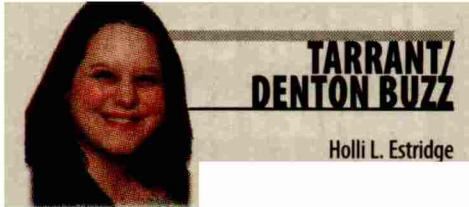


Companies tap into TCU consulting program



Businesses around North Texas are taking advantage of Texas Christian University's elective consulting program by getting some low-cost advice from MBA students who have access to TCU faculty and alumni.

TCU's Neeley & Associates Consulting program culled five project proposals from 20 to 25 submitted by area businesses. In the spring semester, 20 first-year MBA students will advise Bell Helicopter, Sabre Holdings, Lockheed Martin, The Alternative Board and the Fort Worth Day Resource Center.

"What's different about this program is that it's tied to a consulting curriculum that's front-end loaded with practical application," said Ed Riefenstahl, the TCU Nee-

ley School of Business' director of experiential

learning.

The students, while putting in an average 250 hours on their projects, have access to various resources, including TCU faculty and TCU alums. In return, their clients pay \$40 to \$50 per hour, depending on the size of the company.

Students use those funds to buy faculty

time and other resources needed to complete the project. The department also uses the revenue to augment training and educational opportunities for the consultants.

Mark Wren, community relations and corporate philanthropy manager for Dallas-based Half Price Books, said his company is implementing recommendations Neeley consultants made last year.

"What was really special about the group is we really wanted an international focus for our project," Wren said, "and the students on our team came from a wide variety of backgrounds."

Half Price Books was trying to expand its wholesale book subsidiary, Texas Bookman, into international markets.

This year Texas Bookman will participate in the Guadalajara Book Show in Mexico, Wren said, and the company is using Neeley research to explore expansion in Europe. Half Price Books has also hired one of the consultants, Francois Piat, to help the company reach out to new clients.

Med building acquired

Alson Capital LLC has acquired a 28,000-square-foot medical office building at 1106 Alson Ave. in Fort Worth. Panther Capital managing directors Tommy Pigg and Doug Kincaid represented the previous owner, RKC Properties of Bixby, Okla., in the transaction.

hestridge@bizjournals.com | 817-693-0025

