24th Annual Simmons Leadership Conference: Dare to Dream - page 4

Inside:

SOM appoints new professor of entrepreneurship - page 13
Alumna Andrea Lyons ’89 is following her dream - page 14
Leaders’ Roundtable debates skills for securing ideal job - page 8
Alumnae Association ratifies name change at Annual Meeting

Record attendance by 125 alumnae, students and friends at the Simmons SOM Alumnae Association Champagne Reception and Annual Meeting on April 25, 2003, created a lively opportunity to socialize and catch up on alumnae association events. Once again the Seaport Hotel helped to create a congenial atmosphere in which to network and attend to some important association business, including the ratification of the board of directors’ proposed amendment to officially change the association name from the Simmons Graduate School of Management Alumnae Association (GSMAA) to the Simmons School of Management Alumnae Association (SOMAA). This change aligns the association name with that of the school.

Read about the Leadership Conference on page 4

1) Katherine Prum ’94 and SOM Dean Patricia O’Brien ’77
2) Karen Pratt ’85 and Toni Riccardi ’87
3) Maggie Campbell Jackson ’94 and Nancy Betz ’93
4) Lynn Tibbets ’96 and SOMAA President Judy Bornstein ’96
5) Martha Sheehan ’01, and Kathy Bruce ’01
6) Gail Putnam ’80 and Susan Big ’80
7) Kate Murray ’82 and Andrea Pokladowski ’82

Photos on the front cover (clockwise from top left): Keynote Speaker Gwen Ifill ’77 UG; attendees enjoy a presentation; Keynote Speaker Candice Bergen, Panelist Sherron Watkins and Keynote Speaker Jane Goodall enjoy a moment during lunch; Charlene Anderson ’01 (left) and Charlotte Street ’00 (right) enjoy a moment with Suze Orman; Keynote Speaker Barbara Walters.
CONTENTS

2 Message from the Dean
Guest Editorial by Associate Dean Deborah Merrill-Sands

3 Message from the SOMAA President

4 24th Annual Leadership Conference dares participants to aspire to lead

7 Faculty Profile: Indra Guertler

8 Leaders’ Roundtable: Attaining your ideal job — from dream to reality
Yuen Annie Chin-Louie ’99, Toni Riccardi ’87, Karen Wallace ’91

10 Career Development Day at the SOM

11 Strengthening Leadership Skills: Results of Strategic Leadership for Women

12 News & Notables

14 Alumnae Profile
Andrea Lyons ’89

16 Alumnae-Owned Businesses

19 Class Notes

25 SOM volunteers span the states to raise money

26 Planning for the Future: Yours and Ours

27 Mastering an online job search

28 Risk and Reward: Executive-in-Residence Jeanne Lewis

NETWORK is published and distributed, free of charge, by the Simmons School of Management and its Alumnae Association to graduates and current students of all programs at the School. The purpose of NETWORK is to represent the voice of alumnae, report on the Alumnae Association and the School, and strengthen the alumnae network through continued learning and connection.
Talking with faculty, staff and alumnae of the School of Management, I am reminded daily of the breadth of perspective and depth of passion these colleagues bring to their work. In the first of a series of guest commentaries, I have invited Associate Dean Deborah Merrill-Sands to share her point of view on a timely issue.

Patricia O’Brien ’77, SOM Dean

A Counter Point to Business Week’s Proclaimed “New Gender Gap”

Reflecting a growing trend in the media, Business Week’s May 26th cover story heralded a “new gender gap,” arguing that girls’ have achieved performance gains in the classroom at the expense of boys. The author writes, “It seems as if girls have built a kind of scholastic Roman Empire alongside boys’ languishing Greece.” This story suggesting the imminent demise of boys to the status of the “second sex” has, not surprisingly, garnered considerable media attention.

I am deeply disturbed by the zero-sum analysis used to build this argument and the implications it suggests. Through a selective use of U.S. Department of Education statistics, the author proclaims a “stunning gender reversal in education.” Yet, a balanced analysis of these data actually shows improved, not diminished, performance for boys over the past three decades. Scores in reading, math and science have increased for all groups of elementary and high school boys tested, except for 17-year-olds in science. Moreover, despite progress for girls, boys continue to outperform girls in 6 out of 9 indicators based on age and subject matter. The claim of a “widening gulf” between boys and girls in educational performance is unfounded. It is also dangerous. It casts girls erroneously as the newly anointed beneficiaries of privilege — crowned at the expense of boys.

Even more misleading are the implications for business spun from this purported “slide of boys.” The author forecasts, for example, a future shortage of skilled workers because women now earn 60 percent of college degrees. Are college-educated women not a viable pool of skilled workers? In the same vein, is the growing number of women who are primary earners in their families a social pathology that will erode the American family, the productivity of our economy and the vitality of our civic life as suggested in this article? Or is it, as I believe, a sign of social progress? My deep concern is that, on a quick read, the author’s arguments almost sound plausible because they reflect subtle, but deeply held, gender norms that shape our assumptions and perceptions about the world of work.

There is nothing but alarmist headlines to be gained from such a zero-sum analysis that pits boys against girls and men against women. This stance will not help us create equity in the classroom, the workplace, nor the boardroom. Moreover, it distracts us from the real challenges facing business and its future workforce.

Business may indeed face a future shortage of skilled workers, but not because boys are falling behind. Rather, business is simply not attracting our talented teens. In our recent study with The Committee of 200 — Teen Girls on Business: Are they being empowered? — professors Marlino and Wilson showed that only 9 percent of teen girls and 15 percent of teen boys foresee pursuing careers in business. The majority of girls, and many boys, aspire to “make a difference in the world” and “help others.” Our real concern should be that teens — our future workforce — do not see business as the means to realize these aspirations.

In this context, our work is three-fold. First, we need to continually challenge specious arguments that suggest girls have “made it” at the expense of boys. This does not help either girls or boys. Second, we need to be vigilant in challenging arguments that perpetuate subtle gender stereotypes. These undermine women’s opportunities in the workplace and their rise to leadership roles. And third, we need to create new pathways to capture girls’ imagination, help them see how their skills they need to succeed and take up leadership roles.

Patricia O’Brien ’77, SOM Dean

Deborah Merrill-Sands
Associate Dean
Simmons College School of Management

Panelists at the event (l-r): Carrie Schwab Pomerantz; Kathleen P. Bennett; Agnieszka Winkler; Whitney Smith; and Kathryn Baron.

Message from the Office of the Dean

Special Guest Editor: Deborah Merrill-Sands

A Catalyst for Change:

The Simmons School of Management and The Committee of 200’s groundbreaking collaborative study on girls’ attitudes towards business and business careers continues to receive media attention nationwide. Most recently, the “Teen Girls on Business: Are they being empowered?” findings have appeared in a March 17, 2003, New York Times article on girls and financial literacy; in Carolina Woman (Cary, NC); in BusinessWeek.com’s May 29, 2003, article “The Women of Tech”; and the May 31, 2003, San Francisco Chronicle article “Getting girls into business: Women executives want to
By the time you receive this edition of NETWORK it will be almost time for the class of 2003 to graduate.

The alumnae association board is looking forward to welcoming this newest generation of SOM alumnae. We look forward to another class of alumnae who will stay in touch with, contribute to, and advance the reputation of the school and the association.

I would like to take this opportunity to send a personal welcome to the graduating class. I encourage each of you from the class of 2003 to start building and maintaining your SOM network now. The women from your study groups and those you’ll meet at alumnae events can form an incredible resource as you move ahead in your career and your life. The Office of Development and Alumnae Relations (ODAR) can help you stay in touch with alumnae, and the Career Services Office (CSO) can assist you with information related to job searches. (For example, from CSO you can receive contact information for everyone with a background in marketing, or everyone who works at a particular company, and from the ODAR you can obtain a list of everyone in a specific city, or simply the name of alumna you read about and would like to meet.)

Your former professors can be fantastic resources as you apply their areas of expertise in your daily work. You’ll have opportunities to go back and visit the school, to continue to use the library and career services at the school, and generally to stay connected. You will also have opportunities to give back to the school — both with your time and energy as well as with your financial contributions — and both are important. In return, you’ll find that you yourself have become part of the network for others. This is win-win in action, and I never cease to be amazed by and impressed with the women I’ve met through Simmons — not only my wonderful classmates, but also the incredible alumnae I’ve met in my travels. The SOM Alumnae Association is a rich mine.

Perhaps some of you reading this have long since graduated and can attest to the power of the SOM network. And, perhaps someone reading this is an alumna who has lost touch with the school and the association.

The board has been thinking hard about how to bring more alumnae back into active involvement with the school. We want to find ways to bring more alumnae to the school as volunteers, as participants in Executive Education programs, as alumnae association board members, as guest speakers, and as donors to the annual fund. We’d like to hear from you on this front.

If you’re already involved with the school, what keeps you connected? How might you be able to help us share that experience with others?

If you’re not so involved with the school, what would bring you back? Are there programs or services you’d like to see? Are there networking connections you’d like help making?

We welcome your input, not only as a way of helping our thinking about building the network, but also because each e-mail you send, each phone call you make, each time you establish contact, that in itself grows the network and builds the connections, and that’s what we’re really here to do.

Please let us know your thinking — you can contact the entire board at our shared e-mail address: SOMAA@simmons.edu. We can’t wait to build the network with you.

All the best,
Judy Bornstein ’96
SOMAA President

Empowering Girls for Business

attract youngsters." The Chronicle covered the SOM/C200 forum held specifically for high-powered businesswomen in the San Francisco area on May 29, 2003. Sponsored by Charles Schwab Co, Inc., and held at its headquarters, the forum’s goal was to establish a dialogue among women executives about ways to increase awareness among teen girls as to the opportunities and benefits of a business career. Also featured in the article was SOM Alumnae Association President and CFO of McCown De Leeuw and Co. Judy Bornstein ’96, who helped organize the event.

Special thanks to the Steering Committee whose efforts and guidance made this event possible: Judy Bornstein ’96, Suzanne Cutts ’89, Lisha Driscoll ’90, Shelley Pavela ’83 and Amy Robinson.
The 24th Annual SOM Leadership Conference, “Dare to Dream,” featured women from a variety of fields known for breaking the mold and taking risks: Gwen Ifill ’77 UG, Washington Week in Review moderator and managing editor; actress Candice Bergen; groundbreaking chimpanzee researcher Jane Goodall; and ABC News host Barbara Walters. More than 2,200 women attended this year’s conference at the World Trade Center Boston on April 26. “It was by far one of the best conferences in terms of content and speaker quality,” said Joyce Kolligian ’89, executive director of the conference.

In addition to the keynote speakers, the conference offered workshops led by some of the country’s most influential women. Workshop topics ranged from negotiation and entrepreneurship, to stress management and leadership. In one workshop, Enron whistle-blower Sherron Watkins and Ifill discussed corporate ethics; and in another, financial planning guru Suze Orman coached attendees on investing, insurance, and tips for talking to children about money.

While the conference focus was on leadership, power, and success, speakers also emphasized the importance of happiness. “Your job title doesn’t make you powerful. The money you make doesn’t make you powerful. What will make you powerful is how much control you have over your life,” advised Orman.

Rashonda Ambrose ’02 UG is public relations coordinator at Simmons.

Below, attendees offer their thoughts on the conference.

by Patty Melanson ’83

I graduated from the Simmons SOM (it was the GSM then) 20 years ago, and I’ve been going to the conference for a long time. The conference has morphed from a fairly small event attended by maybe 40 alumnae with the occasional “iffy” speaker to the amazing event it is today. I wouldn’t have my job if it wasn’t for the education I received at Simmons, and I look forward to the conference every year to inspire me to be better at what I do. I usually leave with a reaffirmed belief that one person can change the world.

One of the things I love about the conference is how personally the speakers address the audience. I remember the year National Public Radio’s Nina Totenberg had us in tears talking about when she was in Oklahoma City interviewing Timothy McVeigh’s lawyer and got the call that her husband was in the hospital and they didn’t think he would make it. She flew back afraid he would die alone, only to find fellow journalist Cokie Roberts sitting by his side, holding his hand. She was telling us how important our friendships are, and how three women bonded during their early careers at NPR and helped each other be a success and cope with life.

Every year we get to listen to women with remarkable resumes, and they share their stories and their struggles and what they have learned along the way. It’s incredibly powerful. Jane Goodall was a very inspirational speaker this year, and I loved Barbara Walter’s speech, especially where she shared what many of the people she has interviewed over the years have told her about leadership. Last year, Donna Shalala gave a wonderful speech about ten things you need to do to be a great manager. I took notes and wrote them up and gave them to my woman managers at work. I’m drawn to the communication, management and leadership topics — always looking for tips. I don’t do the work/life balance stuff, although some of my employees tell me I should. I have a lot of passion for what I do; I love the company, work with incredibly smart, talented people, and I’m getting old enough that my body tells me when I need to take a break or go whack some tennis balls and name them as I do it.

We had a woman president in my early days at Catalina Marketing and she helped me quite a bit. I try to mentor some of our woman managers, because I believe I should give back. I’ve been bringing my woman managers to this event since the mid-90s. The group gets bigger every time my job changes because I never take anyone off the list once they have attended, even if they don’t report to me anymore. This year there were 34 women from Catalina Marketing there, and I’ve talked to a few of my sales managers who attended and we are thinking next year we will invite some of our female clients to attend as our guests.

Another reason I make sure I attend is it’s so easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and never pull back and really think about how you want to go about this business of having a life and a career, and what it means to be “successful.” The Simmons Conference makes me stop and assess where I am, and whether I like where I am.

Patty is group president for Catalina Marketing Corporation.

by Rashonda Ambrose ’02 UG

Helen Hayes Burns ’04 (center) listens intently.
Attending the Simmons School of Management’s Leadership Conference was an exciting experience for me. I was particularly inspired by Donna Brazile, who participated on the Women and Leadership Signature Panel, “The Female Advantage — Truth or Fiction?” She embodies power and leadership in character and action. As she spoke, I came to a deeper understanding of how important it is to share one’s beginnings with others. Beginnings are often a window into the platform from which we make leadership decisions as adults.

Brazile clearly stands for how much impact one person can have on his or her community. As she referred to the many women politicians in positions to run for president, I came to realize how pivotal it is that we all believe in that possibility and make it happen in our time.

I had the pleasure of meeting many Simmons alumnae at the conference. The strength in the Simmons network has always impressed me, but it was overwhelming to see so many gifted businesswomen in one place.

Meeting Sherron Watkins and hearing Anita Hill speak within the same hour impressed upon me the importance of courage in the workplace. I’ve often thought about how little decisions can affect the course of my career. But in the cases of these two women, they have altered the business world and atmosphere forever merely by being truthful. Both have paved the way in truth and perspective. Both are examples of how one must maintain perspective and retain integrity first and foremost.

Anita Hill’s candor about the course of her career since the hearings years ago was inspiring. I realized that we may each be presented with a leadership moment. It may be when we least expect it; and it may not be incredibly clear. It is the measure we take in that moment, without hesitation, to set a course right or verbal-
by Judith Vanderkay ’78

What an exhilarating experience! The speakers were top-notch, which I expected — but what I didn’t expect was for them to provide such personal insights into their highly publicized careers. Those human details allowed the audience to connect with them as women, and made their remarks inspiring in a truly personal way.

As an event, the 2003 Leadership Conference was admirably organized and executed — and I speak from experience, having organized quite a few events myself.

As a volunteer, I appreciated the materials, training and overall gracious treatment. The attendees were a splendid group of attentive, cheerful and accomplished women (a few men for contrast, of course). And again, I was expecting that, but en masse, the collective confidence and energy were impressive. It was a pleasure to offer my assistance, and the atmosphere was so upbeat that quite a few people thanked me for simply holding the door open for the crowd. (Of course, I was grinning with the pleasure of being there and seeing them all, and they could have been responding to that!)

Judith is a senior consultant with Rogers Communications.

by Nina Luciano ’03

I was very excited to volunteer at the conference and was looking forward to the speakers and the workshops. I really had no idea how profound an experience it would be for me. Jane Goodall’s comment about leaving the lightest possible footprint on the earth has become something I think about, and I am committed to act upon it everyday. I also attended Suze Orman’s finance seminar and she referred to Jane Goodall’s comments, too, but in a financial context. She commented that as women, part of securing our finances for ourselves, our families and our futures is to make purchasing decisions based on what we need, not based on what we can afford. I was truly inspired by these women and their insights. I think about them everyday and I have shared these insights with my friends and family.

I’d like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the SOM for this opportunity and I am looking forward to volunteering for the conference next year and in the years to come.

Nina is a full-time student at the SOM.
It’s been just over three years since Dr. Indra Guertler started teaching finance at the Simmons SOM, but she’s already left an indelible impression on her students — both former and current.

“Indra is one of the most dedicated professors I know,” said Janet Cornebise ’01. “She is passionate about finance and even more passionate about getting her students to understand finance. She wouldn’t even think of letting a student hide behind her intimidation of the subject matter.”

Dr. Guertler doesn’t deny this. “I really do believe what’s printed on the back of my business card,” she explained. “The SOM is all about educating women for power and leadership. Some people don’t think that numbers have to do with leadership — with power, yes, but generally not with leadership. The SOM recognizes that in order to be a good manager and a good leader, women need to understand finance and how it affects their decision making.”

According to Kerri Connors Brophy ’03, Dr. Guertler has a way of explaining “why we need to understand certain elements of finance and how they tie into the bigger picture. Even if you aren’t going to work solely in finance, you need to understand why decisions are made and use the knowledge gained at Simmons to make changes in your organization.”

MBA student Kelly Carmody ’04 has learned first hand that an understanding of finance can positively impact your career; she’s taken finance and investments with Dr. Guertler. “This spring I interviewed for a new position with an insurance company,” Kelly explained. “During the interview I spoke at length about the capital budgeting project I had done in my finance class. This was a great way for me to establish a professional dialogue with the hiring manager, and to showcase my analytical abilities and communications skills. Having a concrete example of the application of my MBA skills in a real world situation helped me secure the position!”

Applying the real world of business in her classroom is second nature to Dr. Guertler. She brings nearly twenty years of consulting experience to Simmons from her own company, Strategic Financial Performance. She’s played an integral role in the development of management strategies for companies such as Siemens AG, Lotus Development, and several banks across the world. And, as the first woman in shipyard management when employed with Bethlehem Steel Corporation, she has first-hand knowledge of the woman-in-management experience.

“I had to do more than just crack the glass ceiling at Bethlehem Steel,” said Dr. Guertler. “I had to bust through the steel walls! Being accepted by management was difficult. It’s those personal experiences and business lessons that I try to bring to my students.”

She also brings twenty years of teaching experience. She’s taught at the University of Baltimore; the Colgate Darden Graduate Business School at the University of Virginia; Babson College, where she received the prestigious Kennedy Award for Teaching Excellence; and the Arthur D. Little School of Management. Her undergraduate course work was completed at Albion College, and she received her MBA and MS in finance from the University of Baltimore. She also holds a doctorate of business administration from the University of Virginia’s Colgate Darden Graduate Business School.

Since she started at the SOM in July 2000, she has been most impressed with the quality of work from her Simmons students. “They impose their own very high standards and strive for complete, perfect and professional work, more so than any other students I have taught throughout my career,” Dr. Guertler said. “It’s my pleasure to teach at the SOM, and I feel like I’m making a difference, too. I frequently run across my former students and they tell me they remember what they learned from me and use it all the time. That’s a good feeling.” ■ — CPC
In celebration of this year’s Leadership Conference theme — “Dare to Dream,” NETWORK Editor Christian Pope Campbell spoke with three alumnae who envisioned their dream jobs and got them — using their passion, skills and MBAs. Read on to discover how they did it and how their MBAs helped them.

How did you discern what it was that you really wanted to do with your career, and how did getting your MBA help propel you down that path?

Yuen Annie Chin-Louie ’99: Having worked in the nonprofit sector for most of my career, I greatly appreciate the day-to-day challenges faced by human service agencies to meet ever-increasing demands for services with limited and dwindling resources. Over the years, I have come to be interested in social entrepreneurship, the idea of generating revenues from a for-profit venture to support a social cause. With my enrollment at the SOM, I began my quest for the knowledge and skills that would help me to become a social entrepreneur. While I did not know exactly what my “dream” job was, I was clear as to what my values and priorities in life were. It’s important for me to engage in creative and meaningful work that will lead to community building and contribute to social justice. It’s also important for me to have a job that affords me the balance of work and family life and the integration of my personal values and beliefs.

Getting my MBA definitely helped me land the job I have at the United Way, where I have worked as a director of community investments for the past two and a half years. My MBA helped sharpen my technical and functional skills as well as broaden my understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence between the private, public and nonprofit sectors. The work that I am engaged in now has as much to do with making strategic investments as facilitating collaborations and building partnerships across the various sectors to affect change and create impact in the community. As my dream of becoming a social entrepreneur evolves, I am on my way to building a career that enables me to do well by “doing good.”

Toni Riccardi ’87: Trial and error is how I determined what I wanted to do with my career. I’ve always done my research on a particular job opportunity or career path and used networking to get me there. I worked in academia for twenty years and knew I wanted to make a career change into the business sector. I didn’t think the corporate world would appreciate my academic experience so the MBA was a way to get me into the door. It worked. My first job out of graduate school was with Coopers and Lybrand; they were looking for someone with academic and business experience, but the indicator for me was that I had the MBA. That was the ticket, and that was why they hired me. I’ve always tried to pursue things I enjoy. When my interest in diversity issues began to emerge, I pursued professional and volunteer opportunities that would teach me more about it, and now I’m chief diversity officer. Due to a mandatory retirement age at PricewaterhouseCoopers, I will be forced to retire in five years. I’ve already started to think about what I want to do next and have started a “dream wall” in my bedroom where I pin up interesting pictures, articles, and items to inspire me. I’m still using the trial and error approach by accepting and pursuing various volunteer opportunities that give me the chance to learn and grow.

Karen Wallace ’91: Getting my MBA from Simmons absolutely pointed me in the direction to my current position. I went to the school with different career goals in mind. When I took marketing with Deb Marlino, she spoke about product management and that’s when the lights went on and the bells rang for me. I knew that was what I wanted to do. I began to understand that experience with product management would give me a strong base for marketing work. I did not originally have the goal to hone in on a marketing career, but getting my MBA introduced that possibility to me and gave me the skills and steps to get there.

In my position now, I take an active role in helping our business unit shape the strategic initiatives. I am responsible for overseeing the primary and secondary research functions, marketing programs, and event management. This covers a wide range of areas in terms of marketing. We are talking to our current clients to measure customer satisfaction and conducting focus groups to test new product ideas; we are developing predictive modeling that will help us accurately segment and target our clients. I love what I am doing.

What skills did you need to hone and use to secure your ideal job and which ones are most important to you now?

YC: The key to securing my ideal job was to combine my skills and passion. First I had to be real honest and clear about who I was and what skills I had to offer. Then I had to hone my networking skills and my ability to make a sales pitch about myself. Coming from a
nonprofit background, I was at first uncomfortable with the idea of having to “sell” myself, but I quickly came to realize that having a great resume is not enough. I also needed the marketing and negotiation skills to get my foot in the door and to compete with other job seekers for the job I wanted. Much of what I do in my current position is about relationship-building, knowledge and change management, which requires strong analytical, organizational and communication skills. Problem solving and team building are also important. But above all, people and leadership skills as well as system and strategic thinking are essential.

**TR:** Without a doubt, my communication and networking skills. My ideal job began to take shape after I had been with PricewaterhouseCoopers for a while. I already had a track record and a network. What I needed to hone was my knowledge of diversity. Now as a member of the firm’s management committee, I need to use and hone another set of skills, which include a greater emphasis on collaboration and relationship building.

**KW:** Three come to mind. Managing relationships was and still is huge. Many marketing roles require working with a number of different people and functions, often with no direct reporting line to you. Building solid relationships is important. You have to do it and hone in on it and excel at it as you go further and further up the corporate ladder. The further up you go, the more important it becomes to understand the motivators of key stakeholders associated with an initiative. Which of these stakeholders will be most important in helping you accomplish short-term and long-term goals and how can they help you with other relationships?

Negotiating skills help when working with people outside of your reporting structure. You have to know how to work with people who have other priorities. How do I get them to work with me?

And, networking — speaking with people inside and outside the organization. Oftentimes, getting new and fresh ideas and approaches to attack something are what make all the difference in achieving a successful outcome.

Describe your tactics for navigating your career during these turbulent economic times.

**YC:** During these turbulent economic times, navigating my career requires personal leadership, patience, perseverance, discipline and creativity. As my organization changes and adopts different strategies, I must also be ready to adapt, change, take risks, learn and grow with the organization. I must be flexible and comfortable with working with ambiguities and unknowns, while staying optimistic and doing my best to add value and to demonstrate my worth to my employer. In addition, I keep current in my field and take advantage of every training and networking opportunity to improve and increase my skills and to expand my professional, social and personal circles. But it is knowing who I am and what I want to do that will help me stay the course or decide to go on a path that’s less traveled.

**TR:** I’m a person who thinks that if you believe it you can have it. Though turbulent times can slow you down, I think they have as much of an impact as we believe they have. Yes, managers are hiring less right now, but unless an entire industry or department is being eliminated, there are jobs out there. Fall back on networking, communication skills and flexibility. Go deep into your network. Recent research by Catalyst suggests that most people don’t find jobs from their closest friends and acquaintances, but rather from less familiar contacts like your alumni network. Turbulent times make us more cautious. We like to see the other shore before we cast off, but that’s not always possible. How flexible are you willing to be? If your ideal job turns out to be in another state, are you going to move?

**KW:** It’s been difficult due to the restructurings and reorganizations that have occurred as a result of trying economic times. You can often end up where you don’t want to be or in a place that doesn’t naturally align itself with your career goals. You have to do a hard self assessment and make tough choices. Where am I now? Where do I want to be? Can I bridge the gap? If the answer is, “I can’t bridge the gap,” you may have to think about leaving. If you decide to stay, you need to give it as much effort as you did before the tide turned and continually answer the question, “What can I do to bring value to my current role?” and then, deliver.
In May, the Simmons SOM Career Services Office held Career Development Day for students and welcomed back to campus several alumnae leaders from a variety of industries, all with one thing in common — each uses the management and leadership skills learned at the SOM to transcend traditional MBA career paths.

Alex Pinck ’93, partnering with sister Jennifer, opened South End Video in Boston four years ago, after leaving a job in healthcare. For Alex, who had been living in the South End since 1985, “The video store helps me be more connected with the community.”

Two years ago Jennifer and Alex opened Code 10, an affordable restaurant serving food that everyone can enjoy. The idea for Code 10 was born out of Alex ordering out all the time while working at her first small business, the video store, with too few choices in the neighborhood. Jennifer conceded that the business has had some dark days due to September 11th and dealing with ongoing neighborhood construction, but said it seems to have turned a corner in the past few months.

Jennifer has been in the construction industry for many years. Today, she works to provide construction management services for companies doing development, primarily for non-profits, and does what she enjoys most: building community. On her MBA experience, Jennifer said, “It was unbelievable to go from working with only men, and then being in class with all women.”

Looking back on her Simmons experience, Alex said, “The MBA is a tool box; from day to day I never know what aspects of my education I will draw on.”

Millie Petrova ’00 came to the SOM as an international student from Bulgaria, and now works as an international sales coordinator for Zoom Telephonics, Inc., in Boston. Petrova credits the Career Services Office’s job-seekers network meetings with helping her land the job. Petrova advised students not to lose track of the big picture. “The MBA program gave me the foundation to obtain additional information on how the activities of other departments affect me and my department. The market strategies game is what I do everyday, but on an international level.”

Catherine Gamon ’99 is the director of the MBA Student Affairs Office at MIT Sloan School of Management. “The MBA is increasingly perceived as an entry level degree. It adds value but it does not substitute for work experience.” Gamon warned students that in a down economy, it is particularly important to consider what you can offer to a prospective employer, rather than vice versa. Gamon advised that graduating students also focus on interpersonal skills, which can make or break career success, as well as professionalism and willingness to engage in personal growth.

Other panelists included: Nicole Newman ’02, managing partner, Penn Research & Solutions, LLC; and on the finance panel: Hope Coolidge ’89, finance and operations manager, Danforth Museum of Art; Janet Cornebise ’01, fiscal policy analyst, Division of Medical Assistance, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Laurie Doyle ’95, senior manager, Investor Relations and Corporate Communications, GPC Biotech Inc.; and Linda LeFever ’99, manager of Capital Budgets, MBTA.
Strengthening leadership skills: 

Results of Strategic Leadership for Women

by Cynthia Ingols, SOM Faculty

Several years ago I was conducting a leadership exercise in the living room of the 419 building. One student did not accept the leadership role that the exercise positioned her to take. When I asked her why she was hesitant to be the leader, she responded: “Bosses shout at people.” At that moment I realized that this participant’s mental image of a leader was someone who dominated others. No wonder she didn’t want such a role!

This minor incident changed my perception about how we should talk about and teach leadership at the SOM. My colleague, Joyce Fletcher, had researched the myriad leadership models on the marketplace and had concluded that James Kouzes and Barry Posner’s model advanced in The Leadership Challenge provided an excellent framework for teaching people how to lead. Through extensive research, Kouzes and Posner found that leaders who made a difference in organizations practiced five fundamental behaviors. Rather than using images of singular heroic figures such as John Wayne on a horse with holster and guns, Kouzes and Posner tell stories of leaders who face challenges and, by skillfully creating a compelling vision and pulling people together, accomplish extraordinary results.

Strategic Leadership for Women (SLW)

Throughout the year, groups of women enroll in SLW to develop their leadership skills and to appreciate and develop strategies for managing the subtle micro-inequities that gender differences present in organizations. Research on gender and organizational effectiveness conducted by our Center for Gender in Organizations underpins our curriculum. Through sessions such as Career Strategies and Negotiations, women not only learn specific skills that enhance their leadership potential, but also they gain an understanding of how gender dynamics in an organization’s culture can affect their ability to be successful. Since organizations usually sponsor these women for participation into the program, the participants are already leaders in their fields. Most, however, want to take their careers to the next level and welcome the opportunity to reflect upon who they are and what leading means to them.

In October 2002, 28 women from seven countries gathered at the SOM. It was an amazing group of women that evolved in one short week into a learning community, openly sharing diverse perspectives and experiences on business and leadership challenges. Debbie Pollock-Berry ’02 EE, senior human resources manager at Verizon, explained, “It really helped to be exposed to this diverse group of women who, like me, work in predominantly male corporate America. I picked up tips for how to sit at the table and speak powerfully. For example, I’m in HR and I used to speak with so much emotion that it was difficult for people to respond to me. Now I think about what and how I’m going to say something, aware that others’ perception of me is influenced by both.”

That week, participants’ attention was always focused on leadership. The week began with an introduction to Kouzes and Posner’s leadership model. Participants received 360-degree feedback from back-home work colleagues. “When I first looked at the feedback,” commented Pollock-Berry, “I thought ‘Wow — this is negative.’” However, by the end of the week, Pollock-Berry saw things differently. “Through my coaching session and discussions with other participants, I realized that the feedback was great information about how others view me — it tells me how I can improve.”

Enveloped in Kouzes and Posner’s leadership model for the week, Pollock-Berry internalized the leadership model and acquired ideas about how to change her behavior back at work. She takes more risks since her return from SLW. “When I came back, I thought, ‘Hey, I don’t have to be perfect at this opportunity.’ I used to shy away from assignments until I thought that I was going to hit a home run. I was afraid to make mistakes because I thought those mistakes would hinder my growth. Now, I understand that by accepting challenging tasks, I’ll get better at them. I now seek out projects and jobs that are going to stretch me.”

Debbie Pollock-Berry is just one of the 28 women who attended SLW last fall whose leadership ability was strengthened because of her leadership training at Simmons — in fact, she has received a promotion since participating in the program. She reports that she continues to challenge herself in interesting and important ways, and believes she will always draw from the learning experience she shared during SLW.

Cynthia Ingols is an associate professor of management and is the faculty director for Strategic Leadership for Women.

Look for another Strategic Leadership for Women seminar this fall! September 28 - October 3, 2003

Also, find out about our Negotiation Program — October 27-29, 2003.

Go to www.simmons.edu/som/exec_ed for more info.
Recognition

At the annual Eastern Academy of Management (EAM) Conference on May 2, 2003, Professor Bonnie Betters-Reed was given the prestigious honor of being named an EAM fellow. A member of EAM for 20 years, Betters-Reed has served the organization as program chair, president, and director.

U.S. News & World Report placed Simmons College in the top tier of northern United States schools in the category “Best Universities — Master’s.” The School of Management was ranked the 16th largest MBA program in Massachusetts, according to the Boston Business Journal’s 2003 Book of Lists.

Media Highlights

SOM Professor and Research Faculty at the Center for Gender in Organizations (CGO) Stacy Blake-Beard continues to receive press coverage for her research on the growing importance of women mentors. According to Blake-Beard’s study, the number of women receiving mentoring assistance from other women is rising, and this “may signal that more women are in positions where they may act as mentors.” Blake-Beard gave tips on mentoring in the May 2003 Essence Magazine column “Working It” and served on the advisory board of the ESSENCE 2003 Career Guide: 17 Great Places to Work. Her mentoring research has most recently appeared in Newsday (Long Island, NY), Courier-Journal (Louisville, KY), Women’s Business Boston, Arizona Daily Star (Tucson), Bergen Record (NJ), and the St. Paul Pioneer Press (MN).

CGO Director and Senior Research Faculty Evangelina Holvino was quoted in the June/July issue of Working Mother Magazine, a landmark issue focusing on women of color. In the article “A Delicate Balance: Real life at work for women of color,” Holvino comments on the extent to which women of color can express their values at work.

Dean Patricia O’Brien ’77 was interviewed on WBZ-AM, April 23, 2003, and WBIX-AM, April 24, 2003, with Enron whistle-blower Sherron Watkins. Executive Director of the SOM Leadership Conference Joyce Kolligian ’89 and Watkins were interviewed on WBUR 90.9 FM Boston, April 23, 2003. The interviews focused on Watkins’s involvement with the Simmons SOM Leadership Conference held April 26, 2003, at the World Trade Center Boston.

Research

Professors Bonnie Betters-Reed and Lynda Moore were awarded research grants at the 2003 U.S. Association for Small Business and Enterprise Conference. The Case Writing Incubator Grant, sponsored by the Coleman Foundation, will fund the development of a case study on Darlene Jeter, an African-American woman owner of a successful business (Jet-A-Way in Roxbury, MA) in a white-male-dominated industry. The Elevator Grant, funded by the Coleman Foundation and the Hughes Charitable Foundation, provides support for the development of interactive teaching materials.

The Carnegie Corporation recently awarded a $22,000 grant to the CGO. The grant will fund a project, led by CGO Director/Senior Research Faculty Evangelina Holvino, to design and deliver three gender and organizational change modules in a workshop for gender focal points of African universities in Accra, Ghana. The work done by CGO will support the Carnegie Corporation’s Program to augment women’s educational professional opportunities in African higher education institutions.

CGO recently published CGO Insights #16 and #17, available online at www.simmons.edu/som/cgo/publications_resources/briefing_notes.html. “Building Constituencies for Culture Change in Organizations by Linking Education and Interventions,” by CGO Faculty Affiliate Deborah Kolb, and “Working Across Differences: Diversity Practices for Organizational Change,” by Evangelina Holvino and Bridgette Sheridan, CGO director/senior research faculty and associate director, respectively, are featured.

The reader Gender, Work, and Organization, designed for MBA students by CGO faculty, provokes new thinking about critical management topics such as leadership, negotiation, globalization, diversity, and organizational change. To be released this summer by Blackwell Publishing, the reader is praised as “the best and most up-to-date compilation of research and theory” on gender in the workplace.

Advancing
Women

Professor Cynthia Ingols presented “Power — How to Gain It, Teach It, and Capitalize on It” with Beverly Edgelihill of Fidelity Capital Management at the March 2003 Conference Board’s Women’s Leadership Conference in New York, NY. The conference focused on the role decision makers within organizations play in women’s rise up the corporate ladder.

Professors Cynthia Ingols and Mary Shapiro wrote Your Job Interview: An Easy, Smart Guide to Interview Success, published in 2003 by Silver Lining Books, an imprint of Barnes & Noble, Inc. The book is part of the Barnes & Noble Basics series. It provides guidance through the twists and turns of the interview process—from making the most of that first call to coping with stressful interviews to negotiating your job offer. Valuable tips include acing phone interviews, making a great first impression, dealing with interview curveballs, explaining gaps in your resume, negotiating salary and benefits, and much more.

SOM Professor and CGO Affiliated Faculty Deborah Kolb spoke at the March 2003 10th Anniversary Conference for Columbia Women in Business in New York, NY. Her talk, “Negotiate the Conditions for Your Success,” focused on five challenges facing women developing their careers: 1) failure to recognize negotiation opportunities; 2) taking on work for which you are not rewarded; 3) taking on new roles without support; 4) mistaking toughness for effectiveness; and 5) taking “no” for an answer.

Professor Sylvia Maxfield delivered a presentation based on her book, Gatekeepers of Growth, at the Ninth Annual Harvard International Development Conference. The April conference drew an audience of several hundred development practitioners from around the world.

Maxfield also presented “Business Forecast for Mexico” to an audience of 100 local businesspeople at FleetBoston headquarters, Boston, on May 28, 2003. The program was co-sponsored by the National Society of Hispanic MBAs, the New England Latin American Business Council, and the Massachusetts Export Association.

Associate Dean Deborah Merrill-Sands was invited to serve on the advisory board of Ms. Foundation’s new Take our Daughters and Sons to Work Initiative. The program builds on the foundation’s successful Take our Daughters to Work Day. It will broaden public dialogue about family and work, and spark change so that both girls and boys have the opportunity to participate fully at work, at home, and in their communities.

Gail Townsend, a senior HR representative from W.L. Gore & Associates, visited the Simmons School of Management on March 7, 2003, to interact with faculty, administration, and students as part of the SOM’s outreach strategy to strengthen relations with selected corporations. W.L. Gore & Associates is a $1 billion-plus privately-owned corporation with 6000 employees in 45 locations around the globe. Their innovative products include GoreTex and Teflon.

Building these strong corporate relationships is important for strengthening MBA and Executive Education enrollments, student placement, and sponsorship of research and the SOM Leadership Conference. Earlier this year, representatives visited the school from HP and Johnson & Johnson, which resulted in expanded opportunities for collaboration. The SOM continues to broaden its relationships and contacts with State Street Corporation, Fleet, and EMC among others.

Dr. Jill Kickul has joined the SOM as the new Elizabeth J. McCandless professor of entrepreneurship

A former professor at the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business at DePaul University, Dr. Kickul has built an impressive reputation in the field of entrepreneurship for her teaching and research. She has taught courses in Entrepreneurship Strategy, Entrepreneurship and New Venture Management, Strategic Analysis for Competing Globally and Management Strategy, and Creativity in Business. Dr. Kickul has published a significant stream of research on entrepreneurship, producing more than 15 refereed journal articles since 2001. Her research interests include entrepreneurial intentions and behavior, strategic and innovation processes in start-up ventures, and, most recently, women in entrepreneurship. Look for more information about Dr. Kickul in the next issue of NETWORK.
Andrea Lyons '89 attaches this quote to her e-mail messages. Does this give you a hint as to the type of person Andrea is? Andrea Lyons isn’t afraid to follow her dreams. With nearly twenty years experience in the corporate sector, she knew she could run her own business, she just didn’t know the dream would spring from a craving for granola! But that’s exactly what happened.

“My dream was not so much about starting a food manufacturing business,” explained Lyons, “but about having an opportunity to find my voice, own my power, and realize my potential.” Lyons began her career as a lending officer for Fleet Bank of Massachusetts, then went on to become director of finance and operations for Energy Alliance Group. There she established and maintained accounting and financial systems, oversaw corporate tax matters, maintained billing systems for projects, and monitored delivery schedules for large contracts.

Enticed by the Internet boom, she headed to the West Coast for a position as vice president of finance and operations for College Broadcast, a broadband Internet and cable TV entertainment business. “I helped grow that business from the ground up,” said Lyons. “Eventually we raised over $8 million in investment capital and grew from zero to 175 people. Of course, the end of the story is a cliché — the company got caught in the Internet collapse and we were forced to sell out.”

But that wasn’t the end of the story for Lyons. “The whole experience was an incredible education and an empowering experience for me,” she said. “I had many people tell me that I would be great at running a company as CEO, and intuitively, I thought so, too.”

A craving for granola
After her stint with College Broadcast, Lyons and her family moved back to the East Coast. She began a job search in September 2001, but then came September 11, and everything changed. “I put the job search on hold and did what everyone wanted to do — just spend time with family and loved ones.” In early November, she got a craving for granola but couldn’t find any as good as what she had experienced on the West Coast. Undeterred, she headed to the library to research granola ingredients and returned home to bake it herself. She loved it and so did everyone else! With encouragement from family and friends, Lyons pondered making granola for consumer consumption and starting her own business. “The moment I realized I was destined to move ahead with this idea was when I found the industrial bakery on my very first phone call,” explained Lyons. “In that moment it felt like I had launched the business under a lucky star.”

Lyons admitted she had doubts when she started. “My biggest fear was that I was starting a business in an industry about which I knew almost nothing. But

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The GoddessGood Fund

One of the highlights that came out of the recently released “Teen Girls on Business” study was that girls rarely associate careers in business with the ability to help others. Andrea Lyons is ready to take on that myth.

She says the best part about running Goddess Granola is “providing a product that tastes good, is good for you, and does good.” As she celebrated the growth of Goddess Granola, Andrea wished to help and encourage other women to manifest their dreams, so she created the GoddessGood Fund. Ten percent of profits from Goddess Granola support programs helping women reach their full potential.

“Providing funds to organizations helping women realize their dreams is a great opportunity for me,” explained Lyons. “I’m humbled and grateful for the assistance I have received in launching Goddess Granola and I want to put a little wind in the sails of these worthy activities and efforts.”

Lyons also features a “Goddess of the Month” link on her Web site — www.goddessgranola.com. Each month, Lyons features a woman who is working to make a difference in her community. “I try to bring attention to these unsung women who work so hard to improve our world,” said Lyons. “I like to think that the energy boost these wonderful people receive in turn amplifies into their work and gives them a spiritual lift in terms of their ability to carry on and expand their incredible activities.”

In recent months, Lyons has featured Marian Heard, president and chief executive officer of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, and Laura Watkins, executive director of the Patriots’ Trail Girl Scouts Council in Boston.
my doubts were offset by positive events that kept propelling Goddess Granola forward,” she said. “Lack of knowledge of the food manufacturing industry was an obstacle I confronted with focused networking efforts. Talking to successful food manufacturers, getting their advice, inviting them to participate on my advisory board — those were some of the tactics I used to quickly learn what I needed to know to launch the business with strong margins and effective distribution channels.”

“In today’s economy raising enough investor capital for an easy launch is next to impossible,” she continued. “Under funding forces entrepreneurs to become very creative with marketing and sales strategy. In my case, I knew Goddess Granola couldn’t afford traditional shelving fees in grocery stores, and that granola was a commodity in the health food stores. My strategy, therefore, was to market through specialty food stores and food service channels, where shelf fees are less of an issue and a premium brand can outsell a commodity brand. I established a premium brand identity for the product with unique labeling and a clear, stand-alone, heat-sealed bag that could be resealed to maintain freshness. Customers clearly recognized the quality of the granola. This branding technique differentiated us from competitors.”

Although Lyons says the business is still under capitalized, she feels she’s making strong progress anyway by focusing her attention on building relationships with distributors and customers versus chasing investor capital. “I’m making faster progress this way overall, and as sales and distribution increase, the attraction the company holds for investors will increase too. Right now revenues and margins are what investors want to see, not pie charts and projections.”

**Having her granola and eating it, too**

For Lyons, there are many benefits to owning and running her own business, including “the feeling of accomplishment, the blossoming of previously untapped potential and talents, and the lovely feeling of being in charge!” She enjoys the flexibility that running the business allows her, especially in how she balances building the business with the priorities of family life.

“Daring to dream is about recognizing an opportunity, taking action, and having the faith to see it through. It’s daring to pursue at the risk of losing everything, but you never really fail. If the dream lacks a traditional successful outcome, such as a hugely profitable sale or an IPO, you still succeed in terms of everything you learn during the journey. And then you try again.”

Lyons is quick to credit the SOM for helping her achieve her dream. “From the moment I was accepted at Simmons, my confidence rose and I gained the extra belief in myself that I needed to tackle business as an entrepreneur,” she noted. “The ability to perform financial analysis and understand marketing, branding and operations certainly helped, too. In particular, the large network I acquired through my Simmons educational experience has provided critical support and momentum both personally and professionally, for which I am truly grateful.” — CPC
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Chicago area alumnae come together

A number of SOM alumnae from the Chicago area came together to hear Associate Dean Deborah Merrill-Sands give a presentation to the Financial Women’s Association of Chicago in March 2003, entitled “Women as Leaders: The Paradox of Success — Claiming Your Leadership Value.” More than 40 women attended the event, including members of the FWA Chicago and the following SOM and Simmons undergraduate alumnae: Rebecca Bruns ’78, Siobhan Flynn ’93, Noor Habibulla ’98, Mary Abbott Hess ’64 UG, Sheryl Kravitz ’84 UG, Priscilla Maniscalco ’90 EE, and Simmons College Trustee Paula Sneed ’69 UG. Special thanks to Siobhan Flynn ’93 for organizing this event.

Associate Dean Deborah Merrill-Sands and Simmons College Trustee Paula Sneed ’69 UG

Associate Dean Deborah Merrill-Sands, Noor Habibulla ’98, Siobhan Flynn ’93, and Becky Bruns ’78
Last March was a month of active outreach among alumnae. The Simmons SOM spring telethon, held in Boston, along with a first West Coast telethon, held in the San Francisco Bay area, and an expanded Phone-from-Home Program all combined to raise $26,418 in pledges and gifts in support of the 2002-2003 Annual Fund, close to double the results of last year’s spring telethon!

We salute the following alumnae who volunteered their time and energy to help us advance toward our Annual Fund goal of $385,000. In addition to raising much needed funds for the SOM, these volunteers reached out to alumnae to keep the Simmons network strong. We are grateful for your efforts in calling on your colleagues to join you in supporting the school.

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- Jeanne Fuller ’95, SOMAA COO
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- Ellen Kulik ’97, SOM director of development and alumnae relations
- Lisa Lambert ’99
- Kathy Luvisi ’01
- Natalie Matus ’86, SOM development officer and senior corporate sponsorship officer
- Feyza O’Connell ’99

**West Coast Alumnae Volunteers**
- Judy Bornstein ’96, SOMAA president
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- Andrea Sanni ’05, SOM executive education program manager
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- Brookline Booksmith, Brookline
- Davis Hairdressing, Newton Highlands

Special thanks to Terumi Irizawa ’88 for her leadership and vision for the West Coast event, and to Shelley Pavela ’83, for providing accommodation for the Northern California alumnae callers in offices at Sun Microsystems in Cupertino, California.

What’s New with You?
Send your news for the Fall/Winter 2003 NETWORK Class Notes section to somalum@simmons.edu. You can also mail copy to the ODAR, attn: Class Notes, 409 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA, 02215.
The deadline for submission is Sept. 15, 2003.
SOMAA Board Member Leslie Sanderson ’82 knows that the term estate planning means different things to different people. And well it should, because an estate plan reflects the uniqueness of the person creating it. “Estate planning” typically integrates personal financial goals with provisions for others who may survive us — and often these provisions take the form of planned gifts to your favorite nonprofit organizations. As director of major and planned gifts for the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua, Leslie works to educate prospective supporters about planned gifts to help secure the future of the organization. Beyond her career responsibilities, however, Leslie is also helping SOM alumnae learn about supporting the school through planned gifts.

Leslie’s approach both to thinking about her own plans and helping others is to simplify, when possible: “Planning for the future does not have to be overwhelming. There are some basics that influence our planning, regardless of how complex or simple our financial situation.” The elements that influence estate plans are usually:

- the people and organizations for whom you are responsible or wish to benefit;
- the assets and property you own or expect to own in the future;
- your financial plans for your lifetime and what to do with resources you will no longer need; and
- the people who can advise or assist you in carrying out your intentions — a lawyer, financial planner, accountant, bank trust officer, etc.

After considering these elements, you may want to begin implementing your plan, and to explore the advantages of one or more estate planning tools. Here is just one basic idea to start your thinking. As Leslie says: “The cornerstone of your planning is a will — and a charitable bequest in your will is one of the simplest ways to provide future support for the SOM. I emphasize that a will is important because it lets you decide who will inherit your assets, not the laws of your state. A will is a very important choice to exercise — enabling you to reduce or eliminate estate taxes, designate a guardian for your children, and choose your own executor of your affairs.”

A bequest to the school can be made for a fixed amount, a percentage or remainder of your estate, and can include property or real estate. Bequests can be added to existing wills, usually through a codicil.

There are other simple ways to make a future gift to the SOM that you might consider, such as naming the school as the primary, secondary or contingent beneficiary of a life insurance policy. “Naming the School of Management on the life insurance policy provided by my employer has been one of the easiest ways for me to make provisions for the SOM. I just completed a change of beneficiary form,” said Leslie, of her own commitment. Another simple way is to name the SOM as beneficiary on a policy no longer needed for family members.

Planning for the unspent portion of a retirement savings account (401K, 403B, IRA) to benefit the school is another valuable step to take. By naming the SOM as a beneficiary of your retirement assets, you can avoid losing a large percentage to estate taxes and have the full value benefit the SOM.

If you would like information on any of these topics, please contact:
Ellen Kulik ’97
Director of development and alumnae relations
617.521.3828,
elen.kulik@simmons.edu
or
Leslie Sanderson ’82
SOMAA fundraising/development chair
lesliesanderson@attbi.com.
Mastering an online job search

by Wendy D’Ambrose

Let me begin by stressing that searching and applying for jobs online is only one of several methods to utilize for an effective job search. However, with that said, it is the newest method and there are some very basic, yet critical aspects, to be aware of when using this method. The goal of this article is to demystify the online job search.

First it is critical that you have a reliable home computer — if you don’t have one, do make the investment. It will be well worth it to you in facilitating your search. Next, you must be online and have an e-mail address. Be sure to set up an e-mail address that is easy to read and replicate when someone is typing it; be sure it is professional, as opposed to casual or humorous. (Tip: For anyone 50 or over, AARP offers a discount for Earthlink.)

Next you need to prepare your Electronic, i.e., ASCII, Resume. ASCII documents are simple text documents that can be read and opened by all e-mail word processing programs. Below are instructions for creating your ASCII resume.

1. Open WordPad or any basic text editor, such as Notepad or Simpletext, which is available on your computer. The text editor lets you view your résumé in the same simple format that the recipient will see. To open WordPad, go to the Start button, choose Programs, select Accessories, then choose WordPad.

2. At this time, you can compose a résumé from scratch or open an existing résumé. If you open an existing resume, WordPad will automatically convert proportional fonts to a fixed font (understood by most e-mail programs), and it will indicate which parts of your text are unsupported ASCII characters, such as bullets or underlining. Replace all unsupported characters with their ASCII equivalent. (Tip: Any characters found on your keyboard are an ASCII-equivalent character. For example, instead of bullets, try using * or +.)

3. Select all of the text, and then change the font to Courier, size 12, or any non-proportional 12 pitch font.

4. Put your name in all capital letters, as well as the section headers in your resume such as KEY WORD SUMMARY, EXPERIENCE, EDUCATION. (Tip: Browse the Career Section of any bookstore and you will find books that provide guidance regarding “key words” for an electronic resume.)

5. Do not exceed 60 characters per line. Use hard character returns at the end of each line. I suggest making two-inch margins on the left and right.

6. Your resume will be a left justified document. If you want to indent, do not use the tab key. Instead use the space bar and use five spaces as a standard.

7. Save your résumé as a “text only” file.

8. Once you are satisfied with the way your resume looks in the text editor, copy and paste the text of the résumé into the body of a text e-mail message.

9. You should always include a short cover letter with your resume. Create a short cover letter using the same steps described above. Insert this text above the résumé in the e-mail message. Do not send the cover letter separately as an e-mail attachment.

Send a copy of this e-mail message to yourself for review and make any necessary changes. Then, send it to a friend or to Denise Davis ’99 LS (denise.davis@simmons.edu) for feedback.

Now that you have your electronic résumé you are ready to search and apply for jobs online. See the sidebar for our site recommendations.

If you come across a favorite site, please share it with the CSO; you can e-mail me at: dambrose@simmons.edu. Always remember the online job search is only one of several ways to find a job. Do not rely on it solely, as you will do yourself a disservice. The CSO urges you to utilize all paths, including online, newspapers, business journals, networking events, vendor events and personal contacts. I hope this is helpful.

Wendy D’Ambrose is SOM’s Director of Career Services.

Special thanks to Denise Davis, SOM librarian and CSO team member, for her assistance with this article.

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### MBA Job Search Sites

- Careers.wsj.com (www.careers.wsj.com)
- Monster.com (www.monster.com)
- CareerPath.com (www.careerpath.com)
- CareerMosaic.com (www.careermosaic.com)
- HotJobs.com (www.hotjobs.com)
- HeadHunter.net (www.headhunter.net)
- MBAJobs.com (www.mbabjobs.com)
- Idealist.org (www.idealist.org)

### International Job Search Sites

- MbaJobs.net (www.mbabjobs.net)
- ForeignMBA.com (www.foreignmba.com)
- RecruitmentNet.com (www.recruitment.com)
- OverseasJobs.com (www.overseasjobs.com)
- AsiaNet.com (www.asia-net.com)

### MBA Career Research Sites

- WetFeet.com (www.wetfeet.com)
- Experience.com (www.experience.com)
- BulletPoint.com (www.bulletpoint.com)
- CEOExpress.com (www.ceoexpress.com)
- RileyGuide.com (www.rileyguide.com)
- Women.com (www.women.com)
- Forbes.com (www.forbes.com)
- FastCompany.com (www.fastcompany.com)

### Industry Specific Sites

- MediaBistro.com (media) (www.medibistro.com)
- MarketingJobs.com (ad/sales/marketing) (www.marketingjobs.com)
- a-zjobs.com (Internet/e-commerce/etc.) (www.a-zjobs.com)
- Jobs.Internet.com (Internet/e-commerce/etc.) (www.jobs.internet.com)
- eduVentures.com (education) (www.eduvventures.com)
- Jobs.pj.org (non-profit) (www.jobs.pj.org)
- Inc.com (entrepreneurs) (www.inc.com)
- ShowBizJobs.com (entertainment) (www.showbizjobs.com)
More than 110 alumnae, students and friends attended the seventh program of the Michelle A. Rosmarin ’90 Executive-in-Residence Program on May 22, 2003, featuring Jeanne B. Lewis, former president of Staples, Inc. Small Business Delivery. After almost a decade with Staples, and at the height of her success, Lewis made the decision to leave the company in 2002. “For me, I reached the point where it felt like work,” she said. “I’d joined and been there at a time when Staples was still growing rapidly, and when there were constantly new problems and opportunities. It became an established Fortune 500 company, and much of that entrepreneurial challenge associated with fast-growth companies had gone for me.” Lewis believes the decision to make a career change should be made with careful attention to the balance between one’s logic and intuition. For most of Lewis’s career, she found herself listening to the logical part of her brain in making career decisions, and as a result sometimes found herself in roles that felt forced, like a “square peg in a round hole.” “It took me a long time to listen to my visceral reaction to change,” she explained. “The marriage of the two is a powerful force.”

Lewis, 39, began her career in banking, after graduating from Wellesley College in 1985. After advancing to the level of assistant vice president, Lewis felt that banking was not a good fit, and that it was time for a change. In spite of a 1989 Wall Street Journal article that advised against getting an MBA, citing that opportunity costs were not worth the gains, Lewis decided to enroll in an MBA program, a decision she does not regret. She found a strong network, met lots of interesting people, learned the functional areas of business, and strove to take advantage of the “giant job swap” — the chance to go into another field. Upon graduation, Lewis accepted a job offer at a financial services firm — a decision she made from the “head and not the gut.” “It was a job everyone else wanted, so I figured I should want it,” she stated. “It paid very well. By day two, I was miserable.” She resigned six months later.

Lewis joined Staples in 1993. (She had interned there in marketing, between her first and second years of business school.) According to Lewis, at that time Staples was a simple company — a retail business with a small, new mail order delivery business without any global operations or an Internet operation. Lewis joined as a marketing manager, overseeing a small budget and team. Lewis was also asked to join a cross-functional task force. “Usually you roll your eyes and say okay, but that opportunity really opened doors for me. It enabled me to meet people I would not ordinarily have had exposure to.”

On the task force, Lewis developed a good working relationship with the president of the east coast division of stores. A year later, he had an opening in his division, which at that time had no senior women and no MBAs. He offered Lewis a position as director of sales and operations, managing 50 stores in New England totaling approximately $250-$300 million in sales and more than 1,000 associates. Lewis said it was a position she felt at the time she “had no right being offered.” She believes that in addition to her good working relationship with the president, there was pressure within the company to spread the cluster of MBA employees into the core part of the business, which helped foster this opportunity.

Lewis experienced “baptism by fire” in this role, learning to say “I don’t know,” and ask “stupid” questions. She researched competitors and Staples’ own business by going into the field herself, in order to create best practice solutions for the company. Within three months, she realized she did bring strengths to her role in a division that was not performing well and was in need of resuscitation. Surrounded by retail veterans, Lewis brought a different way of looking at things to this team. Two years later, once the division turned around, Lewis was asked to join an extremely poor performing merchandising unit within the company. While other units were experiencing 20 percent growth, this unit ran at a deficit. Undertaking a genuine career risk, Lewis used the first three months of a “honeymoon period” in her new role to ask for many resources that she needed. By coming up with some “quick wins” to invigorate a team with very low morale, Lewis was able to extend the honeymoon period to six months, and soon the unit was performing at double digit sales growth and at single digit profit — an incredible turnaround.
Following this success, Lewis was offered a role as executive vice president of marketing in the company, after one of the founders of the company left this position. “What should have been an easier transition was one of the scariest I made,” said Lewis. “It wasn’t broken. It was a lot easier to deal with a broken unit than enter an area that was doing just fine.” There, she found ways to make iterative improvements, rather than the leapfrog steps she had instituted in her other roles. Lewis used quantitative feedback to improve accountability, and also focused on the areas in which she could get qualitative feedback. In 1999, Lewis was named president of Staples.com and began the company’s online expansion in order to compete with the burgeoning growth of Internet office supply companies. “In a time when up was down and down was up, Staples was in catch-up mode. So we hired new people to infuse our Internet business with good technology, while sticking to the basics of good merchandising that we knew made sense.” Lewis’s tactics worked. In 14 months, the unit grew from $30 million to $500 million in revenue, and achieved profitability — a rare exception among Internet businesses — 24 months ahead of schedule. Lewis attracted young talent in part by designing a physical office space that was atypical in the Staples’ culture. After a visit to eBay’s headquarters, Lewis was inspired to leave her corner office and join the cubicle community, which “did a wonderful thing to communication.” Previously, Lewis had been receiving an average of 120 e-mails a day with attachments, and 35 voicemails over the course of a few hours. In the new set up, however, the number of e-mails and voicemails dropped dramatically. The cubicle’s visual cue spoke volumes to her staff, and encouraged face-to-face conversations and faster decision making. Lewis eventually oversaw the successful merger of the catalog and Internet units into a $1+ billion Small Business Delivery unit.

In December 2001, Lewis was asked to return to the core business, to become the third person at the helm of the company. It was an incredible opportunity and promotion. Although she knew that she should feel happy about the move, her immediate visceral reaction to the offer was, “Oh no!” Lewis attempted to resign, but was talked out of it, a decision she would later regret. Suddenly, her work “felt like work.” As she prepared for a company-wide sales meeting with 4,000 associates, where she would give a speech about her new role, Lewis knew in her gut she could not accept the position, and she resigned again — this time for good. “I had been at Staples for nine years and for eight and a half years, it didn’t feel like work to me. I had been managing the complexities of different product lines with multiple components, and all of a sudden it was just about office supplies.” Lewis wasn’t swayed by the CEO’s persuasive techniques to change her mind, including his admonishment about her dismissing an opportunity to be one of the few women at the top of a Fortune 500 company. “I wasn’t swayed by the money, the title or the guilt,” she stated.

For Lewis, the time to leave was when business demands parted ways with what she wanted to do. Over time, Lewis learned to develop and pay attention to her visceral reaction to change. Occasionally, in the absence of a gut reaction, she employed fact-finding measures to determine her decision. “For me, learning was both inductive and deductive.” Now, Lewis says, she spends 70 percent of her time researching new opportunities with former business colleagues, and soon expects to be involved in a new entrepreneurial venture where, like in the early days of her Staples career, “work won’t feel like work.”

“For me, learning was both inductive and deductive.”
Simmons SOM Reunion Day
October 25, 2003
Save the Date!


We’re planning a wonderful day of reconnection and learning, featuring distinguished SOM faculty. You won’t want to miss this chance to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and learn how the SOM has become the Center for Women, Leadership and Management. We’re eager to tell you about the resources the School can offer you in your career, and also how you can be a direct link to the future success of SOM students today.

Please send an e-mail to somalum@simmons.edu to join the Reunion e-mail list and learn the latest about reunion programming and activities — including who’s already signed up for the big day!