Fall 2014 E-News

Dear Alumni and Friends,

I recently attended a Business Education Symposium, entitled “Meeting Our Highest Aspirations for Capitalism,” sponsored by the Aspen Institute and held at the Ford Foundation offices in NYC. This invitation only event included deans from schools such as Wake Forest University and Said Business School, Oxford University; faculty from Princeton, Yale, and other universities; and business leaders from companies including Kroger and Levi Strauss. During the opening events, Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation, noted that a core issue for business schools is "What kind of leaders are we generating for tomorrow?"

As I listened to my esteemed colleagues at the event talk about business education around our symposium theme and Mr. Walker’s question, I realized even more clearly how different the College of Business at JMU is compared to other business programs. We already offer a course that integrates functional areas across the curriculum, a need in business education expressed by the faculty, deans, and business leaders present. We already infuse ethical reasoning and entrepreneurial thinking into our curriculum; they actually are part of our core values. And, we instill in our students a strong sense of excellence in all they do, which requires collaboration and a strong work ethic, elements often noted by employers as missing in graduates from other business programs but not missing in CoB graduates.

With that context, it isn’t surprising that when the College worked with a communications firm to develop a new logo and tagline, they suggested we adopt our new tagline of “Prepared to Make the Difference.” During the conversations with our many stakeholder groups, the consultant heard consistently that our faculty are prepared to make the difference in the lives of our students when they walk in the classroom. They also heard that our graduates are prepared to make the difference in their organizations from the first day of work. Not many business schools can make those claims as strongly as we can here at JMU.

And that’s how we answer the question “What kind of leaders are we generating for tomorrow?”

Go Dukes!

Mary Gowan
Dean and Kenneth R. Bartee Endowed Professor of Business