

From the Desk of Founding Dean Charles Handy



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The approval of a PhD program in the College of Business is a real credit to Dean Labh Hira and the business faculty. It is a wonderful

accomplishment, sort of the icing on the cake with respect to the evolution of graduate business education at Iowa State. There is an old saying about giant oaks growing from little acorns; in a sense this describes our graduate program's growth.

I joined the faculty of the Department of Industrial Administration (IAd) in the College of Sciences and Humanities (now Liberal Arts and Sciences) in 1958. Even then there was already much departmental discussion about becoming a business college. It was pure speculation; in 1958, our faculty count totaled eight. In the early 1970s, Dean Chalmer Roy directed us toward the development of a graduate program, and a committee was formed.

Although there had been IAd faculty growth since my 1958 entry, we were still shallow in faculty with doctoral degrees and breadth of course offerings—two critical factors in offering a master's-level degree program. Consequently, the committee recommended a business graduate program in cooperation with the Departments of Economics, Statistics, and Industrial Engineering. The master's degree was to be called Industrial Administrative Sciences (IAS).

When IAd became the School of Business Administration in 1980, the IAS graduate program became Business Administrative Sciences (BAS). During the IAS/BAS gestation period, interest grew for an MBA program. In the fall of 1983, a committee comprised of faculty from the Department of Economics, the College of Agriculture, and the SBA was charged with preparing a proposal to the State Board of Regents. The committee proposed an MBA with an agri-

business specialization—a degree program unique to the state of Iowa and, at that time, most of the nation.

In 1984—the same time the school became the College of Business—Pioneer Hi-Bred International endowed a \$500,000 agribusiness chair, the occupant of which would manage the proposed MBA in agribusiness program. In March 1985, the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, approved the program, and the MBA was launched that fall.

The new MBA needed a strong, nationally known educator. Pioneer's gift allowed us to conduct an extensive search, which culminated in Dr. Max Wortman being hired as the first Pioneer Hi-Bred International Chair in Agribusiness. Max's passion and dedication to academia helped us get our fledgling MBA program off the ground.

Dr. Wortman is no longer with us, but the MBA program that he helped to get started is today recognized as the third most popular area of graduate study at Iowa State. Agribusiness was the initial MBA specialization, but today the program can be taken in eight different focus areas. Back in 1985, the MBA was taught only full-time and only on campus. Today the program is offered on Saturdays and in Des Moines on a part-time basis. Master's programs in accounting and information systems have also been added.

During recent years, the College of Business has developed collaborative graduate relationships with other colleges across the campus; in particular, the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine. In a sense, the graduate business program has gone full circle. We requested help from other programs to initiate IAS in 1975; now business is returning that favor.

As I stated earlier, giant oaks grow from little acorns. ■