School of Economics & Business Administration
Think Globally • Lead Responsibly

2010–2011 Dean’s Report
I am excited to share with you this inaugural annual report of the School of Economics and Business Administration (SEBA) at Saint Mary’s College of California.

Over the past year, we have engaged in extensive discussions with key SEBA stakeholders to identify the most pressing business and leadership needs of the 21st century. As a result, we have formulated a new vision for the school, summed up in the phrase “Think Globally, Lead Responsibly.”

With this vision in mind, our new educational mission is clear: to develop business and community leaders who embody global and responsible perspectives. As our students learn to analyze and make decisions about business and economic issues, we are educating them to always consider global contexts as well as ethical, economic, social and environmental values.

Our mission is built upon Saint Mary’s Catholic, Lasallian and liberal arts traditions and its social justice mission. It also reflects the intrinsic strengths of the San Francisco Bay Area, with its broad international connections and world leadership in sustainable and socially responsible initiatives. Finally, it builds upon SEBA’s established success in researching and teaching from a perspective that is both global and responsible.

In this report, you will find news about our school’s achievements as well as many stories about the success of our students and faculty as they pursue our goal to “Think Globally, Lead Responsibly.”

I hope you will share our new vision and mission and work together with us to change the world.

Zhan Li
DEAN
2010–11 Year in Review

1 Assistant Professor Jyoti Bachani received the prestigious Fulbright Senior Scholar award. Bachani will travel to India to study an Indian national tradition called “juggled,” in which ordinary Indians solve seemingly insoluble problems by making do with what they have and never giving up. She also received the esteemed Early Career Award at the SMC Scholars Reception in February.

2 A record number of undergraduate students were placed into paid and unpaid internships at a variety of firms nationwide, including Ernst & Young, Deloitte, KPMG, PwC, United Capital, United Bank of Switzerland, Merrill Lynch, Oracle and others.

3 Best-selling business author and marketing expert Geoffrey Moore spoke about innovation to MBA students and alumni at the Network Meeting Center at Tech Mart in Santa Clara.

4 For the first time, outstanding teaching, research and service awards were given to recognize superior performance by faculty and staff.

5 Saint Mary’s hosted the first Executive MBA Tech Conference, attended by other top MBA schools such as Stanford, USC, Berkeley and Cornell, to discuss the use of technology for EMBA education. Our Hybrid Executive MBA Program is leading the industry.

6 The Undergraduate Students’ Advisory Board was established to provide a forum for students to voice their needs, concerns and suggestions about future planning and decision making within the School. This new student group empowers students and enhances their experience at SMIC.

7 Professor Barry Eckhouse (pictured right in 5) has been named Saint Mary’s Professor of the Year for 2011–12. Eckhouse, the director of technology and online programs, created the Hybrid Executive MBA Program.

8 Professor Eric Kohede and Professor Virginia Smith (see 4, second row) ended their posts as chair of Business Administration and chair of Accounting, respectively, after many years of dedicated service. Professor Rebecca Carroll was appointed chair of Business Administration, and Professor Greg Merrill was appointed chair of Accounting.

9 The Graduate Business Alumni Councils in the East Bay, South Bay, San Francisco and Sacramento worked tirelessly to coordinate a variety of “network, learn and serve” events, including the annual picnic, annual golf tournament and volunteering at food banks in their communities.

10 SEBA catapulted from zero to more than $100,000 in scholarship funding for new students in 2011, including gifts for diversity scholarships from donors Raúl and Shari Deju and Song Wao MBA ’06. These new SEBA scholarships support the College’s mission and attract high-caliber students for both undergraduate and graduate programs:

- Deju Hispanic Scholarship
- Lighthouse Scholarship for Diversity
- St. Pierre Scholarship
- Dean’s Scholarships
- Dean’s Scholarship for Women Executives
- William L’Heureux ’35 MBA Scholarship Fund

11 SEBA hosted a wide range of events for alumni and the public, including the first Global Economic Forum at the World Affairs Council, organized by the San Francisco Graduate Business Alumni Council, and the Center for Regional Economy’s “Asian Investments in California: Strategies, Threats and Opportunities.”

12 SEBA alumni were recognized at the 2011 Saint Mary’s College Alumni Awards. Recipients were Joe Buenavista MBA ’04 (Gaelt of the Last Decade), Renu Dangri Fischer ’99 (Alumna of the Year) and Greg Teshara ’02 (Gaelt of the Last Decade).

13 Professors Jim Hawley, Shyam Kamath and Andrew Williams published the book “Corporate Governance Failures: The Role of Institutional Investors in the Global Financial Crisis.” The collection addresses the largely unexamined role of large institutional investors in the recent global financial crisis and how shareholding organizations exposed themselves and their clients to risky investment tools, failed to effectively monitor them and ignored corporate governance principles and best practices.

14 Spearheaded by Professor Virginia Smith, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program enabled 28 undergraduate students to be certified by the IRS to prepare income tax returns. They worked at the Unity Center in the Fruitvale area of Oakland where they prepared returns for economically disadvantaged families.

15 The Saint Mary’s College American Marketing Association chapter, led by Kelly Fisher ’11, won the Outstanding Communications award and an Honorable Mention in the national Marketing Week Activities from the national AMA chapter.
Faculty and students go global in Jan Term

When most people think of Tonga, they envision a tropical vacation of palm-fringed beaches and sleepy days spent in the sun. But when Linda Herkenhoff, a business professor at Saint Mary’s, stopped there on a trip from Australia, she saw a perfect opportunity for students to learn about global warming firsthand while helping others.

She returned this year with business Professor Jo Ann Heydenfeldt and 15 Saint Mary’s College seniors for a January Term course that was anything but restful. During an intensive two-week program, the students immersed themselves in environmental research and service work in the grassroots communities in Vava’u and Tongatapu.

“The warmth and friendliness of the Tongan people in combination with the idyllic South Seas brought the concepts of sustainability and green practices alive for our students.”

Because it was created from a flat coral reef, Tonga’s very existence is threatened by the rising sea levels created by global warming, making the topic a high priority to the Tongan people.

The Saint Mary’s students teamed up with the nonprofit Vava’u Environmental Protection Association (VEPA) to plant mangroves as part of the Koleva Village mangrove regeneration project. Mangroves are an important resource in the island nation because they protect settlements from the encroaching sea and serve as hatcheries for fish and other aquatic life.

The group also participated in an underwater survey on the health of a coral reef in Vakalolo, measuring the reef to determine whether there is an increase in sea level. Information they gathered contributed to the Dive Vava’u data collection initiative for the global Coral Watch program. The coordinators are hoping to build on the Tongan experience in the MBA program and in a 2012 Jan Term course.

Tonga content adapted from a story by taimionline.com, a Tonga news and information service.

PHOTO AT LEFT: SMC students planted mangroves with village youngsters in Vava’u, Kingdom of Tonga, and measured reef changes due to global warming.
ABOVE: Saint Mary’s students teach games to children in Khayalami, South Africa.
Can a handful of students make a difference in the lives of thousands — or even hundreds of thousands — of people halfway around the globe? They can if they’re members of the Trans-Global Executive MBA (T-GEMBA) program at Saint Mary’s College. Two recent projects demonstrate the reach of the program.

In the Philippines, a Saint Mary’s team stepped in to save the Livelihood and Enterprise Development Center (LEDC), which assists thousands of poor clients by providing business loans as low as $10. LEDC calls itself “The Lender with a Heart,” but it was “hemorrhaging cash,” said Shyam Kamath, associate dean of Saint Mary’s Graduate Business global programs and founding director of T-GEMBA. “People were taking the money and absconding.”

Partnering with the business school at De La Salle University, Dasmariñas, the Saint Mary’s team suggested that the organization shift from a nonprofit model to a bank-led model, developed a cash management system and recommended strategies to put the organization on the road to solvency. Team member Barbara Norius said, “Five people, my wonderful team, made a real difference with LEDC through our research. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I was 62 years old!”

In India, students worked with a nonprofit organization called Mobile Creches, which provides education and health services for children of migrant laborers. Over the past 40 years, it has helped improve the lives of more than 600,000 poor, malnourished and illiterate children. Mobile Creches asked Saint Mary’s to help identify better service models so it could partner with and possibly reform the Indian government’s Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program, which is riddled with corruption.

One of the team members, Dr. Saowarat Kittimongkolporn, used her own funds to travel to India, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand and survey more than 400 people to identify model programs. With the input from the Saint Mary’s College students, Mobile Creches hopes to eventually scale up its work in partnership with the ICDS to serve 30 million poor children.

“We can get involved, but it’s a drop in the ocean,” said Kamath. “If we can provide institutional structures, we can make a real impact.”
The Strategic Planning and Curriculum Task Force, chaired by Professor Barbara McGraw, spent last year revising the undergraduate business curriculum in an effort to improve program quality, assure that the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) standards are met and to better prepare students for success in the 21st century.

The result of the collaborative effort, which engaged a wide variety of stakeholders, is a new curriculum with a business core of 13 courses and an increase in the major’s required courses from 15 to 17.

Two cutting-edge concentrations were approved — Entrepreneurship and Digital Media, each with four courses — after consultations with business communities, the School’s Advisory Board and alumni and students. Also, major changes were made to strengthen the existing concentrations of Finance, International Business and Marketing.

The new curriculum takes the Lasallian mission to a new level, further integrating ethical and responsible business values, as well as global perspectives, throughout course offerings. “We want to make sure that the students can bring the best of who they are into their lives as business professionals and contribute to making a better world. Business isn’t just about making money. It’s about providing products and services to improve people’s lives,” said McGraw.

“We are extremely excited about the new addition to the undergraduate curriculum,” said Larisa Genin, SEBA’s associate dean for undergraduate programs and accreditation. “It is aligned with what is needed for our students and demanded by employers.”

Another addition to the SEBA’s academic offerings is the B.A. in Economics with a Concentration in Sustainability Studies, spearheaded by Professor Asbjørn Mosåljord. Although students are expected to approach sustainability issues as economists, the knowledge they gain through this major will be beneficial in a variety of fields.

“Sustainability issues have become integrated into the public discourse as well as business decision making to such an extent that deeper understanding of these issues is expected to give students an edge wherever they end up,” Mosåljord said.
Although East Bay Machine in Concord is not the type of endeavor that those with MBAs usually embark upon, that didn’t stop Sean McLellan and Tim Alvey, both MBA ’05.

In fact, they’ve found their niche successfully manufacturing parts on contract for such companies as Gillig, the nation’s second-largest producer of buses, Flextronics International and Shell subsidiary CRI/Criterion Inc.

“This year we’re on pace for a 30 percent growth rate in dollar volume,” McLellan said. “We’re doing everything we can just to keep up with the orders.” The company has 25 employees, up from the 10 it started out with five years ago.

Thirs is an old-fashioned kind of business, usually family-run and rarely operated by owners with formal business training. The two credit their success to the education they received at Saint Mary’s and the friendship they developed while students in the Executive MBA program.

McLellan came from high tech. Alvey was a former Charles Schwab branch manager. They brainstormed countless business ideas as they commuted together to work each day. Alvey was interested in financial services, McLellan in manufacturing. McLellan won out, and after a two-year search he found East Bay Machine for sale online.

“Tim and I took every penny we had and every dollar we could borrow from home equity lines, savings and family. We took a huge risk,” said McLellan. But that risk paid off, and the company has been profitable every quarter of its five-year existence, experiencing double-digit growth year after year. With four acquisitions under its belt and a desire for more, East Bay Machine will continue to expand.

And without Saint Mary’s, it would have never happened, McLellan said. “Saint Mary’s gave us the confidence to come out of the program and take a huge risk and embark on something new.”

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As anyone who has ever visited Saint Mary’s campus can tell you, the sense of community here is magical. For Paul Larkins ’82 this intrinsic atmosphere propelled him to transfer from a large state university to Saint Mary’s in 1979. The decision changed his life.

Today Larkins is the president and CEO of SquareTwo Financial, one of the nation’s largest accounts receivable management firms. His career path, which looks more like a major freeway with notable milestones, has included 14 relocations, travel to 26 countries and responsibility for firms overseeing billions of dollars in financed assets. He traces it all back to Saint Mary’s College.

“It was the community at Saint Mary’s that made all the difference. Not only did I meet and marry my wife Jean there, but I also secured an education and ultimately a career opportunity during my three years there,” said Larkins, who found his first job, with IBM, through the Career Center at Saint Mary’s. “College career centers can make a huge difference in a young person’s life. To this day I am grateful.”

Larkins shows his gratitude through steadfast support for Saint Mary’s and is one of the College’s major donors. He urges other alumni to support the College “because, like me, they are the beneficiaries of an outstanding experience and more than likely a phenomenal education.”

Giving back to the school, even if it is a small contribution, can have a huge impact.”

Meanwhile, reluctant to talk about the impact of his philanthropy on facilities, faculty and course offerings at his alma mater, Larkins prefers to talk about the reasons he gives so generously.

“The current focus within the School of Economics and Business Administration is spot on for what the commercial markets demand,” he said, adding that he is impressed with Dean Zhan Li’s broader focus, beyond the Bay Area, as well as the emphasis on fostering responsible business practices and integrating Lasallian ideas into ethical operations in business environments.

“This focus will differentiate Saint Mary’s students and make them more valuable in the marketplace, both as business professionals and as human beings. I can’t wait to see this focus advance.”

Larkins recalls what Brother Mel said at graduation Mass in 1982. “He suggested to the graduates that, as they drive out of the campus for one last time, they look over their shoulder back at the Chapel and never forget that view. I never have. Saint Mary’s is a special place that attracts unique students and provides them with significant opportunities.”
Saint Mary’s, nestled among the quiet Moraga hills, is making a mark on the Bay Area by contributing economic knowledge and expertise through a series of events and a Jan Term project.

In November, the San Francisco Graduate Business Alumni Chapter organized the first Global Economic Forum at the World Affairs Council of Northern California. A panel of experts in banking, economics and finance addressed the economic issues confronting a world recovering from a severe global economic crisis.

The event was part of what moderator Associate Dean Shyam Kamath refers to as Saint Mary’s “duty to provide intellectual, practical and social conversations, where we can talk about what really concerns us as human beings.”

Other opportunities for community conversations came during spring semester, when the school’s Center for the Regional Economy co-sponsored two campus panel discussions. One focused on the housing crisis. The other brought together business leaders to explore the changing face of Asian investment in California.

The purpose of these events was to “provide additional insight into what is going on currently in these two areas,” said Professor Tomas Gomez-Arias. “The Asian event in particular was trying to fill a significant knowledge gap. There is ignorance about what kind of investment comes to California.”

Focusing on a topic closer to home, Professor Mary Coe’s “Extreme Makeover for Moraga” Jan Term project put student ingenuity to work to improve the town in which they live. Coe divided the “Extreme Makeover” class into five teams that explored different categories of Moraga business and surveyed and brainstormed ideas that would generate more campus business: entertainment, Moraga Center retail, Rheem Center retail, Moraga Center food and Rheem Center food. Ideas ranged from:

- Implementing frequent buyer awards
- Mass text messaging about business specials and offerings
- Moving an annual Saint Mary’s event off-campus to one of the shopping centers to generate awareness
- Using college students as business promoters
- Creating a Facebook site for a group of Moraga businesses with relationships to Saint Mary’s on which merchants can update specials.

“It started a conversation between the College and the businesses that never really existed before,” said economics major Matt LeBel, a sophomore at the time. “Working with this town gave me the perspective that the town, the Chamber of Commerce and the College are all interconnected. I love Moraga now.”

Improving the regional economy
Tanya Stulken MBA ‘11 admits she was nervous when she learned she’d be working for a real client in her marketing research class with Professor Saroja Subrahmanyan. “There was an added element to the student performance expectation; the reputation of the team, Saint Mary’s and myself were all on the line,” Stulken recalls.

Stulken’s group worked with Holy Innocents Children’s Hospital (HICH), a nonpolitical, nonsectarian, faith-based organization dedicated to building a children’s hospital in Uganda. Their assignment was to recommend strategies for raising awareness of the organization and maintaining a sustained level of charitable support. So they investigated what motivates donors to support charitable organizations like HICH and, thus, find new ways to raise its visibility.

In the end, Stulken’s concerns about working for a real client quickly evaporated when she realized that her group was working toward a greater good and employing responsible business practices. “I loved that we were helping a nonprofit children’s hospital. It was an idea that we could all relate and connect to on a personal level.”

It is rewarding for Stulken to see how her classwork materialized into real-life dividends. She remembers checking HICH’s website after the project concluded. Almost immediately, some of the interactive website design ideas that her group had suggested during their final presentation, like the addition of an introductory video and prominent donation buttons, were on the site.

Students find solutions to high-stakes, real-world problems
Our Mission

Built upon the Lasallian, Catholic and liberal arts traditions of Saint Mary’s College, the School of Economics and Business Administration strives to develop business and community leaders with global and responsible perspectives.

We prepare our graduates to be professionally skilled, culturally aware, socially responsible and ethically principled.

As teachers, scholars and mentors, we offer students a rigorous, innovative and diverse learning experience by leveraging our practice-relevant, pedagogical and discipline-based research.

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