

Spotlight

A Learning Community

Martin J. Whitman School of Management
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York

The Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University celebrated two new additions this year. In January, it welcomed its new dean, Syracuse and Whitman alumnus Melvin Stith. In April, it dedicated its new 160,000-square-foot facility that houses 22 classrooms, 74 faculty offices, 40 meeting rooms, a 200-seat auditorium, and a video-conferencing and distance-learning studio. This building also holds the Cole Accounting Lab, Ballentine Investment Institute, and Couri Hatchery for entrepreneurial startups.

Whitman offers undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degrees in business. Each program is designed to give students flexibility in their education. For example, students in Whitman's full-time, part-time, and online MBA (iMBA) programs not only can choose the track that best suits their needs, but they can change from one to another if their needs change mid-program. "We didn't want to erect artificial barriers," says Stith. "If a full-time student has a family emergency and needs to switch to part-time, or if an iMBA student wants to move to full-time, he or she can transition seamlessly."

Entrepreneurship is also a cornerstone of Whitman's mission. Through its Department of Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises (EEE) and Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship, Whitman offers an undergraduate major and minor, an MBA concentration, and a Ph.D. program in the

discipline. The school also publishes two entrepreneurially focused journals, the *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship* and the *Journal of Entrepreneurial Finance and Business Ventures*.

"Entrepreneurship is one of our core strategic objectives," says Stith. "We try to weave entrepreneurial thinking throughout our courses." For example, all freshmen at Whitman take a course that teaches entrepreneurial thinking. They continue their entrepreneurial studies through their senior years, when they form teams to create an original idea for a business and present that idea to a panel of judges.

In January 2003, the school launched its Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (CIE) Learning Community to infuse entrepreneurship throughout the school's culture. CIE includes a themed dormitory that accommodates 72 students; their living experience includes guest speakers, innovation contests, monthly recognition



Above: Undergraduates in one of Whitman's residential learning communities. **Left:** Whitman dean Melvin Stith with undergraduate students at the Olsten Cafe, a gathering place in the school's new facility.



Syracuse University's main campus

for creativity and innovation—even movie nights featuring films with entrepreneurial themes.

That entrepreneurial spirit may begin at home, but the school also works to share that spirit with its local and global community. The Falcone Center, for example, started its Syracuse Entrepreneurs Bootcamp and Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (W.I.S.E.) to help prospective entrepreneurs in Central New York. Likewise, EEE has started two new programs. Its South Side Entrepreneurial Connect project works to support small businesses on Syracuse's South Side. EEE also will conduct its six-week Entrepreneurship and Empowerment program in South Africa this summer, in conjunction with the University of Cape Town. In the program, Whitman students will spend six weeks advising South African entrepreneurs.

Michael Morris, the Witting Chair in Entrepreneurship and chairman of EEE, explains that the purpose of CIE is to create a learning environment that instills an entrepreneurial spirit throughout the university. "We want to create a highly entrepreneurial living and learning environment for students from the moment they arrive as freshmen," says Morris. "We want it to be about breaking with tradition, exploding the box, and discovering how creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship can be critical vehicles for individual self-empowerment and growth." **Z**