

Omaha social entrepreneur develops course for CBA

Social entrepreneurs can be found in many walks of life including citizen groups, governmental agencies, private enterprises and non-profits. They use entrepreneurial principles to effect social change. While business entrepreneurs often measure performance in terms of profit, social entrepreneurs measure success in terms of community impact.

During the spring semester of 2009, the College of Business Administration delivered its first Social Entrepreneurship course. Taught by Ken Lyons, president and CEO of the New Community Development Corporation, students in the class first learned about the concepts underlying social entrepreneurship and then applied those concepts in several different assignments.

To gain an understanding of what motivates foundations, organizations, and individuals to devote their efforts to helping the less fortunate, each student conducted a one-on-one interview with a local social entrepreneur.

To learn how to apply social entrepreneurship concepts in practice, each student team developed a proposal for a social entrepreneurship venture. One student team developed a plan for a steroid education program that could be utilized in local high schools.

The students also examined the mission statements of local social entrepreneurs in order to evaluate the degree of alignment between the venture's activities and its stated mission.

Adam Michaelsen, a senior management major, commented that the class "has really opened my eyes to social entrepreneurship and how important non-profits are in society as a whole. Not only did I learn from the choice of the textbook, but how Mr. Lyons also incorporated real life situations into class. I left class wanting to go make a difference in our community."

Prior to joining New Community Development Corporation, Lyons served as a vice president at First National Bank of Omaha, where he spearheaded First National's community development efforts.



"There are few things more rewarding than watching young people recognize that they have the power to enrich not only their lives, but the lives of others as well." —Michelle Obama