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Minority Development Program In Accounting and Business

The Minority Development Program in Accounting/Business has begun a tradition to continue for many years. The eagerness expressed by the students to make this pioneering program a success has been exemplified from the inception of this program.

In April of 1986, schools in Flint, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Muskegon, and other surrounding areas were contacted regarding Grand Valley State College's Minority Business Education Center and the program developed to assist minority students in the business world. According to the guidelines of the program, interested students then submitted a typed personal essay, three letters of recommendation in support of their application from teachers, counselors, faculty members, deans or principals, and an acceptable ACT score. These students must have maintained a grade point average of at least 3.0.

All applications were reviewed by the director of the Minority Business Education Center and a selected panel of business professors. At the conclusion of the review, fourteen students were selected to participate in the program. To date, twelve freshman students remain



Donald Williams (left). Director of the Minority Business Education Center, with students in program.

active in the program and are attending classes at Grand Valley State College.

The student's summer activities stimulated their curiosity about a future in both the accounting and business fields. They worked at various companies experiencing entry level responsibilities. The students will return to these firms to learn new and different phases of the operation of these companies over the next four summers, with the anticipation that they will be gainfully employed by companies like those who have been mentoring their progress. There is no guarantee that the company will hire these students after completion of this time frame, but an investment of four years of training and learning is an investment in both the student's and the company's future.

Companies who have been involved in this program to date are Arthur Andersen and Company CPA, Barfield Manufacturing, Bearwood Management Corporation, Ernst and Whinney Accountants, First Independence Bank of Detroit, Grand Rapids Press, Grant Thornton, Herman Miller, Honey Bee La Colmena Market, Robert F. Lewis, CPA, Seidman and Seidman, BDO-Accountants, and Steelcase.

Several new firms have expressed an interest in participating in the Minority

Development Program in Accounting/Business. These firms will begin their mentoring relationship with the Minority Business Education Center in the spring of 1987.

Students involved in the program are Thu Thuy Tran, Raymond Bennett, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Johnson, Melissa Lewis, Jadeen Soo, Stephanie Stafford, Edith Rubio, Peggie Amos, Dana Johnson, Ken Stewart, and James Parker.

Upper class minority students have also benefited from the Minority Business Education Center's advice and expertise in the area of career planning and preparation.

The students involved in the Minority Business Education Center have attended several social gatherings with each other, faculty, and business executives. A luncheon on June 5 at the Peninsular Club was the actual "kick-off" luncheon of the Minority Development Program in Accounting/Business. September 19 proved to be a very successful and exciting luncheon for students, parents, faculty, and all prominent business persons in attendance. This luncheon, televised by Channel 13, summarized the students' summer internship program.

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