

Making a Real Difference by Connecting the Classroom and Program to the Business World: Incorporating Business as Mission and Servant Leadership

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Project Overview

To provide university students with the best educational experience to have a competitive edge, business courses and the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Program should connect with the “real” business world. Helping students to have an actual business encounter and thus experience practical application is crucial for success.

Incorporating Business as Mission (BAM) is essential to raising up servant leaders who live out their service by helping others while adhering to biblical core values.



This project shares ideas, strategies and stories to strengthen connections between the classroom and the business world. Project-Based and service-learning pedagogies, integrating business professionals, and hosting a business and leadership special conference event are some program activities included. Teaching and sharing with a “learn by doing” and experiential education mindset, helps students learn to apply their textbook knowledge in real business settings. Servant Leadership principles can be lived out in service-learning projects in the community.

Business as Mission

According to Businessasmission.com, “Business as Mission is demonstrating what the Kingdom of God is like in the context of business – and as we do so, engaging with the world’s more pressing social, economic, environmental and spiritual issues.” BAM consulting stories and training ideas provide valuable lessons for both students and program administrators. Sharing real stories and testimonies from international mission work in Marketplace Missions is important for all to understand the impact that BAM and Marketplace Missions make around the world, especially in impoverished regions. Teaching faith in business and in the workplace is paramount to student growth and development, especially in a faith-based university setting.



This author enjoyed business mission travel to consult with small businesses, aspiring entrepreneurs and students from other countries. The training and consulting volunteer and mission work was done in impoverished areas of Honduras, Dominican Republic, and Brazil. These efforts can take place in areas of the USA, as well.

Virtual Business Conference

In a FranU Endowed Professorship, this author researched the fields of Business as Mission, Servant Leadership, and Business Transformation. A BAM national conference was attended for professional development and networking. From those initial concepts, the FranU unique business conference, “Discover the World of Business that Makes a Real Difference” was developed. The contracted keynote speaker is a global business leader, author, entrepreneur, and founder of business incubators in 30 developing countries. Additionally, Business Advisory Board professionals and other guest speakers are focusing on business and workplace skills, success stories, leadership transformation, servant leadership, and other key topics. A Texas guest speaker will share a business model from her non-profit organization that helps women in poverty to learn business and workplace skills to radically transform their lives and livelihoods.

The preliminary results of the conference are wonderful since over 80 people from all walks of life and from many states have registered. The marketing and outreach has mostly been by grassroots efforts. More specific outcomes and conference impact can be shared after the event that is being held on April 23-24, 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference will be handled in a virtual manner by Zoom video conferencing. Much work has gone into conference development and more went into totally revising the format and delivery to the virtual atmosphere.

Servant Leadership



Servant Leadership topics are being presented in the FranU virtual business conference. Additionally, Servant Leadership is taught in many Management, Marketing, General Business, and Health Administration courses. Through project-based and service-learning pedagogies, students can apply their core value of service in action by helping with important projects in the community.

One book covered in Business courses and in the Servant Leadership Learning Community on campus is “The Servant Leader: Transforming Your Heart, Head, Hands, and Habits by Blanchard and Hodges. This book is a wealth of knowledge for all. According to this book, “Servant Leadership starts with a vision and ends with a servant heart that helps people live according to that vision.” This author believes in, teaches, and lives out this model of Servant Leadership.



Conclusion

These worthy projects and endeavors can strengthen the BBA Program, courses, students, university, and community. By incorporating and emphasizing BAM and Servant Leadership, students are afforded exceptional opportunities to improve their skill sets and values-based attributes, while connecting to the business world and serving others, thus making a real difference.



References and Credits

References for this poster are on file with the author. Much literature has been reviewed and professional development has been received. In addition to academics, the author has drawn from years of experience as a business professional. Thanksgiving and credit is given to Franciscan University, to the BBA Program, and to all who have been involved in the study of these topics and mission work throughout the years. Much gratitude is given to the Endowment fund grantors and leaders – Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center and the Louisiana Board of Regents. Credit and thanks are given for this Sister Margaret Miller Endowed Professorship.