

# The POWER of ENTERPRISE

**A new, University-wide entrepreneurship program promises to bring a 'can-do' attitude to numerous disciplines**

**By Patrick Farrell**

**F**rom the inspirational tales of Horatio Alger to the real-life accomplishments of Henry Ford, the spirit of enterprise exemplifies the American work ethic. The contemporary successes of such entrepreneurs as Bill Gates and Michael Dell have reinvigorated the traditions of innovation, independence, and calculated risk-taking upon which this nation was built. Recognizing this power, Syracuse University's Martin J. Whitman School of Management (see related story, page 5) will soon launch a bold, new venture of its own: the Syracuse Comprehensive Entrepreneurship Initiative (SCEI), a University-wide entrepreneurship program.

The Whitman School already offers an undergraduate major in entrepreneurship through its Program in Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises (EEE), which recently was ranked by *Entrepreneur* magazine among the nation's top 24 such programs. SCEI's development is being shepherded by Professor Michael Morris, who holds the Witting Chair in Entrepreneurship. A former Fulbright Scholar who has taught entrepreneurship at universities around the world, Morris also has been a principal in four business start-ups. His goal for the program is to extend the entrepreneurial mindset beyond the confines of the management school to all the University's schools and colleges.

Under SCEI, Whitman faculty will work with colleagues from across campus to design teaching modules that integrate entrepreneurial concepts and perspectives into a variety of courses. This will provide opportunities for students from different disciplines to interact with one another on entrepreneurial issues and projects at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Morris also envisions additional entrepreneurship-based programs within the Whitman School that will bring students from across the University together to collaborate on projects and activities. He hopes to have the entire SCEI program up and running within three years, though significant elements should be in place as early as this fall.

The new program enjoys strong support within the Whitman School. "Entrepreneurship is our signature theme,"

explains retiring Dean George R. Burman. "We believe the study of entrepreneurship and the development of an entrepreneurial mind-set not only offer our graduates the strongest preparation for successful careers, but also a philosophy of problem solving and a 'can-do' attitude that are useful in other aspects of their lives."

Morris wants SCEI to be a comprehensive program with the potential to touch every student on campus, both in the classroom and through extracurricular activities and open programs. Among the initiatives already in place are the Syracuse Entrepreneurial Competition, a campus-wide student business plan competition hosted by the EEE program; START-UP: The Syracuse Entrepreneur's Bootcamp, a course tailored for those aspiring to start businesses in the area; and the Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship Conference, a one-day symposium held last spring that was sponsored by SU's Michael J. Falcone Center for Entrepreneurship. "The purpose of SCEI is not to get all students on campus to start businesses," Morris says. "The issue here is more about bringing an entrepreneurial perspective to their work, and, most importantly, to their lives."

The value of the entrepreneurial philosophy is not lost on the students. Angelique Darling '03, who earned a bachelor's degree in marketing and received the EEE's 2003 Outstanding Entrepreneurship Student Award, has observed a growing interest in entrepreneurship among her classmates. "Entrepreneurship pushes you to try new things and pursue new interests," she says. "It really complements other majors."

To spread the entrepreneurial spirit across campus, Morris intends to go door-to-door to all the schools and colleges to meet with interested deans and faculty members. "Entrepreneurship, more so than just about any field, is inherently cross-disciplinary," he says. "It requires the study of economics, psychology, marketing, and finance, which makes it the most natural area for an interdisciplinary program."

Interdisciplinary study, a cornerstone of SU's Academic Plan, already has been established as critical to the Univer-



Professor Michael Morris seeks to instill an entrepreneurial mind-set across campus.



sity's future success. The Academic Plan's Strategic Partnerships for Innovative Research and Education (SPIRES) are designed to remove barriers that hamper collaboration among students, faculty, and staff, and to establish priorities for investment in research and graduate training. SCEI carries the spirit of the SPIRES forward on a new level. "Entrepreneurship is an ideal platform for cross-disciplinary study," says Vice Chancellor and Provost Deborah A. Freund. "I appreciate that the people behind this program have taken the initiative to independently identify an opportunity to advance interdisciplinary activity."

**T**he spirit of venture capitalism already has broken out of the traditional confines of business and management classes at such universities as Duke and Harvard, both of which offer courses on social entrepreneurship. Morris notes that many business schools have shifted from the old, functional "silo" model, in which academic disciplines existed in mutual isolation, to an interdisciplinary approach. Babson College in Massachusetts provides an example. Traditionally centered on business, Babson has formed a strategic partnership with a new engineering school, the Olin College of Engineering. "Their focus is the connection between the new engineering school and their entrepreneurship program, and especially with commercializing new technologies through entrepreneurial ventures," Morris says. Similar collaborations are taking place on other campuses, including Stanford, where an entrepreneurship program is housed in the engineering school; and the University of Colorado, where a strong link has been forged between the entrepreneurship program and the music school.

Morris believes SU can take the lead in pairing entrepreneurship with other programs through its comprehensive, University-wide approach. "The engineering school or the law school may have courses where we can help add modules and material," he says. Morris and law professor Ted Hagelin see a mutually beneficial connection between entre-

preneurship and the College of Law's Technology Transfer Research Center (TTRC). The center already brings together cross-disciplinary teams of science, engineering, and law students to focus on intellectual property issues, due-diligence research, and market assessments. "It would really benefit students [with law, science, and engineering backgrounds] to get more exposure to what is happening on the business side in the entrepreneurship program," says Hagelin, who directs the TTRC program.

**B**eyond its purely educational benefits, SCEI promises other dividends as well, particularly in the realm of research. An example of such an opportunity is already in the works: a proposal for a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for the Syracuse Technology Cluster Commercialization program. The proposal involves a partnership with the Whitman School of Management, the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science, SUNY Upstate Medical University, and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. It outlines an entrepreneurship model designed to accelerate the commercialization of innovations from niche areas of technology. "We plan to focus on interdisciplinary clusters, such as environmental science [which encompasses such fields as biology, engineering, and chemistry], and identify emerging technologies," says Nola Miyasaki, executive director of the Falcone Center (see related story, page 11). The program would then assign students to cross-disciplinary teams to help develop commercialization plans for those technologies.

The blueprint of SCEI has also been chosen as 1 of 15 finalists for a \$5 million Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation grant. "As a finalist, we received a \$50,000 grant to work on fleshing out our proposal," Morris says. Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw will accompany Morris's team to Kansas City in December for the competition's final phase. "We've gotten a lot of University encouragement as a result of developing this proposal," Morris says. "Every dean on campus signed off on a letter of support."

SCEI promises to create a new awareness of the resources available to all SU schools and colleges. "One idea we really want to convey is how entrepreneurship can serve people, departments, faculty, and students," Morris says.

Ultimately, it's the value the program brings to students that counts most. "Entrepreneurship is about being different," says School of Management graduate Kalen Pascal '03, who served as president of the Entrepreneurship Club on campus and was the recipient of EEE's 2003 Entrepreneurial Leadership Award. For his senior project, Pascal helped create a business plan for an etiquette school for college graduates. The school would teach such things as table manners, how to dress, and how to prepare for a job interview. "I feel confident I can succeed because I know how," he says. "Entrepreneurship teaches you to look at one thing from several angles. It helps you focus and guides your thinking in a unique way that gives you a leg up on everybody."