorado are drawn from diverse ethnic groups from communities all over Colorado.

“We don't tell them that at the beginning, because we want them to do the work, do the research, and do their best when they are competing,” says Allen. “At the end, we tell them that because everyone has done such a great job, we're going to award a scholarship to everyone who decides to come to the business school.” Similarly, TCU offers \$1,000 scholarships to all the students who complete the program and decide to come to the school.

COLLEGE PREP

Business schools that offer outreach programs to high school juniors and seniors might be waiting until it's too late. That's the theory at the Haas School of Business at the University of California at Berkeley, which runs a program that first connects with ninth-graders at schools in the San Francisco Bay area. According to Oscar Wolters-Duran, director of Young Entrepreneurs at Haas (YEAH), the goal is to find urban high school kids of unspectacular academic prowess and encourage them to go on to college—not just at Berkeley, but anywhere.

YEAH, which has been in existence since 1989, encompasses two main programs. A four-year program admits 40 kids who attend two-week summer sessions each year, as well as sessions that are held every other Saturday throughout the school year. A second program is a semester-long session aimed at seventh- and eighth-graders, who work with Haas undergraduates on a social enterprise project.

All the classes are run by Haas students. About 20 undergraduates work with the middle-school students, and closer to 60 MBAs mentor high school kids one-on-one in the four-year program. Five MBA students act as paid coordinators and teachers and are much more extensively involved in the program than the volunteer mentors. High school students who attend the program are split fairly evenly between male and female participants; roughly 70 percent are African American, 20 percent are Latino, and the rest are mixed.

“This really reflects the schools we draw from,” says Wolters-Duran. “We want a diverse group, but we give extra points for students who are the first of their families to go to college, who are from low-income families, and who are attending public schools in the area. Also, generally we're looking for students with a grade point average of between 2.5 and 3.5. Because we want our program to have an impact, we take those students who are really on the edge of being college-eligible and hope that, because of

College Connection

Most of these administrators have found that one of the best ways to keep high school kids interested in the business program is to staff the camp with college-age students who are



MBA students from the Haas School of Business work as mentors for urban high school students enrolled in a four-year program that teaches them business skills.

their involvement in our program, they go on to college.”

During the first year of the four-year program, each student creates a plan for a business he could “conceivably run while still in high school with startup funding of \$5,000 or less,” says Wolters-Duran. After learning about marketing, financials, organizational structure, and capitalization, students write a business plan that they present to a panel of judges at an annual venture capital competition. All students are given recognition—and a savings bond—but the top two competitors win a slightly larger bond that “we hope they will use toward higher education,” says Wolters-Duran.

During their second year, working individually and as teams, students learn about the stock market by investing \$1 million in pretend money in an online stock investment game. During the third and fourth years, students focus on getting ready for college by learning about SAT tests, college and junior college options, and financial aid possibilities. The emphasis on higher education is so great, says Wolters-Duran, that “the expectation is that these 40 kids are going to go to college.”

In that goal, the program has a high rate of success: Close to 100 percent of the students in the four-year program enroll at a higher-education institution. About a third of the YEAH graduates pursue degrees in business.

While Haas provides in-kind support for the program—

already enrolled in business school. For instance, at Krinsky’s camps, student mentors from the host universities provide guidance for the high school students. “I usually select students who were in the program before to be mentors,” says Krinsky. “They help the kids design business plans, work on the computers, and learn PowerPoint.”

At Wayne State, Anderson has relied on current business school students to teach technical classes, act as administra-

including facilities and administrative support—YEAH is responsible for raising its own funds to pay for the program. Since state funds were slashed in recent years, the majority of the money comes from foundations, corporate sponsors, and individual donors. The cutback in state funds may serve to put a hold on plans to broaden the program statewide to other business schools, but Wolters-Duran is hopeful that such an expansion may still be in the works in the near future.

One of the ways to insure a successful program, he believes, is to involve the parents at many stages, whether through workshops that help them understand what’s required of their kids or through competitions that parents can attend so they can witness how well their children are doing. “These competitions give the parents a source of pride in their students,” he says.

Wolters-Duran thinks that—problematical as competitions can be—they’re vital components of the programs. “They give a sense of importance to the students’ work,” he says. “If we were just to teach marketing skills or finance skills to the kids, the concepts wouldn’t be as interesting and they wouldn’t sink in.”

While the benefits to the participating high school kids are obvious, Wolters-Duran thinks benefits to the participating college students are equally impressive. “One, many of these Haas students have come from the world of finance, but they’ve never written a business plan. At Haas, they’re taking classes in business plan creation, so they’re getting to teach what they’re learning. Two, the mentors who are involved in the YEAH program really get a deeper sense of connection to the school. That’s great for alumni development, for building that foundation of support in the future. Three, many of these students may not have been aware of the reality of urban high school students. I hope this program really helps engender philanthropic feelings in our students.”

The YEAH program helps Haas students discover two basic truths—the best way to learn a subject is to teach it, and the best way to get something out of an institution is to invest a big part of themselves into it from the very beginning.

tive assistants, and provide overall support. The teachers and assistants are paid, but students from the Association of Black Business Students volunteer their time to smooth the way for campers.

“I’m a 58-year-old white male, so I’m not sure I’m the guy who is going to naturally connect with 16- and 17-year-olds from the minority community,” says Anderson. “I thought that if the kids could talk to people who were four to five years older than they were, who had walked in their shoes, that would help them feel confident about going off to the university and pursuing an education.”

At Leeds, Allen also employs business school students to act as paid counselors for the high school kids. This year, Allen interviewed past graduates of the leadership program who are now attending school at CU—whether or not they’re in the business program—and they recommended others to join the counseling teams. “These counselors also help us with high schools visits,” Allen says. “They go back to their own high schools as well as to other schools. We try to partner them up so they have a good balance of energy and responsibility.”

Allen believes it’s also key to let high school students know that they can expect continuing support if they do decide to enroll in business school. Thus he makes sure they know about the Diverse Scholars Program, which offers tutorial programs and advice specifically to business students. “We believe that if we can guarantee them academic support and an academic neighborhood that will help them transition into college life, they will be more successful their first year,” he says.

Measuring Success

Naturally, one of the goals of the summer camp is to convert high school seniors into college freshmen—at the host university. These four programs all succeed at this goal with varying levels of success.

For instance, at Krinsky’s business camps, the participants are high achievers who have met tough standards just to be admitted to the competitive programs. Wharton might get 300 summer camp applicants per year and only admit 60. Tuition for all the Krinsky camps is roughly \$1,000 per week, and each school offers only a handful of scholarships. Thus, the students who enroll in the camps are already fairly committed to business education, and the schools are fairly committed to the students. “Two-thirds will go on to college at the school where they’ve been to camp,” says Krinsky. “The schools have done the selection process already. They want these kids.”

The odds aren't quite as good for other programs, particularly those focusing on minorities. Last year, about 30 percent of the students in the Business Leadership Program decided to enroll at Leeds. The numbers were closer to 20 percent at TCU.



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—Julian Krinsky, Julian Krinsky Camps and Programs

At Wayne State, Anderson has been looking more broadly at how successful his program has been at keeping the students in school, period. He notes that everyone who completed camp in the first two years of the program is either still in high school or has gone on to some kind of post-secondary education, which might include technical training in the military. “It’s way too soon to know how many will continue on with their studies and get a bachelor’s degree, but so far I like what I’m seeing,” he says.

All these administrators believe that their programs can

be counted as successes even if the participants don’t enroll in business school—as long as the students graduate having learned valuable lessons.

TCU’s Mueller wants kids to leave the program understanding just how much work it requires to be a successful entrepreneur. “I want them to know how much time they’ll need to spend, and what it takes to raise enough money. I want to offer the caveats that make them say, ‘Hey, this isn’t easy.’ I want them to understand what they need to do next to get from here to there. They need to graduate from high school, go to college, maybe go to business school, maybe go to engineering school or law school. They need to realize that being an entrepreneur takes time and patience.”

Says Anderson, “I want the kids in our program to feel good about themselves and feel proud of whatever choices they make. At the end of the day, we all know that access to information is enhanced if you have education. Access to a better standard of living is enhanced if you have education.”

As all business school administrators know, one of the keys to continuing success is keeping the pipeline of applicants full. Summer camp provides an excellent way for schools to interest teenagers in business—and to give them an extremely positive introduction to a particular school’s campus and facilities. Once high schoolers see how intriguing business can be, they’re more likely to consider b-school their first and best option. **Z**