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Office for Economic Expansion Update

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Message from the Dean

Enrollments at Grand Valley State College continue to climb. For the second consecutive year an all-time enrollment has been reached. A total of 8,361 students are taking classes,



Marvin DeVries

exceeding last year's record-setter of 7,667 students. The Seidman School of Business is contributing to this statistic by showing an enrollment increase of 12.5 percent over last fall. The number of undergraduate business students reached a new high of 1,328, and the number of graduate business students totalled 316. Much of the increase may be attributed to both the availability of programs and the growing academic reputation of Grand Valley State throughout Michigan.

Our continued desire to offer students more flexibility in scheduling classes will

be enhanced by the emergence of our new Grand Rapids Center, currently under construction. The site of the new Center is strategically located on the west bank of the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids, and should provide students with easy access to that campus and an opportunity to be involved in a variety of programs. Instruction will be offered in Business, Communications, Computer Science, Health and Human Services, Education, and Engineering Science. This nine-story building will contain thirty-five multi-use classrooms, computer laboratories, conference areas, and offices for staff, faculty, and administration. Grand Valley's WGVC-TV and WGVC-FM will also be housed in the new Center as a means of increasing public access to the college's instructional programs and teleconferences.

The Seidman School of Business offers approximately 30 percent of its graduate business courses in Grand

Rapids, with this number expected to increase after the Center opens in the fall of 1988.

The collaborative efforts currently under way with area colleges should benefit the public through the availability of a wider range of upper-level and graduate course offerings. These institutions recognize that in order to succeed in most professions, workers will need more education rather than less, and a cooperative effort, supported by the expanded Grand Rapids Center, makes this venture feasible.

Not only will Grand Valley be in a better position to offer a quality learning environment, but the Center will be able to serve as a key element in the economic development of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. (See update on Office for Economic Expansion in this issue of the *MEMO*.)

Office for Economic Expansion Update

Grand Valley State has a long tradition of working with businesses throughout west Michigan. Individual faculty members and the Seidman School of Business have developed a reputation of providing professional assistance to companies' operations and personnel. In 1984, Grand Valley State established the Office for Economic Expansion (OEE) to commit even more resources on an institution-wide basis to business and industry.

During its first two years of operation, OEE has conducted more than forty conferences and seminars, participated in a number of research projects on the economy of west Michigan, brokered more than a hundred contracts with area companies, and assisted the expansion of available financing. The focus of these activities has always given priority to regional economic development by participating fully in GGREAT and being a leader in developing the Small Business Assistance Network (SBAN) and the College Consortium Assisting Business and Industry (CCABI). The target of many of the OEE's activities has been to promote entrepreneurship and assist start-up and emerging companies.

One of its most recent activities has been the establishment of a microcom-

puter lab. The microcomputer lab is an expansion of the Contract Program division within the Office for Economic Expansion. The lab provides faculty, staff, and private sector consultants with a fully equipped state-of-the-art lab and software library in which to work with companies and offers consultation on how to effectively use computers in business and industry. Many companies have purchased computers but may not have examined the full range of computer uses for business operations such as inventory control, management problem solving, marketing, or clerical functions.

A second program in which OEE staff have participated is the formation of the West Michigan Venture Capital Group (WMVCG). The purpose of WMVCG is to provide a forum for entrepreneurs to present their ideas and emerging business plans to a group of investors. Historically, west Michigan has financed a great deal of new company growth through private investors. This monthly breakfast forum provides an opportunity for wide exposure for the entrepreneur and confidentiality for the investor.

The first meeting on September 26 featured remarks by state treasurer, Robert Bowman, and two entrepreneurial presentations. More than a hun-

dred people attended the first forum and already more than thirty memberships have been sold. Future meetings will be on the third Tuesday of each month at the Amway Grand Plaza. Anyone seeking further details may call Carol Zilmer at 458-6203.

Seidman School Management

MEMO

The *Seidman School Management Memo* is published twice a year, in the spring and fall, and is sent to all contributors to and friends of the Seidman School of Business. Gifts from these sources enable the Seidman School to sponsor activities and programs designed to increase understanding of our economic system, facilitate exchanges of ideas between students, faculty, and businessmen, and support faculty research and professional development and, in general, enrich the business and academic communities. Persons interested in more information about the *Memo* or the published articles should contact Dr. Marvin G. DeVries, Dean, F. E. Seidman School of Business, Lake Huron Hall, Grand Valley State, Allendale, Michigan, 49401. Telephone 616-895-3271.