

NEWS

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Studying to be an entrepreneur can be an expensive task, but a profitable one.

The expenses, for instance, not only include the cost of tuition at The Evergreen State College. But, in the case of students in the Minority Economic Development academic program, some outlay of private **capital** to launch their business careers.

The profits, just beginning to roll in for some of the young business students, vary according to the size of the initial outlay and the success of the economic endeavor undertaken.

Take, for example, two students who opened a small store in the college residence halls to serve their neighbors after hours. Dubbed the "Synovia House of Pleasure," the miniature grocery outlet--open seven days a week from 8 p.m. to midnight--carries two kinds of hand-scooped ice cream, plus the usual array of snack items, candy and cigarettes---all at a cost lower than the ever-handy vending machines.

The business began operating early in Fall Quarter. By December the two "bosses" had to hire two extra hands and seek bigger quarters to handle a rapidly-increasing demand for their goods. By January, they'll add six more "delicious" flavors to their ice cream menu when they open their new, larger headquarters.

Or, examine the more ambitious case of the retired military man interested in constructing apartments in the Tacoma area. In three months he has raised more than \$100,000. He figures he'll need an additional \$200,000 to build the 20-unit complex he's envisioned and his professor has no doubt his student will succeed.

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Dick Nichols, Director
Information Services

Then there's the Seattlite who wants to market soul food in the gourmet section of your neighborhood supermarket's freezer.

He's currently seeking a \$10,000 grant from a federal agency to test market frozen soul food dinners that will appeal to the sophisticated Pacific Northwest palate. Once he's raised the money and tested the market, he'll tackle the task of establishing a "profitable" minority-owned and operated business that creates employment opportunities for non-whites in the inner city of Seattle.

Other students have successfully opened the college's first night club--complete with ethnic menus, jazz music and--by State permit--alcoholic beverages; they've launched a consignment shop for arts, crafts and clothing which offers high-quality goods for low overhead prices. Another has established a silk screen business for posters, teashirts and recreational equipment, while a fourth student has created a "Favorite Foods" wholesale grocery business.

Tying all these separate ventures together is a Hong Kong-born, England-educated computer expert who directs Evergreen's Computer Services and coordinates the Minority Economic Development academic program.

York Wong, who arrived in the United States at the age of 14, came to Evergreen with more than 20 years of business experience behind him. He designed the business/economic program, he states flatly, "not to train students to be employees."

"I'm interested in teaching them to be entrepreneurs --- to be owners and managers of their own enterprises."

Working with 17 non-white students whose backgrounds vary from Philippino to Black, Chicano, Asian and East Indian, Wong has outlined a program his students describe as "tough" and "exciting."

There's no heavy emphasis on textbooks for the program --- just Wong's years of experience in successfully co-creating a New York clothing design and manufacturing company which sells to major chain stores throughout the nation, his expertise gathered from serving as an economics consultant to former New York City Mayor John Lindsay, and his establishment of a restaurant and boutique in New York where women recently released from prison can gain

practical, professional skills.

He seeks, he says, to give the students the academic foundation necessary to run a successful business. He stresses the development of applied skills in advertising, marketing, financial analysis, organizational theory, management techniques and economics.

"It's really a condensed version of the graduate business administration program I studied at Columbia University," he says. "It doesn't get into that kind of depth, of course. It concentrates on giving students what they need to own and operate their own businesses."

In addition to developing their business ventures --- which most of the students are finding to be highly profitable --- Wong has introduced his predominately male entrepreneurs to four guest lecturers, all successful non-white businessmen. Two Tacoma men who own and operate a supper club, a Yakima farmer and the owner of a helicopter business which services logging operations have discussed how they developed their businesses and handled organizational and financial problems.

Reputation of Wong's course has attracted students from several other Evergreen academic programs and visitors from Tacoma who have heard of Wong's approach and sought his advice on their own operations.

The program will conclude the end of Fall Quarter. But most of the students are reluctant to give it up. They'll continue in their business ventures and probably several will continue working with Wong on independent study contracts.

In the meantime, Wong, who also serves as a member of the Tacoma Human Relations Commission, will resume his full-time responsibilities as director of Evergreen Computer Services --- and his part-time explorations into the world of the successful businessman.