

# School of Business

*Reinventing Business*

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THE CAMPAIGN FOR USD

## Real-World Projects: \$300,000

### Background

The School of Business is seeking \$300,000 to provide **real-world projects** that will enhance the student experience. During the 2013-14 academic year, 43 percent of the undergraduate degrees awarded at the University of San Diego were in business. As of Fall 2014, there were 1,624 declared business majors. Now more than ever, current students and prospective students alike are interested in pursuing careers in business, and USD's job is to prepare them for rewarding careers.

A recent survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that 84 percent of executives at private sector and nonprofit organizations expressed a desire for students to complete a significant project before graduation. These experiences demonstrate the depth of student knowledge and passion for particular areas, as well as their acquisition of broad analytical, problem-solving and communication skills. Other data suggests that students need skills in dealing with ambiguity and with complex, unstructured problems.

Within the School of Business, reviews of several majors and the MBA, as well as anecdotal data from faculty members and the dean, confirm these points. For example, a manager in the Merchant Banking Group at a major U.S. bank recently commented that such projects "would clearly set apart the resume of School of Business students."

### Objective

The \$300,000 would enable the School of Business to hire a program coordinator. The program coordinator would find clients for student projects, find and manage coaches and mentors for the students, and match mentors with projects based on the mentor's expertise.

In addition, the coordinator would help students prepare for and practice their presentations, as well as review what the best universities are doing in this area.

Finding clients is challenging because client projects must be feasible for students and beneficial to both students and clients. In addition, the coordinator will be responsible for interfacing with the faculty members as they build these projects into their courses.

Projects help students develop skills in the following:

- Identifying problems, setting the scope of the problem and solving the problem;
- Communicating results in written and oral presentation formats;
- Collaborating with a team;
- Dealing with ambiguity;
- Reflecting on performance and learning from mistakes; and
- Learning to take risks.

### Impact

The School of Business espouses a culture of caring deeply about student learning and success. The school currently offers a modest level of experiential learning for students, but because of the clear student benefits, has made it a priority to expand these greatly.

Current offerings include courses in social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship, international consulting, social media and integrated marketing communications. Students are encouraged to pursue internships; however, the learning environment in an internship is not as controlled as it is in faculty-supervised, real-world projects. With more real-world projects, students will be better prepared for, and have an advantage in a highly competitive job market.

### For More Information

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