

THE MACKLIN BUSINESS INSTITUTE AND CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP at Montgomery College



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MC/Macklin SIFE Team Preparing for Regionals

Competing in the annual SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) Competition is a spring rite of passage for Macklin students. This year follows tradition with 12 Macklin Business Institute students preparing to compete in the regional SIFE competition in Philadelphia this March.

An international nonprofit organization, SIFE promotes community outreach among students through educational projects that create economic opportunity for others. This year's MC/SIFE team has created four projects targeted on improving financial literacy among Montgomery College's diverse student population.

For starters, the MC/Macklin SIFE team will conduct resume and financial workshops, and a special seminar, "the Classroom Café," focusing on new-business start up and operations. As student managers of their own on-campus business, the MBI Café, the team will have plenty of real-world scenarios to illustrate successful—and not so successful—business strategies and outcomes. In addition, the team is creating training modules and a marketing "notebook" for future Café employees. These materials will significantly reduce time spent each semester learning the business.

Through several on-campus events featuring local business experts, the team hopes to enlighten fellow students, many of them non-native, about opportunities

available to them in business. Slated are speakers from the World Bank, a local franchise entrepreneur, and a CPA on topics of business ethics, financial planning, and globalization. These events will be open to the entire Montgomery College community.

After Philadelphia, regional winners advance to the SIFE national competition, held in Dallas in May. "Regardless of whether they win this competition, this has been a positive learning experience for the students," said Steve Lang, MBI director and the Sam M. Walton Free Enterprise Fellow for the team. "They are gaining experience writing project proposals, managing and implementing projects, and working as a team, all while having a positive influence on their community."

Macklin students have participated in SIFE competitions since the MBI program's inaugural year in 2001. That year, the team won first runner-up at the regional level, with the added distinction: "Rookie of the Year." In 2003, MC/SIFE team won first-place at the regional level by mentoring inner-city entrepreneurs in conjunction with Washington Jobs Partnership, followed by another first-place win in 2004. In 2003, MBI transfer students established a new SIFE team at University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business to continue projects initiated while at Montgomery College.

Soldiering through College

As a Maryland National Guard Reservist, Staff Sergeant Sarah Vandy spends weekends diagnosing ailing HUMMVs, managing 18 soldiers, and delegating equipment/vehicle repairs in the Vehicle Maintenance Shop at Ellicott City Armory. Once on active duty—Vandy served in Iraq, Bosnia, and Germany during her seven-year commitment—she now spends her week days as Macklin scholar.

Q: You were very successful in your military career. Was it hard for you to leave that behind to start a college career?

A: It was a big decision. I found success in the military and moved up quickly, however, my education was always a priority for me. Soon after enrolling in Montgomery College I learned about the MBI Scholars program. I immediately knew that it would challenge me, and I was eager to be a part of the program.

Q: What does someone with your experience bring to the MBI program?

A: I feel like I bring creativity and experience, though I've found that I can't tackle things at school the same way I tackle them in the military. I want my peers to be receptive to me. I'm learning to modify my military style in the business world.

Q: You've completed one semester of the MBI program. What has the program done for you thus far, and what do you hope to achieve by graduation day?

A: The name "Macklin Business Institute" opens doors and provides opportunities that otherwise wouldn't be there, and I am incredibly grateful to be a part of that. I'm learning so much right now. The



Staff Sergeant Sarah Vandy

hands-on, real-world experience is great. By graduation day, I want to be able to take what I've learned in the classroom and the hands-on experience and successfully apply all of it to the business world.

Q: Your former Company Commander said: "Her leadership and character were absolutely essential for the success of our mission..." and you've been described as an "outstanding citizen" by an MC Professor. How does that make you feel?

A: It feels good and energizes me to keep on working hard.

Vandy's military record speaks for itself and she's proving to be as successful and effective in her academic career in the Macklin Business Institute.

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