

Early in 1996 I drove with a colleague named Joe Scully to a small business park in Irving, TX. We were to attend a meeting between our department chair, Dr. Ron Hasty, and several business people. Dr. Hasty told us he wanted us there to listen to the dialog and to observe. Years later I figured out he wanted to prove to the gentlemen that he actually had faculty members who could find the business park.

At the meeting Dr. Hasty discussed with the gentlemen in attendance the concept of an academic program that would cater to the logistics function of industry. My recollection of logistics was as a military function some historians contend contributed greatly to the allied victory in WWII. I failed to realize it encompassed a bit more territory and served as a competitive differentiator employed by dominant firms like Wal-Mart to achieve industry leader status.

Dr. Hasty discussed with the gentlemen what would be the components (coursing, scope, and desirable student background characteristics) of the program and the students to whom it was targeted. He also managed to get the group to put a price tag on the value of a product that would emerge from the degree program in logistics.

An unusual aspect of Dr. Hasty's skills set is his ability to get a client to make a real financial commitment to a venue. Within the next year Dr. Hasty and the gentlemen in the room managed to amass one million dollars under the auspices of the Texas Logistics Education Foundation. The foundation awarded scholarships and aided the program in many other ways.

I asked Dr. Hasty why a 401C3 foundation was needed. He indicated the foundation protected the funds from being swept in by a dean, provost, or other university critter. Dr. Hasty had been a dean of business and understood such behaviors. We were incredibly lucky to have him.

Well, Dr. Scully moved on out of UNT to other pastures. Dr. Hasty cobbled together a curriculum for the logistics students, recruited faculty and courses for the program, and went in search of a real logistician.

He located a fellow down in Mobile, Alabama. From what I understand, Dr. Hasty called the fellow several times, and ultimately convinced him to come on board as the first official logistics professor.

Being the first official professor for a new academic program and holding untenured in status requires a pretty resilient personality and a rugged demeanor. Dr. Ted Farris fit the bill. As a high school hurdler he ran through the hurdles rather than jumping them. And that was how he handled the task of building in coursing and overcoming problems. Ted thrived on adversity.

Internally, not all faculty in the Department of Marketing ('Logistics' was added to the title some years later) were in favor of Dr. Farris, Dr. Hasty, or the idea of a program in logistics. So a bit of academic chicanery was practiced by a skilled practitioner.

Despite the obstacles, Dr. Hasty, Dr. Farris, Dr. Pelton, and a group of allied colleagues were able to recruit students. A good number of students moved from the Accounting program and the Information Systems program to logistics. I contend that a logistician is an accountant with a personality.

The program grew. Dr. Hasty organized an event for the logistics community called the Forum. Forums were held at a large hotel in the Metroplex. Each forum featured sessions addressing problems faced by logistics firms. Presenters were industry professionals or in some cases Dr. Farris. Firms paid so much a head for the event. Each event featured a keynote luncheon speaker. And, of course, students from the program attended the events and visited with the professionals. Initially, Dr. Hasty used funding from the logistics community provided through the Center to pay keynote speakers such as former general Gus Pagonis. Speakers could run as high as \$10k. Today the forums have been replaced by other, smaller events.

To recruit students, Dr. Hasty and Dr. Farris spoke to large marketing classes, sales classes and other gatherings of students where majors could be derived. A selling point of the logistics program was the unique opportunity for students to intern with a firm in the industry. Interns work 20 hours per week in a rotation based learning program. Internships paid at least as much as most college student jobs. And firms use internship as a screening device. I refer to an internship as akin to dating. Both student and firm size each other up. It is a professional exposure that cannot be replicated in any other way. The program leveraged the location of UNT.

Students appreciated the opportunity. Soon, seventy percent of interns were being offered jobs with the provider. Fifty percent of students took those jobs. Firms saved up to thirty percent of first year salary in placement fees charged by headhunters. Graduates walked into a job that is in their field.

In 2002 or thereabouts Dr. Pohlen joined the logistics faculty. Then Dr. Swartz joined the group. Then Dr. Manuj and so on. About 2004, Dr. Pohlen recruited several USAF doctoral students from AFIT. These fellows served as the original logistics doctoral students. And each of these fellows is now on faculty somewhere, on active duty with the Air Force, or working as a government contractor.

Today when I work a new student or transfer student orientation a good part of my time is spent explaining to parents and students what is logistics. People in Dallas/Fort Worth understand the career potential of the field. Now they want to know how to get their child into it.

UNT is the dominant provider of logistics personnel in the Texas market. C.H. Robinson Worldwide employs or has employed full-time over 240 UNT Logistics program graduates—according to Paul Moline, one of their long time managers. Bell Aircraft has at least nine graduates on board. Sysco Foodservice, Burlington Northern Railway (BNSF), Transplace and literally hundreds of firms employ our products.

The UNT Logistics Program is one of four recognized as a provider by the Intermodal Association of North America. The academic faculty in logistics are rated among the top researchers in the field of Logistics. Dr. Farris has been recognized by the body that accredits business schools(AACSB) as an innovative educator for an international student exercise he developed. Rumor has it that the Pittsburg Challenge, a college bowl type of logistics contest, was concluded because the UNT team won it six of the last twelve years of its existence. Of course that is just a rumor—but a nice one indeed.

Looking back to the spring meeting in 1996 I attended with Dr. Scully, I am amazed and proud to be indirectly associated with the program in Logistics at my institution—the University of North Texas. It has generated considerable and favorable attention to my college and to my university from constituencies that matter. And it has enriched the lives of its graduates, their firms, and their clients.

As a marketing professor I understand that Dr. Hasty, another marketing professor, designed and executed a successful product launch for the program. Drs. Farris, Pohlen, Swartz, Manuj, Randall, Nowicki, Sauser, Kincaid, (Mr.) Joiner and all our supporting faculty allied departments built and continue to build a product that consistently exceeds customers' expectations. And the board of the program, all of whom are customers, continue to provide feedback that allows us to improve the product (e.g., the Onboarding Program). So we have achieved symbiosis with a profession and an industry.

Watching the logistics program begin, grow, thrive, and become dominant and well known in both industry and academics has been a fairytale experience for me. Sometimes I must mentally pinch myself to see that all the things related really occurred and continue to occur.

Okay. That's the story.

Thanks, Dr. Hasty.

JKS