Next Two Courses
Set to Go

While Masters candidates are rushing to complete their first two courses, program Manager Tom Webb and program Director John Chamard are working with course developers to have the winter courses ready to roll on WebCT and course packs in students’ hands. Program participants will get a short break before launching into MMC 520: Comparative Co-operative Practice I – The Variety and Range of Co-operative Business and MMC 530: Co-operative Financial Analysis and Management I.

Preparations have already begun for the Fall 2004 courses. MMC 550:Field Research: Study Visits to Exemplars of Excellent Co-operative Business Practice will take the students to the Basque Country of Spain October 11 to 20 to study the many innovative features of the Mondragon Co-operative group. A proposal call has gone out for MMC 540: The Emerging Global Economy from a Co-operative Perspective II.

Meet The Faculty

Dr. Sonja Novkovic was delighted to discover the MMCCU Program being developed at St. Mary’s when she returned from sabbatical and excited about teaching MMC 510: The Emerging Global Economy from a Co-operative Perspective. Sonja has a Ph.D. in Economics from McGill University, an M.A. from the University of Guelph and a B.A. in Economics of Self-Management from the former Yugoslavia. She is currently Assistant Professor in Economics at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax. Her research interests include labour-managed firms. She has been active in the International Association for the Economics of Participation (IAFEP), serving as Vice-President and organizing IAFEP’s 12th bi-annual conference.

Dr. Stephen Dutcher was a long-time writer and columnist to the Atlantic Co-operator. Today he is Assistant Editor of Acadiensis, a learned journal published at the University of New Brunswick. During that period he earned an MA in Political Science and a PhD in History from the University of New Brunswick. His thesis was on the history of Co-op Atlantic, the regional wholesale, retail, and agricultural central in Atlantic Canada. He is the author of numerous papers on cooperatives. Over the past six months he has also developed and taught MMC 500: Philosophical Origins and Historical Evolution of Co-operative Governance and Business Practice.

Dr. Tommie Singleton teaches management information systems in the MBA program at University of Alabama – Birmingham. Currently an Assistant Professor he has taught at both University of Mississippi (from which he obtained his PhD) and University of North Alabama (where he obtained his MBA). He is a Certified Information Systems Auditor, a Certified Public Accountant, a Certified Information Technology Professional and a Certified Management Accountant. He has written on the role of audit committees and ethics in co-operatives. Dr. Singleton is developing and will instruct MMC:530.

MMC 520: Comparative Co-operative Practice; Variety and Range of Co-operative
Business was developed by Dr. Johnston Birchall a Senior Lecturer in Social Policy in the Department of Applied Social Sciences at Stirling University in Scotland. He is the author of The International Co-operative Movement and Co-op: The People’s Business. In addition he has edited several books on co-operation and contributed to others. Johnston’s research interests include governance, management and stakeholder relations in public services, mutuals and co-operatives.

Student Feedback – Program Change

One of the objectives of our program right from the start was to be in regular touch with our Masters candidates. The idea was not to limit our contact to responding to their calls and normal professor to student contact, but to call whether or not there was a problem just to make sure all was going well and get their ideas on how we might improve the program. Of course, we also monitor student involvement and respond when there are problems.

The regular calls have paid off in spades and the comments we have received have benefited professors, the Masters candidates themselves, future students, program staff and the university. There have been many changes to the program delivery and to course planning guidelines. We are, for example, now very aware of the time it takes a discussion group to get organized and aware that the larger the group the more time required. We are also aware that in a very small group, one non-participator has a big impact. We are developing ways to see if we can get the best of both worlds.

When faced with student complaints about ‘little things,’ one’s natural reaction (depending on mood) can easily be dismissive. Little things like, some ‘to do’ items are buried in the professors notes. Why can’t you put them all together?"

Picky? No! The more small things we do not do well the more time our Masters candidates spend coping with them and the less time they have to do what we really want them to focus on – learning. So to our Masters candidates – thanks for making this program better!

The Mondragon Connection

The CEO of Mondragon International, Jesus Herrasti, impressed the 50 academics, co-operators, government officials and community organizers with his January 27 presentation on the economic impact of worker-owned co-operatives in the Basque Country of Spain. Mr. Herrasti is also a member of the eight-person Governing Council of the Mondragon Co-operative Corporation that serves as the umbrella group for the successful Basque Country co-operatives. He was in Halifax with the Vice rector of the University of Mondragon, Josemari Aizega, to discuss collaboration with St. Mary’s University President Colin Dodds, Dean of Commerce Alan Miciak and the MMCCU program.

The two universities agreed to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement on several collaborative initiatives and will work out the details over the next few months. Among the tentative initiatives discussed were the development of a Spanish version of the MMCCU program to be delivered by University of Mondragon; Spanish and/or business students at SMU taking courses at University of Mondragon; the Mondragon Co-operative Corporation hosting the MMCCU study tour. In any co-operative arrangement with Saint...
They Make Things Happen

When Jesus Herrasti agreed to speak at St. Mary’s his tight schedule required that it overlap lunch. For an academic program running on a ‘bare bones’ budget, covering lunch is a big deal. Into the breech stepped three generous supporters:

• Nova Scotia Co-operative Council
• Credit Union Atlantic
• St. Mary’s President Colin Dodds

Many thanks!

Recruiting for this Fall 2004 has now begun. If you know of likely candidates please turn them on to the program and direct them to our web site: www.smu.ca/mmccu for information and application forms. They should, of course, also feel free to contact Tom Webb or John Chamard for anything they can’t find on the web.

FUTURE WATCH: A conference on the future of co-operative accounting – we need your input!

Mary’s, Mondragon would be contributing expertise in the areas of workplace democracy, accounting and worker co-operative practice, while Saint Mary’s would provide co-operative education experience.

John Chamard and Tom Webb expressed their delight at the developments. “Having this kind of expression of interest in what we are doing is like having Wayne Gretsky invite you to join his hockey team or Bill Gates ask for advice on programming. Clearly we are doing some things right and we have much that we can learn from such collaboration.”

CMEC AGM

The Co-operative Management Education Co-operative (CMEC) will hold its third annual meeting in the Secunda Marine Board Room at St. Mary’s University on February 25th beginning at noon. Forty-five CMEC members will be eligible to attend, including 36 co-operatives and credit unions, six educational institutions or organizations and five individuals. CMEC’s members come from New Zealand, Australia, the USA, Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Like the students in the program CMEC members represent a wide range of co-operatives – agricultural, natural gas, co-operative business financial services, housing, natural foods, worker-ownership, education, credit insurance and retail and wholesale. Developing a program that spans and links the management needs of such a diverse group of co-operators is a daunting task.

Recruiting Under Way

The second wave of candidates for the MMCCU Program will begin its studies in August with a one week Orientation in Halifax. Classes begin in September 2004.

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