GIVING BACK, DOING GOOD: MBA entrepreneurship team GreenSun affects positive change
The Eller College doesn’t offer classes in volunteerism, philanthropy, or activism. Students aren’t required to demonstrate their grasp of social responsibility before we hand them a diploma. We don’t mandate that students volunteer for a cause, though a lot of them might think of their internships that way.

And yet, year after year, many of our students give of their time and energy to organizations in this community and beyond. They come up with business ideas with lasting social value or embark on careers with government or nonprofit entities where they can work to improve lives.

The stories you’ll find in the feature section of this magazine are typical of what we encounter here among the student population at the Eller College of Management, but if you’ve read any analysis of the generation of students currently in college, you might find that surprising. These students may have a reputation for living virtually through social networking websites and high-tech devices, but they can and do make a difference in tangible ways.

As an economist, it occurs to me to wonder what they get in return. It’s purely speculative, but I think Eller alumnus Robert Sarver (see page 28) has the answer. It simply makes them feel good.

From the Dean

Paul R. Portney
Dean and Halle Chair in Leadership
This semester, preeminent economist Mark Schankerman joins the Eller College of Management as the holder of the James and Pamela Muzzy Chair in Entrepreneurship, the executive director of the top-ranked McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship, and a tenured faculty member in the Department of Economics. As the Muzzy Chair, Schankerman will oversee a research agenda directed at advancing academic understanding of the discipline of entrepreneurship and building collaboration among faculty across departments and colleges at The University of Arizona. “Entrepreneurship is a topic that draws on elements from a broad array of disciplines and departments,” says Schankerman. “A good entrepreneurship research program needs to build links among diverse researchers and bring out the complementarities across fields.” To that end, Schankerman plans to establish an interactive entrepreneurship seminar series so that research faculty with overlapping areas of interest, both inside and outside The University of Arizona and in other high-quality universities, can share current work. “The early focus will be on interdisciplinary and interdepartmental interaction,” he explains. “This academic forum will provide a natural context in which collaborative research projects can grow.” Some potential topics of research include the valuation and enforcement of intellectual property (especially patents), the sociology of networks, venture capital finance, contract design, governance and succession in entrepreneurial firms, and the impact of incentives on innovation. “Long-range, I’d like to see the research focus on innovation-based entrepreneurship,” Schankerman adds. “It is my firm belief that technology and innovation are the wellspring of sustained growth, and that entrepreneurship is a key element in the process. I believe that the long-term competitiveness of the U.S. vis-à-vis other countries will turn on our ability to innovate. Eller can lead research in this area.”

ABOUT MARK SCHANKERMAN

Mark Schankerman (Ph.D., Harvard University, 1979) comes to the Eller College from the London School of Economics and Political Science, where he was professor of economics and research director of the Programme on Productivity, Innovation, and Intellectual Property Rights. He is an expert in intellectual property rights, research and development and innovation, industrial economics and regulation, and the economics of emerging economies. Some of his recent research explores the role incentives play in university innovation and technology transfer. “The central question was whether monetary incentives work for scientists (royalty sharing) as well as for professionals in technology licensing offices (bonuses). Do they do it for love or money—or both?” Schankerman says. “In a university setting it’s less obvious that monetary motivations matter, but we found that such incentives are important at every stage of entrepreneurship, even the earliest.” He will continue to explore entrepreneurship-related research topics at the Eller College, including university technology transfer and the localization of knowledge spillovers. “I’m interested in understanding the link between localization and the objectives of technology licensing offices,” he explains. “When universities say they want to focus on local economic development, do they generate knowledge spillovers that are more geographically localized?”

JOSEPH BROSCHAK

Associate Professor of Management and Organizations
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin, 1999

Joseph Broschak conducts research on employment relationships and the dynamics of relationships between organizations. Current projects include mobility in professional and managerial labor markets, nonstandard work arrangements, the demographic composition of organizations, and the social embeddedness of market relationships between firms. Broschak comes to the Eller College from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he taught under-graduate, graduate, and executive courses in organization theory and design, human resources management, and organizational behavior.

MRINAL GHOSH

Associate Professor of Marketing
Ph.D., University of Minnesota, 1998

Mrinal Ghosh conducts research into managerially relevant problems in business-to-business marketing, distribution channels, and sales force management. Particular areas of interest include the design of cooperative inter-firm relationships, alliances in B2B and distribution channels, pricing contracts, branded component contracts, and allocation of customization decision rules in industrial markets. Ghosh comes to the Eller College from the University of Michigan where he taught since 1997.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
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Gautam Gowrisankaran joins the Eller College faculty full time after serving as a visiting professor in the spring. Previously, Gowrisankaran was an assistant professor of economics at Washington University, and a senior fellow at the University’s Center for Health Policy. His research interests include industrial organization, health economics, and applied econometrics. Recent papers have examined the dynamics of pricing for durable goods industries and issues related to competition among hospitals and health care providers.

Ivalina Kalcheva holds a Ph.D. from the University of Utah, an MBA from Saginaw Valley State University, and a bachelor’s degree from the University of Economics in her native Bulgaria. Her research interests fall into the overlap between market microstructure and the classical fields in finance. Her co-authored paper “International Evidence on Cash Holdings and Expected Managerial Agency Problems” is forthcoming in The Review of Financial Studies. Kalcheva’s teaching interests include corporate finance, investments, institutions, and international finance.

Oliver Zhen Li earned his Ph.D. at The University of Arizona’s Eller College of Management, and returns to teach here from the University of Notre Dame, where he earned his Ph.D. and taught courses in human resources and organizational behavior. His areas of research interest include organizational stress, leadership, and research methods related to the measurement and modeling of constructs. Current papers examine scholarly influence in the field of management and the mediating effects of employee justice perceptions. Podsakoff earned his undergraduate degree in psychology from Princeton University.

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Paul W. Rhode came to the Eller College in Spring of 2007 from the University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill. He is a noted expert in American economic history, and teaches courses including microeconomics at Eller. Rhode is currently studying the role of biological learning in American agriculture before the advent of hybrid corn and synthetic fertilizers in the 1930s. The topic is the subject of a forthcoming book, Biologic...
Eller MIS continues to lead in teaching and research.

Thirty-three years after it was founded, the Department of Management Information Systems (MIS) at the Eller College continues to operate at the forefront of information systems research and teaching. The department has ranked in the U.S. News and World Report top-five since that survey category was introduced 19 years ago.

Now, as former department head Mohan Tanniru takes a position as dean of the business school at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., the MIS department is launching a search for a new head who will help the department continue to evolve at the pace of global business.

“Mohan led the department well and achieved major accomplishments during his tenure as head, including revamping the MIS master’s program, developing a well-respected board of advisors that helped bring in significant funding, and hosting a successful 30th anniversary event,” says J. Leon Zhao, interim head of the MIS Department.

“We have a real challenge ahead of us,” says Eller College dean Paul Portney. “But the strength of the research and teaching in Eller MIS is extraordinary, and we’re confident that we will identify a new leader who is prepared to take the department even higher.”

Leading IT research.

Eller’s MIS department is well known for its pioneering research. A substantial portion of its funding is generated by the ground-breaking research of the Center for the Management of Information (CMI) directed by Jay Nunamaker, the Artificial Intelligence Lab (AI Lab) directed by Hsinchun Chen, the Advanced Database Research Group directed by Sudha Ram, and the Intelligent Systems and Decisions Lab directed by Daniel Zeng.

“This year alone, the MIS department has roughly $5 million in research grants coming in,” says Zhao. In August, the AI Lab received $1.8 million through several multi-year grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in support of McClelland Professor Hsinchun Chen’s Dark Web project, which develops techniques for collecting and analyzing terrorism data online. Also in August, Professor Judee Burgoon, CMI Director of Human Communication Research, and Regents Professor Jay Nunamaker received $250,000 from the NSF to form the Center for Identification Technology Research, which will explore biometrics and deception detection. Biometrics deals with uniquely identifying people based on biological or behavioral markers; the CMI deception detection research centers around developing computer-aided techniques for distinguishing truth from lie. Burgoon will head the new Center. In all, CMI has received several new research grants totaling over $2 million.

Zhao is also the recipient of an NSF grant of $800,000 over three years for collaborative research with Keith Provan of Eller’s Department of Management and Organizations, the UA Department of Systems and Industrial Engineering, and the Kuali Foundation of Indiana University. “The goal is to develop a new platform to manage complex and dynamic software requirements and contribute to the development of better enterprise applications,” says Zhao. In September, Zhao received $190,000 in funding from SAP to develop an automated procedure for transforming programs into business-process-driven components through service-oriented architectures. To better manage these two research grants and facilitate future grants, Zhao has formed a new research lab called Enterprise Process Innovation and Computing (EPIC) Lab.

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Sudha Ram recognized among the UA’s finest researchers.

The University of Arizona annually recognizes its top researchers during Innovation Day at the UA. This year, McClelland Professor of MIS Sudha Ram was one of five UA research leaders singled out for her achievements.

“The recognition is for a corpus of research on linking silos of data,” Ram explains. “Corporations rely on this data for decision-making, but it’s often spread across different databases. They need efficient processes for storage, retrieval, and management.”

Ram has developed enterprise data management models to link these different silos of data so companies can manage processes including product recalls, counterfeit detection, and fraud prevention.

“The teams people lead today are often not in the same building — and sometimes not even in the same country,” says Eller Fellow in MIS Suzanne Weisband. “Technology has allowed people to lead from a distance, and the traditional views of leadership are changing in today’s networked world.”

Weisband began compiling research on the subject in 2000 with funding from the Army Research Institute for Behavior, and now she has edited the first book on the topic, Leadership at a Distance: Research in Technologically-Supported Work, which was released in August.

Citing globalization and the spread of advanced information, Weisband says that workplaces are shifting to a distributed work process in which employees have all the information they need to make decisions for themselves. The book takes an interdisciplinary approach to considering innovative ways of thinking about leadership in distributed work settings, group dynamics and social processes, and large-scale collaboration. It is available at www.psypress.com.

In an industry where change is the norm, it’s not surprising that the MIS department at the Eller College regularly assesses its programs to ensure that students are prepared to meet the challenges of the workplace. Recent innovations in the undergraduate and master’s programs are aimed at improving student success and giving them a competitive advantage on the job.

Students working toward a master’s in MIS have new class options this semester, including bioinformatics and service-oriented architecture. Faculty Fellow and lecturer Roberto Mejias and Eller IT director Lance Hoopes have also collaborated to offer two courses on information security, which result in official certifications by the Committee on National Security Systems (CNSS). These CNSS certificates are an important first step in establishing the MIS department as a Center for Academic Excellence in Information Assurance,” says Jay Nunamaker, Regents and Soldwedel Professor with the MIS department.

In addition to the new courses and certifications, MBA students now have access to a new concentration in business intelligence and analytics. “These are great additions to the coursework,” says assistant MIS department head Pamela Slaten. “There is a growing need for this type of expertise in today’s job market.”

The Eller undergraduate program has introduced personal response system clickers in freshman classes, which allow professors to assess every student’s understanding of concepts. “This allows us to tailor the depth and speed of our lectures to the needs of each individual class,” explains MIS department director William T. Neumann. In another innovation, students in the introductory MIS class have access to FlexLab periods, or open labs where students can seek assistance on assignments and technology outside of class. “What’s interesting about FlexLabs is that we’re using undergraduate peers on our support team,” says Neumann. “Research has shown that in many cases students are reluctant to approach an instructor or teaching assistant with a question about the class; however, students are much more likely to reach out to a peer.”

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In July 2002, Congress passed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act — named for Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-MD) and Representative Michael G. Oxley (R-OH) — which reformed accounting and reporting practices in the wake of high-profile corporate accounting scandals by such firms as Enron, Tyco, and WorldCom.

Now, five years later, is there any evidence that the broad Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) reforms have had the intended effect? “The researcher’s challenge is to separate effects of SOX from the effects of people self-regulating after observing all the arrests and convictions,” explains Dan Bens. “Measuring the amount of fraud before and after is not tractable; this isn’t a case where we can add something to a Petri dish and then record the change.”

Bens is skeptical of studies that indicate that the stock market improved as a result of the legislation: “SOX was enacted during a stock meltdown,” he says. “The meltdown shook out a lot of Internet companies that weren’t operating on sound business models, for example, so I don’t think you can look at stock returns and attribute them to SOX alone.”

Right now, he says, the biggest debate centers around the way SOX affects firms of different sizes. “The costs of implementation are fixed, so a large company like Microsoft with a lot of revenue coming in can spread those costs out,” he says. “For start-ups and young publicly traded firms, that’s not the case.” As a result, the Securities and Exchange Commission has pushed back the small firm compliance deadline again and again. “For some small firms, the cost of SOX compliance is keeping them from going public,” says Bens. “Research shows that some of these firms are staying private, or choosing to go public abroad on the London Stock Exchange, for example.”

In a recent paper, “Altering Investment Decisions to Manage Financial Reporting Outcomes: Asset-Backed Commercial Paper Conduits and FIN 46,” Bens and Steven Monahan of INSEAD demonstrated that in some cases, regulation designed to help a market can end up hurting it. “We discovered that as a result of post-Enron regulation by the Financial Accounting Standards Board, North American banks, ‘lost market share to foreign banks in the securitization environment,’” he says.

In terms of SOX, Bens points out that the number of firms listing abroad rather than in the U.S. is a trickle, not a deluge. “Still, it’s not good news for New York,” he explains. “The city’s economy is partially tied to the investment banking industry,” he says. “So the effect is no different than a manufacturing-intensive region in the U.S. losing blue-collar jobs to other countries.”

Overall, Bens says he’s not convinced that there was a need for the SOX legislation. “Fraud is going to happen,” he says. “People are going to behave badly. It isn’t clear to me that SOX will be that much more effective in ferreting out fraudulent behavior, and it’s human nature for some people to refuse to play by the rules. Sometimes those people are going to be CEOs.”
Not Business as Usual
Eller expands MBA offerings in the Valley of the Sun.

Southwest’s growing demand for accomplished business leaders, "To grow and sustain a vibrant economy, Arizona needs leaders with top-notch analytical skills combined with meaningful experience," he explains.

The new Evening MBA in Phoenix builds on the success of the Executive MBA program launched in 2006: "We scrapped the traditional semester-long course design in favor of a blended business learning model in which courses are condensed — anywhere from one to 12 weeks — based on the academic material under study," explains Chrite. These condensed courses, along with the integrated curriculum, make it possible to accelerate the program from the usual 24 months down to 18.

"For example, the introductory course on leadership and social responsibility is completed in four days during the first residential session; the statistical decision-making course unfolds over eight weeks in order to maximize transfer and impact," says Chrite.

The program also includes three residential sessions and weekly catered dinners to build a sense of community and promote professional networking. It also includes an in-depth, team-based project to be completed during the second residential session, and an optional international trip. Due to the accelerated 18-month format, there are no electives. However, a capstone project focusing on organizational strategy combined with the latest topics in business leadership will culminate the MBA experience.

"This is an exciting and unique MBA model," says Chrite. "These students will engage in real-world, hands-on learning every Wednesday evening that they can apply when they return to the office on Thursday."

Karl Eller addresses guests at a reception to celebrate the opening of the Scottsdale campus.

Beginning in January, the Eller College of Management will add an accelerated Evening MBA program to the slate of offerings at its Scottsdale campus. "We entered the Phoenix market with a much-needed Executive MBA program aimed at experienced professionals," says Brent Chrite, associate dean and director of Eller MBA programs. "But there’s also a need for an accelerated MBA option for professionals at an earlier stage in their careers, and we designed our new Evening MBA with them in mind."

Paul Portney, dean of the Eller College, emphasized the commitment of The University of Arizona to meet the...
In May, 20 Eller undergraduates traveled to Costa Rica for a 10-day exploration of the region and some of the political and economic challenges it faces today.

“The trip was designed around three academic pillars — the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), eco-tourism, and fair vs. free-trade commodities,” explains Paul Melendez, lecturer in the School of Public Administration and Policy. And, of course, the trip was also designed around snorkeling, exploration of a volcanic and waterfall gardens, and zip lining.

“Zip lining is a huge adrenaline rush,” says Pita Espinoza (BSBA Marketing ’08). “They harness you in, and then you go flying down through the rainforest.”

“It was a way to see first hand how eco-tourism works,” says Melendez. “A third of Costa Rica is preserved for national parks, and tourism is a huge economic driver. Whole communities become personally invested in operating businesses around activities such as zip lining or white-water rafting.”

The zip lining operation didn’t have a lot of elaborate structures, Espinoza explains. Instead, the students zipped from tree to tree, landing on simple platforms — which make minimal impact on the tropical rainforest.

“Costa Ricans really cherish their rich environmental diversity and work to preserve it,” says Kyle Esham (BSBA Accounting ’09). “They have a very different perspective on their environment than we do.”

The students also spent time in the boardroom where they met with civic leaders about Costa Rica’s potential membership in the region’s free-trade pact with the U.S., CAFTA. “Costa Rica is the only Central American country that hasn’t signed the agreement,” explains Melendez.

The agreement would remove duties on 80 percent of U.S. exports, but opposition leaders cite concerns including pushing local farmers out of work and hampering environmental legislation. Costa Ricans voted on the issue in a national referendum on October 7. “They are very brave to put something like that to the public to decide,” says Esham.

As part of the three-credit trip, organized by Cultural Experiences Abroad, the students also met with producers of coffee and bananas, and spent two days relaxing in Puerto Viejo. But both Espinoza and Esham say that living at a local casa universitaria was one of the real highlights.

“We stayed with a huge family in San José,” says Esham. “It was like being at home.”

The family cooked for them, acted as guides, and helped the students test their Spanish. In short, says Espinoza, “They treated us like their own kids.”
Eller MBA team completes global consulting project.

Field projects – real-world business consulting jobs – are the mainstay of the Eller MBA program. Usually, firms contract teams of Eller MBAs to conduct projects of varying scope over the course of a semester, but for the first time this summer, four Eller MBAs had the opportunity to experience the concept on a global scale.

“We worked as full-time employees of ABB Vetus, a division of Fortune 500 company Emerson, for three months,” explains Vishnupriya Selvarathinam (MBA ’08), who was based in Hong Kong for the project. Along with Eller teammates in Vienna, Manila, and the U.S., Selvarathinam completed a project to develop best practices for engineering processes in the wake of a corporate merger.

“Working in an international setting with colleagues throughout the world adds challenges including language, culture, and time differences,” says Matt Helms (MBA ’08), who was based in Vienna. “At the same time, the learning opportunity is expanded and I am able to experience what it’s like to be involved in a multinational corporation.”

“A huge organization with interlinked departments, studying a particular process in isolation is no longer realistic,” says Selvarathinam. “The project helped us understand the way the entire organization worked — from material engineering to design engineering to factory operations.”

Selvarathinam and Helms both say their classes were good preparation for the project. “The project was a combination of strategy, management information systems, and operations, so my coursework was directly applicable,” Helms says. “Field projects are where theory becomes practice. These types of experiences not only reinforce concepts learned in the classroom, but also give me the opportunity to apply them to current, pressing business problems.”

“Field projects help us to improve our soft skills by affording us the chance to make presentations to corporate executives,” Selvarathinam adds, citing the first-semester business communications course that all Eller MBAs take. “This experience also gave me the opportunity to expand my global network of contacts.”

“I strongly believe that participation in this project has increased my marketability,” Helms says. “My real-world experience and interactions with high-level executives shows potential employers that I am ready for the challenges facing business today.”

“Business is global now,” adds Selvarathinam. “The project gave me exactly the kind of work experience many companies seek in potential hires.”

MBAs join UA science students for technology transfer projects in Mexico.

This past summer, the Advanced Technology Transfer Project (ATTP) paired teams of UA graduate students with scientists at four institutions in Mexico to evaluate emerging technologies for commercial potential. The UA teams, comprised of Eller MBAs and PhD students from the College of Optical Sciences, met with scientists to identify projects well-suited to technology transfer, then completed a market analysis and feasibility study.

“It’s the second time the Eller College has partnered with the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) on this project, which was coordinated by Eller Distinguished Service Professor Ken Smith and retired Accenture partner Richard Bouder, and sponsored by the Thomas R. Brown Family Foundation,” explains Smith.

“ATTP gave me the opportunity to test myself and my abilities, and truly see where I stand professionally after my two years at Eller,” says Cameron Verhaal (MBA ’07). “Our team was given a set of goals and a limited amount of time in which to achieve those goals. We were also asked to do so in an international environment that posed a significant number of challenges, including language and cultural barriers.”

“Technology transfer is a new concept at the Mexican research institutes,” says Denk Robinson (MBA ’07). “It’s going to require a cultural change in order for it to become fully accepted on an institute-wide basis. Hopefully, through the continued support of projects such as the ATTP, the leading research institutes in Mexico will be able to recognize the importance of technology transfer in the work that they do.”

“This exercise gave us the opportunity to learn from a proven process that generates wealth to everybody: students, researchers, institutes, universities, and society,” says Teresa de Leon of Instituto Nacional de Astrofisica, Optica y Electronica in Puebla, Mexico, who worked with Robinson’s team.

“It showed us that it is possible to work in interdisciplinary and global groups with excellent results and generate future opportunities.”
The daily newscast — and the constant updates on your Internet home page — might suggest that there's little in the way of good to report in the world. War, political unrest, natural disaster, and tragedy warrant prime placement on the news ticker. But out of those headlines, many smaller stories grow — stories about individuals who are invested in making a difference right now, and for the future.

Two years after Hurricane Katrina, Eller undergraduates try to give back to the still-ravaged city of New Orleans. Amid growing concerns about climate change, students in the McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship conceive venture plans around green business concepts. And two extraordinary women in the MPA and MBA programs each make it their life's work to reach out to underprivileged youth.

For many students at the Eller College of Management, affecting positive change in the world isn't an abstract, unattainable ideal. It's as simple as participating in the annual Eller College Philanthropy event in December. It's as important as the bottom line. It's a way of life.
"We all came together," Tanner Detro says. "There was no hierarchy; everyone was there to help. It was something I will never forget."

Two years after Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans and its citizens still face significant challenges. Eller undergraduates are among the volunteers who have traveled to Louisiana and tried to make a difference in the lives of people affected by the disaster.

Accounting senior Tanner Detro was selected to represent the University of Arizona for Project New Orleans, a community outreach effort organized by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The firm brought in a workforce of 80 students from around the country and 60 employees to renovate Warren Easton High School, which was devastated during the storm. "I thought it was a good opportunity to get involved and help out," Detro says. "It was really amazing to see what 140 people could do in a day."

The students converged in New Orleans on June 19, and toured the city to see the damage and recovery effort. At 8:00 a.m. the next day, they arrived at Warren Easton High School and got to work, rotating through different projects including painting classrooms, offices, and a mural of the school’s eagle mascot. Detro says it was a great opportunity to get a taste of PwC’s culture — June is community service month at the firm — and get to know people. "We all came together," she says. "There was no hierarchy; everyone was there to help. It was something I will never forget."

In March, Eller students in the American Marketing Association (AMA) traveled to New Orleans for the association’s National Leadership Conference, but they also partnered with Tucson’s Ben’s Bells project to reach out to the city’s residents by distributing the bells over the next few days and see that someone had picked them up. The most incredible and heart-warming part was reading the almost immediate feedback that we got on the Ben’s Bells message board on www.BensBells.org.”

One woman posted her experience finding a bell at Audubon Park with her young daughter and her daughter’s friend. “I found it on a bench while the girls were playing in the fountain,” she says. ”I was so thrilled when I read that I was meant to take this beautiful thing home. Two homeless men on the bench mentioned seeing someone hanging the bells, and when I read them the message, they immediately ran off to find their own bells. A few minutes later, we saw them, bells in hand, talking to a woman who was visiting from Washington, D.C., who had also found a bell. We found another bell and Emma and Lana ran up to tell a young African family where it was located. In the space of five minutes, these bells brought together kids, homeless people, mothers, travelers, and immigrants.”
ENTREPRENEURSHIP VENTURES GO GREEN.

Call it zeitgeist. Environmentally responsible business is a hot topic, and last year two student teams in the McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship conceived venture plans based on green concepts. One of those teams is working to launch its business, and the other has formed a sustainability-focused consulting group.

The concept behind GreenSun Energy, which announced an angel investment this summer, is simple: help commercial businesses go solar and stabilize energy costs without upfront capital expense.

“Our goal is to make solar energy financially feasible for companies and organizations here in Arizona — to help bring solar energy to Arizona in a big way,” explains company director of marketing Mikel Chertudi. “GreenSun provides opportunities for investors who have been looking to invest in renewable energy projects, and it helps to push commercial-scale solar into the mainstream, where it ought to be. So it really is a win-win-win situation.”

Chertudi and his colleagues — Kate O’Toole, Dan Tarico, and Jake Stephens — are all 2007 graduates of the MBA program. “We entered the McGuire Entrepreneurship Program with the intent of taking our concept for GreenSun as far as possible,” Chertudi says. “We all wanted GreenSun to be an option for full-time employment after graduation. In late fall of 2006, we realized that we had something — that we had made it work. Our advisors, mentors, and friends here at Eller encouraged us to go for it, and at that point we stopped looking for other jobs.”

Chertudi says that they were interested in finding a sustainable solution to a complex business problem, but there was another factor at play: “Our mutual interest in renewable energy drove us to figure out how to remove the barrier to adoption for solar energy.”

Undergraduate entrepreneurship team Waste2Energy approached environmental sustainability from another angle: the team created a venture plan around a technology to reformulate waste into oils, gasses, and water while creating a positive net energy output, reducing the environmental and economic impact of landfills. The team — Justin Cummins, Andrew Nicholas, and Martin Reed — formed an environmental consulting company after negotiations for the technology’s usage rights stalled.

“Even though Waste2Energy is no longer our focus, we are still very excited and committed to working with green companies and solutions,” says Cummins. “Our consulting company, Green Giants Consulting LLC, is allowing us to work with multiple technologies and solutions, giving us a greater view of the green/environmental/sustainable industry as a whole, and broadening our knowledge and experience across many levels. It’s been great to realize that even though one door has closed, it opened other doors so we could continue working on projects that we are passionate about.”

EVALUATING ETHICAL CHOICES

For most professionals, ethical decision-making is part of that first-job learning curve, which is often timed with the realization that there’s a lot of gray in between black and white.

The Eller College’s E-tegrity Program, founded in 2003, was designed to help students think critically about the ethical choices they will face on the job and in daily life. The centerpiece of the program is the Eller Ethics Case Competition — the only national collegiate competition of its kind. Now in its fifth year, the competition continues to draw student teams from schools across the country, including Penn State, USC, the University of Washington, and Case Western. The teams are presented with an ethical case, which they analyze, formulate a position on, then present and defend.

Paul Melendez, public policy lecturer and director of the Ethics Program, chooses hot button issues such as mortgage lending to illegal aliens and shareholder activism, and then writes the cases that the students tackle. “I try to focus on an issue that will persist in the years ahead,” he says. “What I hope is that the topic is provocative and gives the students exposure to the types of issues they will face again and again in their professional careers.”
Working for the Greater Good.

Sometimes volunteering is not enough. Amanda Kucich (MPA '08) and Stephanie Small (MBA '07) both entered graduate programs at the Eller College to make a bigger difference in the lives of underprivileged children.

Kucich earned her undergraduate degree in therapeutic recreation from Grand Valley State University and took a job in New York helping emotionally disturbed boys build social skills. “It was some of the most challenging work I’ve ever done,” she says. “Here I was, this white-bread girl from Kalamazoo, Michigan, working with a group of predominantly black and Latino boys from the inner city. They ate me alive for the first six weeks! Once I started to see the larger issues — the lack of money, effort, and time going into these communities,” she says, “I couldn’t just keep being a Band-Aid.”

Kucich spent two years with the Peace Corps in Samoa training teachers to work with special needs children, and then entered the School of Public Administration and Policy master’s program at the Eller College. She is currently interning with the community development department at the United Way focused on preventing family violence. Kucich has collaborated on a program designed to assist couples at risk — teen parents, parents in poverty, or those with a history of abuse — who are having their first child. The United Way was also a jumping-off point for Stephanie Small, who took a position with the organization after moving to Arizona from Virginia in 1991. “While I was at the United Way, I had the opportunity to volunteer with Free Arts of Arizona, which was a small start-up at the time and struggling to survive,” she says. The fledgling nonprofit was established to inspire abused, homeless, and at-risk children to transform their lives through artistic expression.

“I joined the board and we raised $30,000 to hire someone full-time,” says Small. “When I decided to leave United Way in 1994 and take the job, we had enough money to last five months. We were five volunteers serving 58 kids. Now we have 400 volunteers serving 5,000 kids each year and a $1.2 million budget.”

As executive director of Free Arts of Arizona, Small is responsible for this growth. “Nonprofit is just a tax designation,” she says. “It doesn’t mean that you don’t run your business professionally. Even when I was the only employee, we still had a personnel policy.” Two summers ago, she was selected to participate in a two-week executive education program at Stanford University. “It was riveting,” she says. “I wasn’t ready to leave!” Earning a graduate degree was always a goal, so last year she enrolled in Eller’s Executive MBA program in Phoenix.

She credits the program with adding a lot to her executive toolbox, but one thing that hasn’t changed is her motivation to keep going to work day in and day out. “Making an impact on your community is challenging and fulfilling.”
ELLER COLLEGE PHILANTHROPY
Saturday, December 1, 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
For the past six years, Eller Undergraduate Programs has organized a college-wide day of giving. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends sign up to give four to five hours of service one Saturday in December. RSVP online at www.ugrad.eller.arizona.edu/philanthropy.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK
Friday, December 7, beginning at 11:30 at the Westin La Paloma
Join us for lunch as UA economists Marshall J. Vest and Gerald J. Swanson review the nation’s current situation regarding budget deficits, national debt, and economic forecast for the State and Metro economies. RSVP online at www.eller.arizona.edu/outlook/.

FATHAUER LECTURE IN POLITICAL ECONOMY
Tuesday, January 29, 5:15 p.m. at McClelland Hall’s Berger Auditorium
Robert Reischauer, president of The Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. and former director of the Congressional Budget Office will deliver this year’s Fathauer lecture on the economics and politics of health care.

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

Each year, the Eller College brings high-profile executives from a variety of fields to The University of Arizona for the Distinguished Speaker Series. These leaders address topics and issues that affect organizations, industry, business, and community. Lectures begin at 5:15 p.m. at McClelland Hall with a reception following, unless otherwise noted. The talks are open to students and the community at no cost.

Don Beaver
November 13, 2007
CIO of PetSmart

Ben Lytle
January 22, 2008
Independent management and healthcare industry consultant

Steve Soboroff
February 5, 2008
President of real estate firm Playa Vista

Dr. Norman Gaut
February 12, 2008
Chairman of biotech firm SemaCo, Inc.

Robert Eckert
February 26, 2008
CEO of Mattel Co.

Rob Matteucci
March 25, 2008
CEO of Evenflo

Please Note: Dates and speakers subject to change. Check the website at www.eller.arizona.edu/speakers for current information.
Robert G. Sarver, BSBA Accounting ’82
Chairman and CEO, Western Alliance Bancorporation
Majority Owner, Phoenix Suns

For Robert Sarver, majority owner of the Phoenix Suns and chairman and CEO of Western Alliance Bancorporation, success is equal parts persistence, chance-taking, and partnership with trusted friends.

“When you’re young, you look at people who are doing well — at people who are heading up big companies — and you think, I could never do that,” he says. “As you get older, you realize these people are just like you, and I always had confidence in myself.”

At the age of 23, Sarver became the youngest person ever to found a national bank. “During my senior year of college, I started working on the business plan with my finance professor Robert Wallace,” he says. Sarver graduated a semester early so he could focus on studying for the CPA exam, and applied to a couple of grad schools, but wasn’t accepted. “So I just kept plugging away on the business plan, eventually secured investors, and then on November 24, 1984, the National Bank of Tucson (now National Bank of Arizona) opened on Wilmoth,” he says.

In 1994, Sarver sold the company — which had become the largest independent bank in Arizona. But it wasn’t the only venture he started with UA connections.

“I met a lot of great friends in college who I still do business with,” he says. “Mark Schlodien and Scott Douglass are my partners in a real estate business, Southwest Value Partners.” Among its other activities, the firm acquired and sold a large office portfolio in downtown San Diego. “Over the last 15 years, we’ve bought and sold over a billion dollars of real estate,” Sarver says. “Often time, success in business is directly related to the people. It’s like that saying, you’re better off in a bad deal with good partners than a good deal with bad partners.”

A UA connection also put Sarver on the path to buying an NBA franchise. UA men’s basketball coach Lute Olson put Sarver in touch with Steve Kerr, a 15-year NBA veteran, who helped the banker become the majority owner of the Suns in 2004.

Robert Sarver on the basketball court with his son Zach.

That year the Suns enjoyed the third-greatest turnaround in league history. “The goal is always to win a championship, and we’ve come pretty close these last three years I’ve owned the team,” he says.

But franchise ownership offers another perk: “It’s a business I can enjoy with my family,” Sarver says. “We go to games together, and follow all the scores.”

The importance of family is also apparent in Sarver’s philanthropic efforts. He and his wife, Penny, recently donated $1 million to build the Phoenix Family Museum, and Sarver sits on the board of the Sarver Heart Center at the University of Arizona. Sarver helped build the Center in honor of his father, Jack.

“Early in my career, I volunteered my time, and now that my time is constrained with running a public company and with family, I donate money,” explains Sarver. “The number one reason I do it is that it enjoy. It makes me feel good.”

Scott Pope ’83 BSBA Marketing
Scott worked with the San Antonio Spurs where he built their email marketing program for their loyalty program as well as database marketing system. In 2003 he accepted a Marketing Manager position with Tim Warner where he has been involved in bringing online and email marketing worlds as well as improving new products and programming.

Andrea Barrett-Casertano ’94 BSBA Marketing/Entrepreneurship
Andrea is the founder of two real estate companies, a real estate development company, and four real estate companies. She moved to Tucson in 2004.

Kelly Baker ’88 BSBA Management
Kelly manages a senior role, and has developed a high performing performance system. He oversees all technology and HR functions.

Feliciano Garcia ’00 MBA
Feliciano is a logistics manager of strategy and training for the global collaborative work processing in California.

Scott Schiavo ’96 BSBA MIS, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship
Scott founded Keybanc Capital Markets, a provider of financial, lifestyle and marketing solutions in Philadelphia. He is currently working as a REIT portfolio manager at Keybanc Capital Markets, a provider of financial, lifestyle and marketing solutions in Philadelphia.

Kelly Baker ’88 BSBA Management
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Lina Maria Gradlo Castellanos, national commercial manager for the apparel line D’Moos in Pereira, Colombia, was shot minutes after leaving work on the evening of July 17, 2007. She died later at the hospital.

The eldest of three sisters, Lina was 30.

Lina earned her MBA at the Eller College of Management in 2002 with concentrations in finance and marketing. She moved to Bogota after graduation, but spent the last three and a half years in Pereira, working for D’Moos. “A great talent has been lost,” says her cousin Alvaro Peiez Castellanos, who is an associate at the company’s warehouse facilities.

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Rebekah Vakneen Belzer, BS Consumer Studies, Business minor ’00
Senior Manager, New Business Initiatives, Disney Consumer Products

Aaron Vakneen, BSBA MIS ’02
Manager, Systems Integration and Technology, Accenture

Rachel Vakneen, BSBA Marketing ’07
Retail Management Program, Gap Inc.

For siblings Rebekah, Aaron, and Rachel Vakneen, the Eller College proved to be an equally effective springboard into three very different careers with Fortune 500 companies. Eldest Rebekah – a retail major and Eller business minor – found a job posting for Disney through the College of Retailing and Consumer Science. “I started at Disney in the training program for store planners,” she says, “And I was very fortunate to move up the ranks into a different division, Disney Consumer Products, which is the licensing hub for all things Disney.” From there, Rebekah moved into merchandising and product development. “It got me more involved in the creative process,” she says. “I was also great experience for my current position.” Earlier this year, Rebekah was instrumental in the launch of Disney Bridal Gowns, inspired by the beloved Disney Princesses. This led to a promotion to senior manager of new business initiatives with the Global Apparel, Accessories, and Footwear division of Disney Consumer Products. “I wanted a degree that combined business with technology, and the MIS program at Eller was exactly what I was looking for,” says Aaron. He interviewed with Microsoft and Cisco, but ultimately took a position with Accenture in its consulting practice, where he’s worked for over four years now. The job has taken him to large corporations – including pharmaceutical and consumer product companies – in New York, Chicago, Florida, and abroad. “I like not knowing what the challenges of a new project will be,” he explains, “and being able to take the learning from the previous work on to the next challenge.”

Rachel – the youngest of the three – graduated this year. “When I was in high school, I sat down with Aaron and Rebekah and told them I needed to decide on a major,” she says. “We all agreed that business would be a good way to go, we all have that business mindset, we all think strategically.” Aaron thought Eller was a good choice for Rachel. “The number one thing at Eller is the emphasis on team-oriented projects,” he explains. “It’s how the real world works.”

“We are a close-knit group of siblings,” says Rebekah. “We all had different focuses, but Rachel is following a similar path to mine in a large retail corporation, so I was able to share a lot of my experiences.”

Last year, Rachel applied to the retail management program at Gap Inc., and was among the 45 chosen for the program from 5,000 applicants nationally. The rigorous selection process included several interviews and a project – designing a new line for Gap, complete with a rollout strategy – delivered in a presentation format. “While I was going through the interview process, [assistant marketing professor] Hope Schau and [graduate student] James Carver really helped me with retail formulas,” she says. “Hope had me present my project in class, and afterward, everyone stood and clapped. Eller is great because it really helps you get on track with your life. It’s an amazing networking institution.”

Steve McElwain, MBA ’98
General Manager, International Principal Finance Division with Shinsei Bank

Steve McElwain expected to spend his career in the Southwest, but instead, a series of professional maneuvers landed him in Asia.

“I went over on a one-year contract, and I expected to return to the U.S. after that,” he explains. “One year became two years, two years became three years, and now it’s been seven years.”

McElwain grew up in Flagstaff, Ariz., and earned his undergraduate degree from the UA in biology in 1994. He spent a couple of years doing heart transplant rejection research, then applied to med school. The medical program he was interested in also required acceptance into the Army but when he was rejected due to a heart murmur, McElwain rethought his plans.

“A friend at the Eller College recommended I apply to the MBA program,” he says. “After I graduated, I took a position with Ernst & Young in real estate-focused consulting. I loved it; it’s where I earned my stripes.”

As part of Ernst & Young Kenneth Leventhal Real Estate Group, McElwain worked on complex international transactions that required advanced database knowledge, which he already had from coursework at Eller. That knowledge brought him to the attention of an Ernst & Young partner. “He called and asked me if I would take a two-week project in Bangalore,” McElwain explains. “Two weeks turned into five months as McElwain successfully oversaw the resolution of $13 billion in non-performing assets.”

In January 2001, he started with Ernst & Young’s Asia Pacific Financial Solutions practice, advising buyers and sellers of nonperforming loan portfolios in the wake of the Japanese bank restructuring. Just a couple years later, he was dispatched to build relationships with local firms like the Taiwan banks went into crisis. “It’s where I connected with Shinsei Bank,” says McElwain. “I sold Shinsei its first international NPL portfolio.”

“Ernst & Young became more accounting-focused, the organizational structure changed,” he continues. “I decided to contact Shinsei Bank and was hired as a vice president.” Shinsei Bank – formerly the government-owned Long-Term Credit Bank – became the first Japanese bank sold to foreign investors in 2000. Now McElwain leads the company’s Asia-focused international principal finance division.

“We have a broad mandate to buy distressed assets and real estate positions in ex-Japan Asia, but Taiwan, Korea, China, and India are our main focus,” he says. “The core management team just performed so well and is renewed my commitment to putting this bank on firm footing for the future.”

McElwain says he expects to be in the region for another five years, though there’s a lot he misses about the Southwest. “I miss good Mexican food,” he says, “I miss clear skies, and looking up and seeing the stars at night.” He also says that although friends stateside seem to have better life balance, his career is professionally fulfilling. “I did my MBA experience up against anyone’s in terms of content and knowledge, but to focus on the opportunities you can get with your first job.”
LAST WORD ON

John W. Rowe, Chairman, President, and CEO of Exelon Corporation

John Rowe heads Exelon Corporation, one of the nation’s largest utility companies, with annual revenues of more than $15 billion. Headquartered in Chicago, Exelon Corporation distributes electricity to approximately 5.2 million customers in Illinois and Pennsylvania and natural gas to more than 470,000 customers in southwestern Pennsylvania. Under Rowe’s leadership, Forbes magazine ranked Exelon as the number one utility company on its 2005 list of “The Best Managed Companies in America.”

PROGRESS: What role has personal ethics played in your career?

JWR: I’m in a business where every investment you make lasts a long time, and all of the decisions you make come out in public. And you have to have the kind of character that stands the test of time; you have to be somebody who understands that there are basic principles like keeping the lights on and running a safe nuclear power plant that are more important than the bottom line. To assist us, we have put together a vision statement to catalogue our various stewardship responsibilities. But behind that simple sentiment is a hard-won recognition that our business success depends upon our ability to align the interests of the many different constituencies we serve.

PROGRESS: Could you discuss Exelon’s approach to diversity?

JWR: We serve Chicago and Philadelphia, two of the more diverse cities in the country. Chicago is 40% African-American and 30% Hispanic, and Philadelphia is even more heavily African-American. Minorities are thus a large part of our customer base, a growing part of our workforce, and an ever more powerful political force. We meet the challenge of diversity through hiring, promotion, minority contracting, and intense commitments to community groups such as the Urban League, Metropolitan Family Services, El Valor, and the Spanish Coalition for Jobs. In the process, we align the expectations of our customers, employees, and the communities we serve, while advancing our business objective.

PROGRESS: As a scholar of history, are there particular leaders with whom you identify?

JWR: Obviously there are the demigods like Lincoln and Washington, and the older I get the more I think we were right in the second grade when we thought they were the greatest leaders. I think it’s less saying, “I’m going to pattern myself on this demigod or that demigod,” than you to try to learn from them. I think one can learn immensely from watching Lincoln grow as he handled the slavery issue and then watching him try to cope with the Civil War. Or if you read a book like The Iliad—it’s tempting to say this is a warrior society from an archaic time and therefore it isn’t very relevant—but you still find individuals with great power and charisma who have an almost Achilles-like effect on an organization. You still find that when you have a staff meeting, the generals who have the big divisions—like Agamemnon and Menelaus—hold weight perhaps in disproportion to their individual abilities.

PROGRESS: Could you talk about your commitment to education?

JWR: My wife Jeanne and I spent a long time talking about where we thought charitable dollars had the highest impact. In a city where so many people come from broken families, and so many people fail at elementary and high school, and we believe that the real front line in trying to give people more opportunities are the elementary schools and the high schools. We helped fund a parochial school, and founded the arts & Sciences Academy for that purpose. The University of Wisconsin is the institution that gave me my first big break in getting off the farm and getting into a broader world. I’ve been grateful to it ever since. One of the things I’ve learned is that it’s easy to raise money for hard science; it’s hard to raise money for liberal arts. So since the liberal arts helped make me the kind of person I am, I want to see those kinds of programs continue to get attention, too.

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Stewardship

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Last Word on Stewardship

John W. Rowe, Chairman, President, and CEO of Exelon Corporation

Congratulations to the Eller faculty members who received promotions for the 2007-08 academic year.

Leslie Eldenburg
Accounting
Ph.D., University of Washington, 1991

Roger Hartley
School of Public Administration and Policy
Ph.D., University of Georgia, 1999

Leslie Eldenburg has been promoted to professor of accounting. Her areas of research interest include hospital and health care cost and accounting and managerial accounting theory.

George Jiang
Finance
Ph.D., University of Western Ontario, 1996

Roger Hartley has been promoted to associate professor in the School of Public Administration and Policy. His research interests include state court budget politics and judicial independence, institutional change in courts, and specialized/probem-solving courts.

Lisa Ordóñez
Management and Organizations
Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley, 1994

Lisa Ordóñez has been promoted to professor of management and organizations. Her areas of expertise include judgment and decision-making with applications to management and consumer behavior. Ordóñez also holds a faculty position in the Eller Department of Marketing.
Eller marketing instructor Vic Piscitello (second from right) shares peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with undergraduate seniors L-R: Damien Rodarte, Marissa Gooding and Amy Long. BusinessWeek featured Piscitello after Eller students identified him as a favorite professor.

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