

Spotlight

Thinking Big

Indiana University Kokomo
Kokomo, Indiana

Indiana University Kokomo's proximity to two of the most prominent business schools in Indiana—the Kelley School of Business, Indiana University at Bloomington, and the Krannert School of Management at Purdue University in West Lafayette—might seem a disadvantage. But IU Kokomo's dean Niranjan Pati views his school's location as an opportunity to fill a niche.

"Larger schools may have more resources, but we can offer small classes, typically 25 to 30 students, all taught by terminally qualified professors. We don't use teaching assistants in either our undergraduate or graduate programs. That is one of our distinctive competencies," says Pati.

To further its program, IUK's business school made a commitment to seek AACSB accreditation. "In spite of a limited number of faculty and a small budget, we attained our goal," says Pati. The school was accepted for candidacy in 1993 and earned AACSB accreditation in 2001.

"Our main challenge was to find the time and resources," Pati comments. "Our faculty and staff really had to go beyond the call of duty to write the reports and put the processes into place to make it happen." IUK's business school is one of only a few programs of its size to earn AACSB accreditation at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

The school serves about 350 undergraduates and nearly 100 graduate students. It accommodates a few full-time MBA students, but most graduate students participate in its part-time program. Most are



Clockwise from top: IUK's main campus building; Students who missed their regular graduation, because they qualified for the national Students in Free Enterprise competition, at a special graduation ceremony; The Wellhouse, a prominent campus landmark; Delphi Delco president Jeff Owens at IUK's distinguished lecture series

mid-career students; many are employed by two of the largest companies in the area, DaimlerChrysler and Delphi Delco.

This year, IUK's undergraduate students consistently performed well on the Educational Testing Service's Major Field Test for business. Students in its investment class, taught by Dianne Roden, also ranked in the top 5 percent at the national Collegiate Investment Challenge, the fifth year in a row they've ranked in the top 10 percent.

Ties to the community are especially important for a small school, adds Pati. Therefore, students in its capstone MBA course participate in the Collegiate Management Program,

working as consultants to area businesses. This year, they developed a plan to revitalize Kokomo's struggling downtown business district. The school also maintains a partnership with *The Kokomo Tribune* and *The Kokomo Perspective*, local newspapers, in which its faculty provide regular columns and book reviews.

"These win-win types of partnerships allow us to reach out into the community," says Pati. He notes that as the dean of a small school, he has a special responsibility to monitor the local environment to find opportunities to keep his school at the forefront of management education.

"Our intent is not to stay where we are, but to improve ourselves and continue to enhance our programs. Even so, we will continue to maintain our small school atmosphere and maintain our niche," says Pati. "Small schools can think big." 