

## **Embedding Entrepreneurialism – A Canadian Case Study**

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### **Introduction**

The globalizing higher education market means that entrepreneurial activity has become a mainstay of how colleges can compete. To be competitive in their markets, colleges need to adopt and adapt business tools that build upon their unique advantages and positions within their markets. This chapter assesses how one Canadian college has addressed these market changes. Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning is presented as a case study to outline a framework for adopting entrepreneurial principles and for implementing successful practices in a college setting.

### **The Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning: Context**

Founded in 1967, Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, (until 2003, College of Applied Arts and Technology - CAAT), is located in the north and western quadrant of Toronto, Canada's largest city, which has a population of almost 6 million people. The city is considered one of the world's most ethnically diverse and cosmopolitan, with a constant influx of immigrants adding to, and enriching, that mix. Humber's population is broadly reflective of the city's ethnic mosaic and includes people from virtually every country in the world.

Humber is one of twenty-four public colleges in Ontario, a province with more than 12 million inhabitants; 8 of these colleges are located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Unlike the United States, colleges, particularly in the Toronto region, do not have to operate in precisely defined geographical districts. Students have always been free to attend any college in the system, subject only to meeting admissions criteria and availability of adequate space in specific programs. Tuition fees are generally standardized across the province by the government. Humber has two major campuses, one, the North, located some ten minutes from Pearson International Airport, and the other, Lakeshore, situated on the shores of Lake Ontario, within twenty minutes of downtown Toronto.

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Humber offers the most comprehensive menu of programs in Ontario, with some one hundred and sixty full time diplomas, two hundred certificates, nine degrees (with more under development) and over one thousand courses in continuing education. In September, 2003, almost sixteen thousand students were enrolled full time, with another sixty thousand part time registrants and corporate clients in eight Schools, including Applied Technology, Business, Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism, Social and Community Services, Creative and Performing Arts, Health Sciences, Media Studies and Information Technology, and Liberal Arts and Science. To meet constantly growing enrolment demand, the institution is currently completing a one hundred and thirty million dollar capital improvement program, including two additional student residences, bringing the total number of rooms up to fourteen hundred. Humber is one of the two largest colleges in Canada, with Seneca, in the north quadrant of the GTA, being the other. Although transfer programs to universities have generally not been a major focus of the colleges' mandate, Humber has concluded transfer agreements with forty one universities in Canada, the United States and internationally, to serve an ever growing number of diploma (associate degree) graduates who wish to obtain a baccalaureate. Humber is the only Canadian Member of the League for Innovation and was selected as one of twelve Vanguard Learning Colleges in North America.

### **Pushes and Pulls towards Entrepreneurialism**

Humber has long operated in an entrepreneurial spirit and style, partly due to the impact of local and environmental conditions, and partly due to the commitment of its leadership and management. Indeed, by playing on the opportunities presented by these two factors. Humber has been able to identify and take advantage of myriad opportunities involving creative agreements and relationships. First, colleges in Ontario were initially structured to educate students in the skills needed for direct entry to the labour markets. As such, with student job placement holding such a high premium, the institution has always nurtured strong relations with potential employers. Also, considerable attention to workforce development of employees of private sector firms, and customized training, has enabled the College to cement strong working relationships of competence and trust over many years. These relationships have been critical to Humber's success because public colleges are not allowed to gain revenues from local taxation, unlike most American jurisdictions, nor are there any provisions to allow them to generate capital through such methods as floating bond issues.

With virtually all campus programs being discretely unique, as well as capital intensive, and with governmental grants being insufficient to cover constantly escalating requirements, the squeeze on finances has always been an issue. Lately, with government grants in decline and tuition frozen, this serious situation has reached crisis proportions. Thus, Humber learned to seek tangible support

from its "satisfied" customers in the private sector, and tried to develop mutually beneficial relationships by providing outstanding services to countless companies, which, in turn, helped the College meet its needs for equipment, software, internships and co-operative opportunities. These economic pushes have compelled Humber to hone its abilities as an entrepreneurial college.

Second, the official, geographical "catch basin" (i.e., north west Toronto) allocated to Humber by the Ontario Colleges Act, 1965, stipulated that members of the Board of Governors must live or work in the area, and that the College could not have physical facilities outside the catch basin. At face value, the geographic limitations may not appear problematic. But as populations have grown since 1967, problems have arisen. While the two Boroughs of Toronto given to Humber, Etobicoke and York, comprised about 400,000 people in 1967 and remain essentially at that level today, the catch basins of contiguous colleges have grown exponentially. Seneca's region, for example, has grown to about 1.8m, while Sheridan College, immediately to the west of Humber, has grown to about 1.7m. When combined with a precipitous decline in high school enrolment due to an aging population and low birth rate in the 1980s, particularly in Humber's area, this meant that Humber had to aggressively seek students from other geographical areas, or risk both a serious decline in enrolment, staffing and operating revenues and a weakened position in terms of programming choices, and critical mass, particularly when juxtaposed with competitive colleges on either side. As a result, Humber took the conscious decision to maintain steady enrolment growth by becoming the college for the entire Province of Ontario, extending its reach even beyond the immediate regions of nearby colleges. Humber, therefore, embarked upon a two pronged strategy to (a) develop and specialize in new programs not offered anywhere else (e.g., funeral services) and (b) make the College a destination of choice for its high quality educational programming and student life, with an impeccable reputation with prospective students and the private sector. In short, to develop strong reasons for prospective students to feel motivated, and that it was worth their effort to enrol at the College. While this strategy caused some resentment in some colleges, it has been successful; it also contributed to sharpening Humber's entrepreneurial skills.

Third, in the early 1990s, both the Federal and Provincial governments carried out a significant shift in the manner in which training contracts were to be made available. For many years, colleges had been preferred providers of curriculum relating to skills upgrading, English as a second language training, immigrant integration, and apprenticeship. These contracts had provided a steady stream of revenue which could be used to supplement and/or complement regular resources to purchase equipment, and refit labs. In a move to create a more competitive environment, contracts were now to be tendered more broadly. As a result, more contracts were awarded to private sector trainers and to the unions, largely due to their lower overheads, with most colleges, as a corollary, receiving fewer. This development, when coupled with the Ontario government's drive to

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more accountability for public institutions, and the introduction of key performance indicators wherein operating grants were tied to performance on such items as graduate employment, and employer and student satisfaction, increased the pressure on colleges which traditionally had been able to depend on more stable and guaranteed revenues. The most crippling blow occurred in 1995 when the newly elected Provincial government carried through on its pledge to cut operating budgets across the public sector by fifteen per cent. For Humber, not only did this mean an annual loss of about \$13 million (exclusive of one-time money spent on early retirement and lay off packages), but also a challenge to adjust to this loss in subsequent years, even as enrolments continued to rise.

These developments, which essentially dropped dependence on government funding from over seventy per cent to less than fifty per cent, forced Humber to rely less on public funding, and to become even more entrepreneurial so that the College's financial and physical resource position could be enhanced. Fortunately, as stated above, this called only for an augmentation of how Humber acted in the marketplace, rather than a complete paradigm shift. Humber continued to try to think "outside the traditional box" so as preserve its institutional vibrancy and health, and to create an exciting, if sometimes not clearly known, future. Reiterating that it would not deviate from the institutional values adopted in 1982, (when the current president assumed his position), Humber focused on those relating to entrepreneurialism, including customer service, student and staff growth and development, and, most important, innovation and risk taking; the latter being a value not shared widely with many public sector organizations.

Fourth, the fact that members of the Board of Governors are appointed, rather than elected, has provided a positive benefit for Humber. Although elected Board members reflect a sense of transparent democracy, some members may arrive with vested interest or single-issue biases which might act as an impediment to the college's flexibility. However, Humber's ability to recruit, recommend and have appointed candidates from the many sophisticated citizens found in Toronto, that is, those generally familiar with the global economy and the challenges of doing business today, has mitigated this problem and enabled the administration to adopt a larger worldview than might be otherwise possible. Equally as important, carefully appointed Board members tend to understand the distinction between policy setting and strategy approval, and involvement in the day-to-day management of the college. Moreover, freed from the constraints that a defined district and local taxation sometimes present, the College administration, with the solid support of its Board, has been able to entertain a broad vision of what Humber could accomplish. This broad vision has been very important as the College developed many activities in the international arena. Rather than being critical that entrepreneurial values drew Humber away from "local" priorities, the Board of Humber has understood the value, both financially and culturally enriching, of bringing the world to Humber and vice versa. Indeed,

they have taken great pride that the College has been so active in many parts of the world. In short, it is evident that whereas a parochial board can act to restrain entrepreneurial initiatives, particularly internationally, an open minded and worldly one can be a stimulus to seize opportunities and embrace new ventures. Moreover, if the President is forced to spend a great deal of time trying to defend his/her recommendations, gaining support, or needing to convince a sceptical board of proposed actions, too much energy can be wasted and, as a result, many interesting possibilities simply could not have been developed and implemented.

Finally, Humber has benefited from the continuity and stability of long serving and committed leadership. The President is beginning his twenty third year in office, one Vice President has just retired after thirty six years at Humber with eighteen being as Academic Vice President, and a Vice President of Business Development has held the position for over fifteen years. Four Vice Presidents, recently retired, are still serving the College on part time assignments in areas where their expertise and understanding of how the college functions can be put to good use. They also can help new people to acclimatize to Humber and to adjust to the accepted managerial style and value proposition. Additionally, many other senior academic administrators, such as Deans, who could easily obtain promotions (e.g. to academic vice president) at other colleges, have chosen to stay at Humber which has contributed to the accumulated experience and leadership of the Institution. This continuity of leadership has provided real stability; and the collective focus on entrepreneurial values has prevented stagnation.

In the context of nurturing internal leadership within a framework of respecting people, and instilling a self-sustaining entrepreneurial tone throughout the organization, some key management principles are fundamental to the Humber way. The first is that long-standing College values have been fully embedded in the culture of the institution. Everyone working at Humber is expected to adopt the principles on which the College operates. It has been the responsibility of the President to be fully committed to establishing the culture and atmosphere of Humber, to implanting the roots of key values and strategic direction, and to monitoring progress, maintaining morale, and making mid-course corrections. It is clear this matter could not be delegated away and, indeed, other key administrative leaders have had both to accept joint ownership, and to spread the concept broadly throughout the institution so that the buy in becomes institution wide. Developing an entrepreneurial culture does not have to be mutually exclusive of a learning culture, but it does mean that some different principles must also be stressed, including:

- Establishing a culture (and comfort) with change. Respecting the successful past, but constantly setting new directions to meet emerging issues.
- Focusing on ensuring followers are engaged in carrying out strategic vision and adopting ownership, i.e., getting the agenda accomplished

through others, while minimizing the involvement of leadership's personal ego.

- Maximizing individual potential through personalized, professional development throughout the organization; providing exposure to external stimuli frequently.
- Hiring the best people available; delegating widely; allowing freedom to do optimum job while encouraging the use of creative, if unorthodox, approaches; demanding accountability in a climate of support, trust and mutual respect.
- Aiming to promote conditions for self-actualization for all staff; high morale, self esteem and worth; pride in work are strong motivators.
- Respecting all staff for their competencies and role differences; always ensuring staff are treated with compassion, and can maintain personal dignity, regardless of the situation.
- Actively developing "disciples" from all areas of the Institution (e.g. opinion leaders in faculty who fully embrace values and style, i.e. entrepreneurial attitude); building support by increasing leadership circle.
- Acting as visible role model and mentor, and walking the talk of the "stated" goals and philosophy.
- Constantly restating and reinforcing the Institution's vision and values (e.g. innovation and risk taking).
- Rewarding behaviour which reflects trying something different and/or learning from mistakes; minimizing punitive actions with those who try their best; establishing reward and recognition program for taking initiative and living "College values" (e.g. extra mile award, innovator of the year).
- Communicating and consulting regularly; people can never have too much information and want to be part of the decision-making process; encouraging everyone to be "in the loop" and to accept ownership (e.g., the importance of revenue diversification is everyone's issue).
- Calculating risk and down side for all entrepreneurial activities; remembering we are dealing with the public trust and accountability.
- Moving quickly to assess new trends and courses of action; avoiding quick hits in favour of longer-term viability.
- Ensuring staff are assertive, competitive, ethical, and acting with integrity.

### **Definition of Entrepreneurialism**

Through trial and error, and the evolution of behaviours and actions over the years, Humber has settled upon an all-encompassing definition of what entrepreneurialism means in the Humber context. For Humber, entrepreneurialism is the constant pursuit to initiate, establish and sustain ventures, relationships and/or partnerships which (a) expand, or add value to, the Institution's overall well-being: (b) increase relevance and/or support for target markets: (c) broaden the public profile and enhance its reputation as a provider of high quality programming; (d) contribute to cutting costs, increasing revenues and/or improving physical and academic capital resources, and (e) reinforce the

Institution's reputation for focussed, imaginative programming and avant garde activities.

### **Features of Humber's Entrepreneurial Model**

Based upon Humber's values and principles, a basic model has been developed which helps to shape its entrepreneurial activities. The model includes six features:

1. Focus not just on increasing revenues and making money; include augmenting the academic profile of the College in times of restraint. Ensure there is pride in serving the common good at optimum levels.
2. Entrepreneurial initiatives are directly linked to, and at the core of, Humber's mission, values and strategic goals. Specifically, initiatives can, and should, support three of Humber's goals, namely, life long learning, market responsiveness and financial sustainability.
3. External focus and unswerving commitment to client satisfaction is as important as sound management internally.
4. Value added potential of entrepreneurial initiatives is key in terms of leveraging active support of academic schools, new curriculum and other internal resources.
5. Packaging combinations of existing college assets with new external initiatives provides greater leverage and competitive advantage of the Humber "brand".
6. Maintain a long-term focus. Sustaining entrepreneurial initiatives builds value added relationships and helps relationship management over the "long term".

Years of trial and error have suggested ways to expedite and facilitate new initiatives. Structurally, the College employs a vice president of Business Development, who acts as leader and enabler for corporate and continuing education, and guides many business units and a corporate sales team. All deans are expected to pursue promising opportunities to enhance the ongoing activities of their schools.

Co-operation between, and among, the deans and vice presidents is expected, particularly at a time of new academic activities which cross existing institutional academic sectors. The College has also created cross functional teams to ensure "one stop shopping" for Humber's clients, as well as to develop new, multi-disciplinary activities which can provide skills development opportunities to serve the requirements of the new economy.

In addition, the College has instituted the following actions to improve its service and ability to maintain influence in important sectors.

- Established stand-alone units in various areas, such as sailing, truck driver, and motorcycle. Without financial support from the College, these units often operate nation-wide, and are expected to be self-sufficient, preferably creating operating surpluses.

- Established sector specific programming (e.g., plastics, automotive, pharmaceutical), in addition to company specific, where possible. Firms in the same field have similar staffing issues and find stealing each other's employees a wasteful exercise, and, therefore, are prepared to co-operate with Humber in an area of mutual benefit.
- Established chief executive officers' councils in important sectors, such as pharmaceutical, manufacturing and hospitality, to give strategic advice for their human capital needs, to build credibility and emotional attachment to Humber, and to create legitimacy for future political and capital requirements for Humber.

### **Entrepreneurial Activity at Humber – Examples of Successful Risk Taking.**

Over the last twenty years, Humber has developed a reputation for assessing new trends, planning tactically and strategically, implementing successful actions, and sustaining initiatives. Humber's calculated entrepreneurialism is directly linked to its planning processes, and its initiatives are often emulated by other institutions once the value of the initiatives has been established. A short list of groundbreaking initiatives in Ontario initiated by Humber includes:

- The reconversion of an 1895 heritage site, at little cost to Humber, to a state-of-the-art modern facility that now accommodates 3000 more full time students at the Lakeshore campus. This was accomplished through land swaps, heritage funds and other sources of money other than the College's own resources.
- The first college to build its own residences, increasing the ability to attract students from greater distances.
- The only college to conclude a joint venture with a major university (Guelph) to offer full honours, baccalaureate programs, and to integrate College curriculum so that two credentials could be granted in four years in two separate, but compatible, fields. The entire activity for the 3000 full time students is offered exclusively at Humber, and all programs are funded at university level.
- The first college to receive government-authorization to establish a holding company, acting at arms length from the College, to enter into investments/business ventures for profit.
- Instrumental in gaining legislative change to allow colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees with an applied focus.
- The first college to receive government authorization that changed its designation from a college of applied arts and technology to an institute of technology and advanced learning, with a revised mandate to offer 15 per cent of programming at the baccalaureate level. For Humber, this has meant that it can offer 25 degrees.
- The first college to offer accelerated one-year programs for university graduates only.
- The only college to receive Ministerial Consent to offer four years of a nursing degree, using Humber faculty, and to have the degree granted by a university outside Ontario (University of New Brunswick).



- The purchase of a one hundred acre farm, some thirty miles north of the North Campus. The property was purchased in 1986 and is waiting for a development opportunity that fits Humber's Strategic Plan.

### **A brief look at successful entrepreneurial ventures:**

#### **International Education**

In order to appreciate the development of international entrepreneurial activities at Humber, it is important to view where the institution has come from and some of the driving forces that have precipitated growth and change. Humber's international activities date from the early 1970s, shortly after it opened its doors, at which time the focus was on small projects aimed at strengthening both educational and management practices in selected overseas institutions. Most of these activities were staffed by faculty volunteers as there was very limited or no funding available. Generally, the expectation was that Humber would provide, on a *pro bono* basis, the human and physical resources to support such activities.

In the late 1970s, modest levels of funding became available through Canadian government agencies. This enabled projects to be undertaken on a cost-shared basis, primarily to establish twinning relationships between Canadian and overseas institutions in designated areas of the world. While this funding grew slowly over the next decade, the 1990s brought a reverse trend, and there was a decline in government funding of this nature. Interestingly and significantly, this forced colleges, and to a smaller extent universities, to become entrepreneurial. Cost recovery projects, sometimes referred to as "fee-for-service", became increasingly common in order for colleges to continue with international development activities. Also critical to an understanding of this context is the fact that colleges wanted to be on the international stage, not simply to provide assistance, but also to very specifically enhance the profile of the institution, provide professional development opportunities for faculty, and broaden the educational experience for Canadian students.

Fee-for-service activities provided international clients with custom-designed programming and drew on deep resources of Humber staff for implementation. Most recently, and the last ten years in particular, Humber has been engaged in joint educational partnerships where training and education are developed and delivered in a variety of models that speak directly to the needs of students and funding agencies. For example, short programs, intensive training, late and early starts, advanced credit evaluation, partnership delivery, and articulation across borders have become the norm. On this basis, Humber has marketed and promoted its programs globally and now recruits international students from all corners of the globe. The *modus operandi* has shifted from the voluntarism of the 1970s, through the partial funding models of the 1980s, to today's more pragmatic approach, which requires projects to cover all costs plus contribute to the institution's bottom line. In essence, Humber has become entrepreneurial in its approach and expectations. Further, that approach, though resting on a financial platform, continues to serve faculty development needs and local

students' interests in terms of providing a broader, globally enhanced educational experience. At the time of writing, Humber has completed or is continuing international delivery of a variety of training and educational models in 25 countries with a total value in the mid six figures. Our major areas of focus have included clients and partners in Bangladesh, Botswana, Brunei, China, Egypt, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Swaziland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Ukraine and Zimbabwe. In addition, Humber is home to 700 international students from 70 countries studying in two and three-year diploma programs, four-year degree programs and one-year postgraduate programs. The following describes two partnership projects and international student recruitment initiatives.

### ***Ningbo University and Humber Joint Project***

In 1995 Humber developed a partnership with Ningbo University to implement a joint program in which Chinese students have the combined benefits of a local and Canadian education. An educational model was developed in which selected Chinese students took part in a two year Business Management diploma program hosted by Ningbo University. The program is taught by a combination of Ningbo and Humber professors. The model allowed for the recognition of business courses taught in Chinese and English and a parallel English language development program; successful students then transfer to Humber for the third year of the Business Administration diploma. This "two plus one" model allows each institution to maintain the integrity of its own program and build an educational opportunity not normally available to Chinese students. The overall goal is to provide a blend of education and cultural experiences to students that prepares them for the world of work. The graduate of this joint program is a person who has had the benefits of a local university education, the exposure to Canadian teaching methods and courses, enhanced language capabilities and an in-depth exposure to Western culture. By comparison to students who gain their education through a traditional program and remain local, the students of the joint program have distinct advantages when they return home and seek jobs. They have an international education, they have stronger language skills, they are more culturally adept, more confident and generally, a more well rounded person than their counterpart who took the traditional path.

From a financial perspective, the joint program provides benefits to both partners. Ningbo University, by means of offering a premium program over and above its regular programming, can attract students at tuition rates far greater than that paid by their usual student body. Ningbo University is providing a service beyond the usual scope of their programming which is very much in demand by an ever-increasing consumer centred society. Humber derives financial benefits in the form of a negotiated fee paid by Ningbo University for each student enrolled in the joint program and also enjoys the benefits of a fifty-plus cohort each year paying international student rates. The revenues Humber generates through the partnership are used to cover all operating expenses such as teacher salaries both in Canada and in China, airline transportation, project administration and

student services. The expenses of the International Office which coordinates the joint program and the School which provides the training, are adequately covered by the revenues generated.

The reputation of both Ningbo University and Humber have been greatly enhanced through this partnership, particularly in China, where the joint program is held out as a model of true partnership, friendship and educational soundness. Humber has been requested to replicate the model on numerous occasions with a broad variety of public and private institutions.

### ***College Development in Singapore***

As a result of contacts with a Singaporean institution dating back to 1994, Humber has recently been asked to assist with the development of college-level programming aimed at attracting international students into Singapore. The school in Singapore has a very strong reputation in the delivery of kindergarten to grade twelve programming and has enjoyed a steady and impressive growth during the past six years. The challenge to Humber and the Singaporean school is to introduce college-level programming and all of the associated support services for courses to commence in September 2005. For Humber, this is an opportunity to utilize the knowledge and experience gained during the implementation of the Ningbo University and Humber joint program and to potentially build a base in a key location, as well as further enhance our reputation.

The opportunity to build a steady stream of students coming to Humber each year is one that is very attractive from an educational and financial perspective. For the Singaporean school, they will undertake the development of a college and all of its associated services and assist the Government of Singapore in reaching its goal of attracting more international students and will derive significant financial gain.

To facilitate the introduction of college level programming, Humber has so far provided a letter of support to the Singaporean school that has been used to demonstrate its connection with an internationally known college, Humber, to the local government. A partnership agreement has been signed and curriculum for selected programs has been provided to enable the new college to become familiar with Humber's standards and expectations. Selection criteria have been established for both teachers and students, and academic policies and procedures have been discussed. Key Humber staff are becoming involved with this project as they are required. The respective Deans have enthusiastically lent their support in a tangible manner by providing the curriculum and have offered to host new teachers for training in each of their Schools.

From a financial point of view, Humber will gain both from a per student fee during the in-Singapore portion of the program and from the international fees paid to Humber when the students arrive for their third year. For the Singaporean

institution, they will have the benefits of student fees paid for college-level programming that will be attractive to a wide audience from within the Southeast Asian region.

The benefit students will gain through this partnership is an education that is multi-institutional, multi-country and multi-cultural. By comparison to students who attend a local institution and exit with similar credentials, the student with the international exposure will present much more suitably to multi-national organizations in all corners of the globe.

### ***International Student Recruitment***

The recruitment of international students at Humber is undertaken for three reasons. First, the integration of foreign students within Humber's classrooms provides us with an educational and learning context which otherwise would not be achieved. Our students learn about the world through their interaction with students from around the world. Second, faculty are energized by the opportunities and ideas that spring from multicultural teaching environments. *faculty are energized* *revenue*  
Third, the revenue generated by additional students supports the institutional bottom line and helps counteract ever-decreasing government grants.

The benefits of having international students in Humber's programs have proved to be significant. The interaction between domestic and international students in an educational setting is a very enriching experience in which perspectives are shared to the benefit of all. While Humber is situated in one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world, there is still a great deal to be learned from visitors from abroad. We refer to this as "cultural entrepreneurialism".

The revenue generated through the recruitment of international students is significant. Tuition revenue from local students studying at the diploma level is approximately \$4,500 Cdn. per year, while each international student is charged just over \$11,000 Cdn. per year. International student tuition revenue has grown from \$1.9 million in 1998 to \$8.1M in the 2003 fiscal, and is projected to be \$9M for the 2004/05 fiscal. A significant portion of the revenue generated through international recruitment is retained for central operations at Humber; however, there is modest distribution of the remaining funds directly to the academic schools. This secondary distribution is done pro rata in order to provide an incentive for the schools to directly support international students. Currently, the budget allocated for the recruitment of international students is approximately 10% of the total revenue generated in the fiscal year.

At the beginning of Humber's international student recruitment program, a target of five percent of the domestic student enrolment was established. Five percent was, and still is, a minimum number whereby Humber believes it can provide the necessary exceptional services to international students recruited into our programs. The institution is conscious of the strong reputation Humber has developed internationally as a high quality educational provider; a reputation built

primarily on the design and implementation of customized training and education solutions. Moving strongly into the more traditional recruitment business was a decision that was not taken lightly; we needed to brand Humber in a different light and still maintain the reputation we had built.

Strategies to achieve recruitment targets were developed and implemented over a three year period. Initially, the main focus was on establishing Humber's profile in international circles. We achieved this by attending educational fairs organized by a variety of promotional sources. Once a general understanding of the needs of students from a particular country were understood, we branched out from the general fairs into school visits and also provided informational seminars.

International student recruitment is working very well for Humber, growing dramatically, and has become a significant contributor to the overall goals of the institution culturally, developmentally, and financially, and is furthering our reputation as an institution with an international perspective.

## **The Centre for Employee Benefits (CEB)**

### **The Business Model**

The decade of the seventies was one of tremendous growth in the benefits and pension industry in Canada. Economic, employment and union growth spurred most employers to expand their benefit and pension programs. Insurance, trust, consulting and union organizations were enjoying a booming base of clientele. The federal government continued to support the private pension system by linking Old Age Security payments to inflation, introducing the Spouse Allowance, increasing Registered Retirement Pension Plan limits and introducing the Registered Retirement Income Fund as an alternative to the traditional annuity. In the United States, ERISA was introduced to regulate qualified pension plans.

This growth in business and legislation, however, outstripped the growth in benefits and pension knowledge in the industry. Product providers and organizational buyers experienced a severe shortage of employees with a solid working knowledge of pensions and benefits. As the demand outstripped the supply, both private and public sector employers felt a serious need to address their competency gap. Consulting firms were also facing challenges in recruiting qualified support personnel to complement their professional staff services.

This knowledge void presented the opportunity and motivation to create an industry alliance to serve everyone's needs. The concept for a "centre of excellence" was conceived by both public and private sector partners. The pension and benefits consulting community agreed to provide instructional staff as subject matter experts to provide professional, up-to-date information and business strategies for nominal fees. Humber, in return, agreed to charge

reasonable tuition fees for managing, promoting, and sponsoring public seminars and other educational services.

With a basic business model now agreed upon by all partners, Humber assumed the task of establishing and operating the Centre for Employee Benefits, under the general oversight of an Industry Advisory Council. Staffing, physical resources and budget were all Humber's responsibilities, while the remaining partners provided general oversight, counsel and advice through the Advisory Council. The Certificate of Proficiency in Employee Benefits, more popularly known by the acronym CEB, was launched. The Advisory Council (representing both instructor and customer organizations) expected efficiency, effectiveness and modest fees. Surpluses and reputation were to be shared by everyone.

The Centre for Employee Benefits was officially launched in 1969 and, since that time, has been building its reputation as the premier provider of value-added pension, benefit and trustee education in Canada.

### **The Revenue Model**

The driving force behind the CEB's business model has been one of financial self-sustainability. The Centre develops and provides fee-for-service solutions to the business community across the country. For the first twenty years of its existence, the Centre provided its programs in local hotel boardrooms in Toronto. Students were dispatched to Toronto by employers who easily justified the expense by the results their employees were able to demonstrate on the job. It was reinforced by the highly qualified instructors and the demanding standards that had been set by the Centre. Students soon learned that they could apply the knowledge from the courses directly to the work environment. Improved work performance was quickly noticed by senior management.

Encouraged by this success in the 1970's and 80's, Humber staff realized that there were other opportunities that were available by building on the success of the CEB program and capitalizing on its rapidly expanding student database. The best, and most cost-effective, way to increase business is to serve existing, satisfied customers and then offer additional products that respond to their needs. This naturally required a solid understanding of the pension and benefits marketplace, the customer knowledge gaps and an established ability to "deliver the goods". Two new specialty programs were introduced in the late 1980s, targeted specifically at former CEB clients who needed to keep employee skills current and who were willing to return for more specialized education.

With the arrival of the 1990's came some harsh realities in the pension and benefits marketplace. In spite of soaring stock markets, the numbers of private pension plans continued to dramatically decline and new plans were virtually non-existent. Tax legislation in Canada had been introduced to "level the playing field" and the fallout from the pension reform decade of the 1980's was becoming

more evident. New tax legislation and regulations were being introduced across Canada and this was creating a challenge for employers, but a windfall for the Centre. Viewed as an opportunity, the Centre immediately responded. Using feedback from both customers and the industry, two new programs, the Pension Plan Administration Certificate (PPAC) and the Pension Fund Investment Certificate (PFIC) were developed and successfully launched. These certificates were advanced level training programs that were designed to respond to the rapidly changing demands of the marketplace and the need for plan sponsors to comply with a plethora of new legislation or face stiff financial penalties. These changes also presented an opportunity to introduce "free market pricing".

The market changes brought about in the 90's resulted in alterations to the Centre's business strategy. It became increasingly evident that new product lines and pricing approaches were needed. With the backing of the Advisory Council, the Centre adopted a strategy of "taking education to the market" and unbundling its programs. It began to promote its public seminars to employers as flexible, modularized units that could be delivered on their premises as an employer/employee investment in co-operative learning. This new approach provided flexible delivery and timing to suit individual corporate schedules. Employers quickly realized value in the approach resulting from economies of scale. Higher numbers of enrolments were now possible, which opened up learning opportunities for other employees who might not have been approved for off-site training involving hotel and travel expenses. Gains were also realized through a reduction in lost productivity time utilizing flexible schedules and the elimination of direct costs such as hotel and travel expenses. Instructional staff continued to be drawn from the industry. Although direct course and instructor costs rose quite significantly, customer acceptance of the increased fees, together with more tailored learning solutions, increased gross revenues and net profits for the Centre significantly.

Revenue and the Centre's growth have continued in the 2000's with the introduction of the new Trustee Development Program (TDP). TDP was designed to meet an increasing need for Trustee education in Canada and sought to capitalize on the Centre's reputation for quality pension knowledge and programs that had been established over the previous three decades. The model used to develop the program reflected the specific requirements of the Trustee target market with regulator and plan sponsor feedback and content drawn from the Centre's successful, advanced-level Pension Plan Administration Certificate (PPAC). A series of one-day modules was built with a national audience in mind, that could also accommodate local on-site delivery. Each module reflects the specific legislation of the jurisdiction in which it is being provided, which enables us to provide learning solutions in most jurisdictions across Canada.

Quality standards are maintained through careful selection and on-going monitoring of instructional staff by the Director of the Centre, as well as rigorous

testing and assessment standards. To successfully complete a certificate program, students must complete a written exam that varies in length from one to two and a half hours, with an average of at least 70%. Testimony of our success is the fact that the core content and standards have received industry recognition and support as evidenced by the PPAC pension program having been designated as a “condition of employment” by major employers across Canada.

### **CEB’s Success Factors**

Through more than 30 years of operation, the CEB has built its success on three major factors as outlined below:

- **Market Driven**

Based on the unique business model which CEB has developed and sustained, new learning products are continuously identified, developed and provided to the pension and benefits industry utilizing “best of breed” industry experts. This results in a more knowledgeable and professional workforce to serve the industry. Furthermore, CEB has built credibility and confidence in the industry such that CEB now offers several professionally recognized, industry certifications based on its course content.

- **Considered a Part of the Pension and Benefits Industry**

CEB is perceived as a credible knowledge source and expert for pension and benefits learning solutions by the industry. Building on 30 years of success, the CEB is now recognized as an integral member of the pension and benefits industry in Canada and thus, there are no degrees of separation to contend with as there might be with a typical service provider.

- **Developed Competitive Advantage**

CEB has established significant competitive advantage through developing depth of market knowledge and expertise in the pension and benefits field, as well as breadth of niche market coverage with its ability to provide solutions nationally. Humber’s reputation as a value-added learning solutions provider also builds and reinforces the Centre’s credibility. These features serve to make it a more difficult proposition for potential competitors to enter the market or to gain a significant market share foothold.

The Centre for Employee Benefits’ strength is in its broad-based expertise in a niche market, buttressed by extensive partnerships with clients and industry stakeholders, focused on providing value-added solutions for the industry. CEB has enjoyed three profitable decades of market success built on these sustaining principles and key success factors and now, is recognized as Canada’s leading pension and benefits learning solutions provider.

### **Comedy College: Unique in North America**

Humber is the first post-secondary institution to offer a full-fledged program in Comedy Writing and Performance, consisting of courses in sketch, stand-up,



improvisation, physical comedy and script writing. We did so because we believed that comedians have a hard time making it out in the harsh world of entertainment and because there was much craft to learn before one could become a comedy writer or performer. What we say around here is that “we can’t make people funny, but we can make them funnier.” It’s an important distinction because we don’t instill talent in any of our creative and performing arts students; we merely shape it and develop it. The other reason we undertook the teaching of comedy was that Canadian soil has been fertile for the cultivation of comedians. We’re observers, voyeurs. We look like our American neighbors, dress like them, sound like them, sing their songs, live much like them, but we are not participants in American culture, and outsiders often turn funny. The list of Canadian comedians and comedy creators is impressive: Mike Myers, Dan Aykroyd, Catherine O’Hara, Martin Short, Jim Carrey, Lorne Michaels and Ivan Reitman, to name a few. And many of these comedians, along with many American comedians, have become friends of this unique program.

The first chair of the program’s advisory board, for instance, was Steve Allen. Other advisors are *SCTV* alumni Rick Moranis, Eugene Levy, Joe Flaherty and Dave Thomas. We’ve had visits by Carl Reiner, Chevy Chase, Joan Rivers, Colin Mochrie and *Seinfeld* producer George Shapiro to thrill and educate our students, all of them generously donating their time to give something back to the upcoming generation.

We launched the program in 1996 as a summer workshop to see whether or not there was a market out there, but we founded the program believing that, to attract people, we needed industry support. We asked a Canadian comedy impresario, Mark Breslin, who owns Yuk Yuk’s, the country’s largest chain of stand-up clubs, to help get us started, and he managed to attract Steve Allen as our first big guest. On the faculty were *SCTV*’s Joe Flaherty and Eugene Levy, as well as Anne Beatts, two-time Emmy Award-winning writer of *Saturday Night Live*, Lorne Frohman, Emmy Award-winning writer for Richard Pryor, Jay Leno and Dame Edna, and others to teach in our week-long classes. We found we appealed to people who harboured a secret desire to try comedy, but never gave it a chance. We attracted students from all walks of life and from all over our country, some from the United States, several from Europe and one even from Japan. The program was a resounding success in the Canadian press, and so we ventured a little further and created a full, two-year undergraduate program directed at students coming out of high school, and a one-year post-graduate program for people with some experience under their belts. Today, hundreds of applicants line up at our door to audition and to show us their scripts, and we select only those we think have that special spark. Already some of our graduates in this relatively new program have gone on to national success. Both Nikki Payne and Jason Rouse have won Gemini Awards for outstanding TV specials. Levi MacDougall and Ryan Belleville have won Canadian Comedy Awards, and the list goes on. A couple of dozen of our graduates have lucrative careers in commercials, at Second City and in stand-up clubs.

Mark Breslin has provided his famous Yuk Yuk's stand-up club in downtown Toronto to our students every Tuesday night, so they can ply their comedy wares in a public forum. Our students have taken over the clubs of the city—the Rivoli, Clinton's, Second City's Tim Sims Theater—to demonstrate their sketch skills. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has bought radio sketches performed by our students, and the Comedy Network is about to buy "Humber Comedy Shorts", two-minute video sketches, to air between programs. We've even taken the show on the road. So many people in far flung cities called to say they could not benefit from the unusual education we were providing that Joe Flaherty and his brother David Flaherty, who also wrote for *SCTV* and co-created *Maniac Mansion*, along with Mark Breslin, began offering weekend workshops in Montreal, Halifax, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. They were welcomed with open arms by eager, fledgling comedians and by the communities themselves. Feature articles appeared in the major dailies as well as interviews on local television and radio stations. Joe Flaherty was hailed as the conquering hero, returned at last to his home.

And then *The New York Times* came calling in the Fall of 2003. The reporter wanted to know why Canadians were funnier than Americans. He spent several days at Humber and ended up writing a feature article on "Comedy College". It was then that lightning struck again. The phones began to ring. *60 Minutes* asked to do a piece on the program. German and Belgian TV networks called. The BBC wants to film a feature documentary. And Merv Griffin Entertainment, along with Creative Artists Agency, expressed interest in producing a feature film and a situation comedy, inspired by the idea of comedy college, and a reality series based at the college itself. Creative Artists began pitching the idea to its own stable of directors and producers: Lorne Michaels, Ivan Reitman, Harold Ramis, Ron Howard and Brian Grazer. The reality show, already under development, would mean that 26 or 27 of our graduates would enter college again in a kind of master class, hone their talents still further, let the cameras into their homes to see where all the comedy comes from, and they would compete to become finalists in the way of *American Idol*. These six or seven finalists would get their own national special and, ultimately, become a troupe around which a sketch show would be created, following in the tradition of *Saturday Night Live* and *SCTV*. Merv Griffin prides himself on having introduced Robin Williams, Woody Allen and a host of young comedians to a wider television audience. He wants to do the same again here. The venture could bring unprecedented attention to this unusual program and it could vault a dozen of our graduates onto the world stage. It could bring great acclaim to Humber, and royalties could help in times of declining government funding for post secondary education. They could get us going on some projects we would not otherwise be able to afford, such as a performing arts and entertainment centre.

In describing the reaction around the table when one of the senior partners at Creative Artists Agency took *The New York Times* article about us in to his

meeting, Jonathan Levin said, "Eureka! Of course, comedy college. Why aren't other colleges doing it? It's so simple, so obvious." And that is the way in which this program has been received by local residents and by the larger national and international communities. It is arguably one of the three or four best-known college programs in Canada. It stands a chance of becoming the Juilliard of comedy because it was the first out of the gate, and it is a testament to the innovative environment out of which it sprang. While it can be argued that few institutions would have encouraged the development of such a program – even at Humber people chuckled (for the wrong reason) at the mere mention of it - it was, in fact, conceptualized and grounded in the same way as any "normal" academic Humber program. Moreover, some of the early critics are now wondering what sort of lustre they might add to their own schools to make them shine as brightly and gain the kind of attention comedy attracts. Of course, it's difficult for Wireless Technology or Supply Chain Management to bring in the stars or the press in the same way, nor should they be expected to, but applications to Humber are at an all-time high, and programs like Comedy Writing and Performance help to brighten unrelated programs too. It's been a valuable addition to the School of Creative And Performing Arts at Humber, and a valuable destination for class clowns whom, until now, had nowhere else to go. Imagine a place where all the class clowns have been assembled together in one class. You'll find such a class at Humber.

### **Motorcycle Rider Training: The World's Largest**

The Motorcycle Rider Training Service was developed by Humber in 1982 and has since evolved to become the largest and most recognized operation in the industry worldwide. The service has enjoyed impressive growth and development over nearly a quarter century with enrollments growing from 150 learners per season, to the current base of over 3,000 learners per year.

Although fashions have changed, styles of motorcycles transformed and learner demographics progressed, Humber's commitment to public safety and superior skills development has not faltered. The 1970's decade was very instrumental in the growth and development of the motorcycle industry, as enthusiasm for the sport was on the rise, as were the number of accidents and fatalities. Motorcycle riding was dominated by primarily younger, male, risk-taking riders, which led directly to the need for safety training. The Ontario Safety League (OSL), operating under the auspices of the Canada Safety Council (CSC), sought credible providers with strong and ethical reputations to deliver their training. Humber developed a solution which responded to the industry's needs and quickly became the leader in the industry as part of an overall Canada-wide safety initiative.

The motorcycle training operation, which is part of Humber's Transportation Training Centre business unit, has had a very successful track record, generating fee for service revenues, which have resulted in financial contributions to Humber, as well as net profits. The Centre operates as a financially self-sustaining business unit. Fees are charged to learners to maintain and

periodically replace a fleet of training motorcycles, compensate Instructors, as well as develop new learning products. Fees are set on a market basis with consideration given to operating costs as well as the margins necessary to support current operations and future expansion.

A key success factor for the Service has been the staffs' commitment to continuously develop relationships with major industry partners. The success of these partnerships is fundamental to the ongoing relevance and market responsiveness of Motorcycle Rider Training at Humber. The strength of sound business relationships, such as with Yamaha Motor Canada, has enabled Humber to provide motorcycle training at their site location, participate in joint industry marketing ventures and take advantage of trade discounts, resulting in both increased profile and operational cost savings.

The Service is dedicated to providing a learning environment that is conducive to learning objectives and to enabling learners to achieve a sense of accomplishment through the learning process. This is accomplished by ensuring that a friendly and competent staff, all dedicated and active motorcyclists, is always on hand to ensure that the environment is safe and appropriate to the learning process. All motorcycle rider learners have two common goals - learning and safety.

#### **“Gearing Up” Learning Solution**

The Gearing Up learning solution provides a novice, who may have never been on a motorcycle before, with the opportunity to experience the sport of motorcycling, while under the watchful supervision and guidance of experienced Instructors. The training is progressive and organized in a manner that enables learners to grasp the basic concepts before moving on to more advanced skills necessary to ride on their own in real traffic situations. The learning experience is both educational and fun for participants.

The Gearing Up product has been complemented with additional training modules to provide learners with on-going learning opportunities and has also developed the repeat business of loyal customers so important for the Centre. Alumni now have additional reasons to return to the Motorcycle Centre to achieve licencing upgrades, refresher training, mechanical maintenance skills, advanced training and a host of customized training designed to meet their specific needs.

Humber provides part-time employment to over 100 Motorcycle Instructors. These instructors have the option to grow with the business unit by advancing their positions to Senior and Chief Instructor status. This progression is available to those staff who have the requisite teaching experience and demonstrated leadership skills necessary to meet the Centre's standards. Humber has enjoyed the commitment of a very loyal group of seasoned Motorcycle Instructors, several of whom have remained for more than twenty years.

### **“M2 – Exit Learning Solution”**

One of the Centre’s strategies has been to capitalize on major market opportunities by providing learners with the opportunity to graduate to the full Ontario class M motorcycle licence.

In 1995, the province of Ontario implemented a graduated licencing system that places restrictions on a new rider for a number of years. Between 18 months, and prior to the expiration of the temporary licence in 5 years, the rider must advance to the full M class licence. Through its long-term relationship with the Ministry of Transportation, Humber was the first provider/partner, aside from the Ministry, to offer testing for the final Ontario motorcycle rider licence. The Centre designed and submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Transportation and subsequently received approval to provide specialized motorcycle rider training and testing for eligible learners. This initiative proved to an extremely valuable service to the public by providing both an alternative licence testing location, as well as making a positive contribution to overall traffic safety in the Greater Toronto Area.

Humber has become synonymous with motorcycle safety and the training service has been operating at capacity with the licensing service since its inception in 1997. By the end of the 2004 training season, Humber will have provided final licence testing to over 2,000 riders. Market research has shown that consumer demand will continue to grow and the Centre has a strategy in place to continue to meet this demand through both site and staff development. Learning solutions such as M2 Exit have demonstrated that there are still many areas for market growth and new profits, without the need to necessarily make capital investments.

The significant market success of M2 Exit has demonstrated that there is significant interest in more advanced riding programs. “Pro-Rider” is a course that was designed by Humber to take learners’ basic skill sets, utilizing their own motorcycles, to a more advanced level. This is accomplished with the aid of specially trained instructors working with smaller groups. There are new training service opportunities to explore with repeat customers and experienced riders to further build Humber’s reputation and profile in the motorcycle training world. Recognizing market opportunities and proactively developing them on an on-going basis ensures that the Centre will continue to remain at the forefront of motorcycle rider training.

### **Public Safety**

Professional rider training plays a critical role in the improvement of public safety, reduction of accidents and increase in traffic awareness. Motorcycle learners are

direct beneficiaries as their knowledge is broadened through learning, and road instincts are developed through extensive training and repetitive practice. Proper physical and mental preparation and respect for the realities of the road are enforced in our classroom training. The learner then has the chance to practice these skills on the training range under the direct supervision of professional training staff.

The overwhelming majority of motorcycle learners also drive other vehicles. Many of the skills learned on two-wheels are also transferable to four-wheels and have improved learners' overall driving habits. Developing a stronger appreciation for blind spot checks, gaps between vehicles, evasive maneuvers and recognizing potentially dangerous road situations, are examples of improved public safety. This example demonstrates that Humber, through this training service, is also contributing to the broader public safety of its community.

An aging population, which has more disposable income, is having a major impact on the face of the new rider. Motorcycle technology has evolved and today machines are capable of incredible speed, superior braking and tremendous agility. The requirement for riders' capabilities to manage these machines has also grown proportionately. The motorcycling world has seen the average new rider transform from a late teen - early twenties male, to a blend of mid-thirties to fifties baby boomers. The mature learner base, which has demonstrated a willingness to devote the time and resources necessary to achieve higher skill levels, also has produced in an increased demand for Humber's educational services.

As a sport, Motorcycle riding has had its ups and downs through the years in terms of public perception, portrayal in the media and influencers such as insurance rates and licencing changes. Despite these challenges, market demand continues to grow. The Centre intends to maintain and grow its position as the market leader in the Motorcycle Rider training industry and continue to listen to its customers and respond directly to their requirements with new learning solutions.

### **Value Add for Humber**

The motorcycle training service has provided Humber with a number of value added benefits, such as an increased profile within the community, the industry, as well as making a significant contribution to Humber's bottom line.

Training services are conducted on Humber's campus on weekends and weeknights from late March through mid-October. Learners who may not ordinarily visit Humber, are exposed to the many opportunities that Humber has to offer. The on-site training also reduces operating expenses and enables learners to take advantage of Humber's amenities.

The industry credibility and success of the motorcycle service was instrumental in the development and launch of the Transportation Training Centre, which opened in the spring of 1991. Humber's Transportation Training Centre is now recognized in the transportation sector as the premier provider of quality commercial driver training. This service provides learners with the ability to pursue careers in a variety of capacities in the trucking industry. The centre has grown to include the training and licensing of in-car driving instructors and continues to develop relationships with many corporate clients such as Fed Ex.

Due to market success and plans for future growth and development, the Motorcycle Training Centre as well as the Transportation Training Centre will be relocating to larger facilities in June 2004, to better meet the needs of our learners and the industry at large.

## **Acting as Broker to Solve a Corporate Learning Challenge**

### **The Partnership**

DaimlerChrysler's key position in the global automotive industry has long been attributed to the knowledge and expertise of its workforce. It is no surprise then that continuing education and corporate training is a well-supported initiative in the company.

In 1997, DaimlerChrysler established a new policy that required all management employees to possess degrees. As a longstanding Humber corporate client, DaimlerChrysler asked Humber to assist them in meeting this target, and devised a tuition reimbursement program for their staff. Humber has been its corporate training provider for some years, so it was natural for DaimlerChrysler to approach us to help them address this challenge that they faced together with approximately 40 of their management employees.

At that time Humber did not have the authority to grant degrees, but had developed a favourable reputation within the university sector for upholding high academic standards, a proven ability to develop and deliver curriculum at the baccalaureate level, and an entrepreneurial spirit and track record that challenged the traditional boundaries for Ontario Colleges. Because of its highly developed mechanism for transferring external credits to its degrees, the British Columbia Open University was asked to join the partnership. BCOU was considered an appropriate partner due to its full membership with the Association of Universities & Colleges of Canada, and as a division of the former Open Learning Agency.

### **Key Aspects of the Learning Solution**

The program architecture was woven around four critical components:

- an innovative approach to PLA (prior learning assessment)
- flexible on-site course delivery that accommodated shift changes
- a tight articulation agreement between Humber and BCOU

- a generous employee training tuition re-imbusement program for DaimlerChrysler employees.

Employees in the management group at the Brampton Assembly plant were invited to take part in a unique learning experience. College-level courses in General Arts and Science and Business, with full degree transferability, were offered on-site, while degree-level courses were taught online by BCOU.

However, prior to in-house training, post secondary academic courses and life experiences needed to be assessed under the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) process. The PLA process was very labor intensive and, for learners who had not had previous experience with the documentation of PLA credits, both time-consuming and frustrating. As a result of lessons learned in this process, both Humber and BCOU implemented changes to their respective PLA processes.

By signing an articulation agreement between BCOU and Humber, learners were granted degree credits at both lower and upper levels, and Humber began to teach articulated courses on-site at the plant while BCOU delivered courses by distance education.

### **Honest Brokering pays Dividends**

Both on-site and distance education courses began in April 1999, with 40 employees taking a combination of Liberal Arts and Business courses leading to a Humber certificate (30 credits) or diploma (60 credits) in General Arts and Science. These credits, when successfully completed, would then be transferable to a BCOU degree in General Studies (120 credits). Courses were flexibly structured to accommodate employees' shifts and thus promoted access to learning. Nine class sections run three 12 week semesters per year, with six faculty members from Humber providing instruction onsite at DaimlerChrysler. Courses are offered at up to three different times each week to accommodate rotating shift schedules.

Since BCOU has a residency requirement of only 6 credits of 120 required for the Bachelor of General Studies degree, most employees take the majority of their credits onsite. In response to the increased demand for advanced-level credits, Humber initially developed six new courses for degree credit. The development of Humber courses for advanced level credit has continued throughout the life of the program to keep up with ongoing demand. Both DaimlerChrysler employees and university-transfer students in regular Humber diploma programs are now taking these courses.

The curriculum was initially developed by faculty and administrators from both educational partners based on feedback from DaimlerChrysler's Human Resources officials at the plant. As the courses progressed, however, learner feedback became the major determinant of which courses would be provided. With few exceptions, learner evaluation feedback was extremely positive.



With the program's expansion in January 2001 to include hourly production employees, it became necessary to install a portable classroom at the Bramalea site to accommodate the larger numbers of learners. As part of DaimlerChrysler's ongoing support for the initiative, they provided all heating, electrical service as well as maintenance. In January 2002, the program expanded again to the DaimlerChrysler Etobicoke Casting Plant where an additional 500 employees became eligible to enroll. In addition, other DaimlerChrysler employees from office locations across the GTA are now participating in the program, and a third onsite location at DaimlerChrysler's Mississauga Administration office has recently been added.

The success of this initiative is clear: The original agreement signed between DaimlerChrysler and Humber, which had a completion date of 2004, has been extended to Spring 2005.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Classes were kept small to build a sense of group identity, cohesiveness and uniqueness as well as to encourage continuity and the integration of diverse curricular and co-curricular experiences and to counteract the isolation that many learners feel. In spite of working in a highly competitive environment, learners in Cohort One began to co-operate in achieving group tasks, transforming their environment into one where ideas were more freely shared. As cheerleaders for their group's success, learners helped each other to learn difficult concepts and to complete tasks.

Learners reported learning concepts, which helped them in their personal as well as their professional lives. One of the learners' major goals had been achieved – that of obtaining a well-rounded education. Based on their new academic confidence, learners were able to succeed with challenging distance education courses, which provided much less structure than classroom instruction. Learner retention, which could have become a problem with adult learners who had been out of school for some time, or who had not had previous positive learning experiences, never became an issue. By building a strong sense of group cohesiveness, learners persevered.

An external review of the Program completed by former deans of two universities and a senior DaimlerChrysler manager confirmed that learner academic achievement was high, easily comparable to and sometimes surpassing student achievement levels in traditional college and university programs.

### **Entrepreneurship Contributes to More than the Bottom Line**

What began as a response to a learning challenge faced by a corporate partner yielded far more benefit to Humber than the revenue generated through the tuition. Seeing an emerging need for degree level education with an applied

focus, Humber has positioned itself to extend its array of learning solutions by providing polytechnic type bachelors degrees.

The DaimlerChrysler project became a real life pilot that enabled Humber to experiment with many of the academic and support systems required to provide this higher level of education. A Degree Council at Humber was formed for the purpose of establishing standards that would be expected of all degree programs, providing support to faculty teams developing curriculum and ultimately for recommending approval of courses that would be delivered at the degree level.

While it was never a stated goal for the project, it was recognized that because Humber simultaneously sought to secure the opportunity to grant its own degrees, partnerships with accredited universities, and demonstrated acceptance of Humber faculty and curriculum by those universities, could form an essential component of Humber's strategy.

In the intervening time, Humber has become the polytechnic institute of choice for life long learners by providing learning solutions appropriate to a wide range of career development stages. Initiatives like DaimlerChrysler challenged Humber's management to introduce learner records systems that provide the foundational support for all types of instruction. Humber is currently involved in a major review of these systems; the lessons learned supporting DaimlerChrysler are proving invaluable to that review and will result in systems that are much more accommodating of corporate clients' requirements.

### **Implications for Future Applications**

With the support of DaimlerChrysler, the initiative has been extended to three plant locations in the Greater Toronto Area, and to date more than 180 employees have participated and more than 75 academic credentials have been awarded. The experience gained by Humber has played an important role in helping to change the collective institutional attitude to one that is more open to developing learning opportunities that do not conform to the traditional on-site classroom based instruction.

While Humber has a long and successful history working with corporate clients and now has a well-developed PLA process, the success of the DaimlerChrysler project has provided the encouragement to more aggressively seek corporate partners who could benefit from customized degree completion programs for their workforce. We are actively working with several other organizations, such as the Ontario Provincial Police, to develop a diploma/degree completion program that builds on what we have learned with DaimlerChrysler. The additional learning models we now have at our disposal, coupled with increasing client requirements for higher level credentials, will enable Humber to channel its entrepreneurial 'know how' into a variety of new initiatives.

## **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurial activity at Humber is rooted in the environmental pushes and pulls that have permanently changed how colleges do business. But it is more than that. Humber's entrepreneurial culture demands an evolving and open environment where "cookie cutter" solutions are not acceptable to solve either the requirements of the ever-changing economy or the shifting demands of contemporary learners. While Humber uses a fluid process based on solid principles to take advantage of emerging opportunities, it also recognizes that it must develop unique solutions for specific situations. In that context, and by employing broad, lateral thinking, we believe the only limitation to Humber's entrepreneurial activities is its own imagination and willingness to try.

As Humber engages in entrepreneurial-based activities, it has learned from its successes and failures; and it has used its experiential base to develop and apply new techniques to future cases. We know it is not just about Humber. We have learned to ask "what is in it for our potential partner?" regardless of whether that partner is one individual or an entire sector of the economy. Focusing on the expectations of both sides of the partnership ensures mutual benefit rather than a zero sum win. This approach also builds trust-based relationships and the sustainability of new partnerships over the long term. Certainly Humber's experience has taught us that "quick hits" tend to be short term and, generally, only once, while carefully nurtured, long term solutions can ensure future and expanding gains.

It is clear that funding from public sources will not increase significantly in the foreseeable future. Healthy, thriving colleges must both sustain, and, preferably, increase their resourcefulness and net worth in order to ensure adequate revenues, viability of programming, and the ability to move into new ventures with the confidence that institutional stability is not threatened.