Throughout this issue of Price Magazine, the artwork on the exterior of Adams Hall is featured. It was sculpted by faculty artist Joseph Richard Taylor (1907-1999) in 1936 when Adams Hall was built. The stonework embodies the ideals of business and industry.

On the cover: From left, Jimmy Stevens, OU football player; Travis Hill, OU Boomer Sooner Mascot; Peta Lancaster, OU Women’s Tennis Player; and Michelle Alexander, OU Women’s Soccer Player - all are Energy Management seniors. Photo by Joanne Stoy.

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Energizing the Next Generation of Industry Leaders:
Price College’s Energy Executive Management Program

By Brooke Barnett

Price College offers the next generation of energy industry leaders a unique opportunity to integrate business knowledge, sharpen leadership skills and gain a better understanding of the management process necessary for success in a highly competitive global industry.

The Energy Executive Management Program is an intensive, five-day program that seeks to accelerate the development of these upcoming leaders and prepare them for advancement into senior management positions. The program specifically targets high-potential energy professionals who hold technical degrees in petroleum engineering, geology, geophysics, chemical engineering or related areas with three to five years of professional experience in the field.

“In the process of putting together the energy specialization for our MBA program, we realized there was a need in the industry for a program of this nature,” explains Dipankar Ghosh, David C. Steed Professor of Accounting. “There are a large number of
senior executives in the industry who are closing in on retirement, and because of the unusual hiring pattern in the industry over the past decade, there is a gap between those who are retiring and the next generation of leaders. We have the faculty and industry support to put together such a program and in Dean Evans, a leader who had the vision to see the relevance of this program and championed it from the outset.”

Designed to provide an overview of the “business side” of an energy enterprise, this challenging, fast-paced program enables 20 participants to become better managers and gain a clearer understanding of the issues and opportunities facing the energy industry today.

“Our friends in the industry helped get our professors ready for the course by providing real-world insight,” Ghosh continues. “We worked directly with senior leaders in the industry, so it is truly a collaborative effort.”

The learning experience combines lectures keyed to the energy industry, class discussions, case analyses and an interactive exchange of ideas, concepts and best practices with Price College faculty in finance, management and entrepreneurship, accounting and the Business Energy Solutions Center, as well as faculty from the University of Oklahoma College of Law and industry specialists.

“The faculty of Price College have great experience and research expertise on energy matters and are able to give energy professionals effective training in modern business skills that are directly relevant,” explains Bill Megginson, Rainbolt Chair, professor of finance and program instructor. “The program delivers cutting-edge business skills and knowledge of best business practices in a manageable amount of time away from daily tasks.”

The program’s inaugural session was held in March, with a second session completed in September. For participants such as John Argo, manager at HighMountain Exploration and Production, the program was worth the time away from his busy schedule. “The amount of knowledge pushed into a one-week period was amazing and very gratifying. Between the faculty and the industry experts, it has been not only educational, but engaging,” Argo says. “What we covered really hit home for me in my development as a manager.”

Scott Quillin, a supervisor at Devon Energy, agrees. “I think this is the kind of program that’s going to be beneficial to people from all different kinds of backgrounds, from large independent companies like Devon to smaller companies as well. [It’s beneficial] for those who want a greater understanding of the big picture and how the individual components fit together,” Quillin adds.

“The first program received rave reviews from participants and also provided useful feedback about how it can be improved. Many of the energy professionals who participated were very happy to be on campus for advanced training,” Megginson adds. “Many were OU graduates, but even those who were not valued spending a week in a university environment, learning and interacting with faculty.”

Looking toward the future, Ghosh envisions offering the program about three times each year, expanding regionally and offering a follow-up program with more in-depth exploration on a focused set of topics.

By developing business acumen, strengthening strategic decision-making abilities, and updating and expanding management skills, participants of the Energy Executive Management Program are better equipped to lead their companies to greater success. “We will continue to listen to what the industry needs and fine tune our program,” Ghosh concludes. “We want to offer the very best program of this type for energy professionals.”

Students and faculty begin the week of the Energy Executive Education Program with a reception and dinner at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.