Budget cuts and the slumping economy have forced many companies to become more efficient and productive – more “lean.” A training tool called Lean Simulation, used by manufacturing firms, is teaching Bloomsburg University management students to maximize productivity.

“The Lean Simulation is a factory training exercise that uses clocks to help businesses streamline manufacturing processes and eliminate wasted time,” says Stephen Markell, associate professor of management. “Students go through the simulation several times and see improvement each round as the changes are made.”

BU’s first Lean Simulation was held in 2008, immediately after Markell returned from a conference in Massachusetts. The Lean Simulation kit was obtained through a grant from the National Science Foundation.

“The Lean Simulation, set up as a traditional factory setting, runs over one full day. The simulation consists of four separate rounds, with a class session between each round to discuss different concepts and how to improve the process. As each round passes, the production time improves until the students have found the most efficient and effective process. Toyota, the auto maker, originated the Lean manufacturing concept and businesses around the world have implemented the processes to help improve manufacturing performance. At BU, Markell and Pamela Wynn, management professor, believe the

“Businesses that attack waste see tremendous improvements in their competitive position, their cost structures, their lead times and their responsiveness to customers.” — Dr. Christian Grandzol—
— Assistant Professor—

Ten years ago, Bloomsburg University professor Lawrence Kleiman began piecing together a career concentration in human resources with the goal of familiarizing students interested in an HR career path with the knowledge they would need to be successful.

In his first year at the University, he put together the 18-credit HR curriculum, using several existing classes to complement the new courses created specifically for the program. The most vital aspect of the new concentration, Kleiman believes, is the required internship, which gives students hands-on experience.

“We see the internship as a very valuable feature of the concentration,” says Joan Benek-Rivera, Management Department Chair. “It allows the students to walk away with a good body of knowledge.”

The program has been immensely helpful for students like Ryan O’Donnell (’09), who completed two internships working as an HR assistant. He emphasizes that many of the skills he learned in the program, such as conducting mock interviews and introvert/extrovert exercises, have helped him in his professional career.

Students who take the HR concentration usually are management, marketing, or communication studies majors who use the concentration to bolster their value for prospective employers. “Having the HR concentration on a resume gives those students an advantage over students in other fields,” says Kleiman.

The concentration has also been certified by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the na-
The world of business is in constant flux, changing course with every economic report and new innovation. The College Strategic Planning Committee is charting a course for future business leaders by assessing trends and making sure students leave Bloomsburg University prepared for the future.

The strategic plan’s direction is shaped by the college’s vision statement: “to be recognized as a leader among regional business schools for our ability to prepare students whose knowledge, skills, and abilities are valued by our stakeholders.”

Michael Tidwell, dean of the College of Business says, “The plan is being designed to act as a roadmap for our future. We will focus our College on areas of growth, such as international business, fraud examination, and graduate programs.”

The Strategic Planning Committee is made up of 10 members with representatives from each stakeholder group; faculty, students, and the College Advisory Board. It currently is in the process of laying out the five-year roadmap for the college.

“We are in the early stages of updating the plan and have spent the first few meetings focusing on rewriting our vision and mission statements,” says Alan Dakey (’73), member of the College Advisory Board and President & CEO, Peoples National Bank. “We try to provide input as to how trends in the business world relate to preparing students for their careers and give feedback as to what employers are looking for in terms of skills and qualifications.”

The new strategic plan will also include a fundraising component to help provide resources for student professional development. According to Tidwell, “the College is working to ensure all students develop the professional skills necessary for success. We know students study a great curriculum from a tremendous faculty, but the plan will include elements like etiquette training, mentoring, and professional networking opportunities.” Tidwell adds, “With a completely renovated building set to open for fall 2011 and a renewed plan for the future, excellence is within reach.”

Human Resource Concentration

Professors in the program also prepare students for the Professional in Human Resources (PHR) exam, the HR equivalent to the Certified Public Accountant (CPA). This virtually guarantees a job for those who pass the rigorous test. According to Benek-Rivera, BU scores well above the national average for the percentage of students passing the exam on the first try.

Looking ahead, Kleiman would like to begin implementing new training software to give students even more opportunities to prepare for the business world.

Happy Holidays!