



BY / ELEANOR HUNT

Casting a Giant Shadow

As part of an innovative program, faculty members are spending time with New York business execs, then relating those firsthand C-suite experiences to their students.



The Hankamer School of Business is increasing experiential learning for students through a program that allows faculty to shadow C-suite executives and their direct reports. In partnership with TIAA, a Fortune 100 retirement provider, the HSB Faculty Shadowing Program helps faculty keep their teaching and curriculum relevant.

“Our faculty will spend two to three days in New York City, where most of the TIAA leaders are located, attending meetings and finding out the tough situations that executives face. The entire senior leadership of TIAA is on board and excited about this program,” Tyrha Lindsey-Warren, director of the newly created Office of Industry Relations and Experiential Learning, said.

Thasunda Brown Duckett, MBA '01, CEO of TIAA and an alumna of the HSB MBA Program, acknowledged that by participating in the HSB Faculty Shadowing Program, TIAA is continuing to support the financial health and well-being of educators.

“When I started talking with Baylor University leaders about new ways we could support faculty, staff and students beyond saving for retirement and investing in their financial futures,” Duckett said, “I knew we had a unique opportunity to bring our core mission together with the brightest minds in education through the HSB Faculty Shadowing Program.”

Enlightened learning from chief officers

In the pilot phase, six TIAA executive mentors and their senior leaders hosted 11 HSB faculty members. The executives oversee TIAA's legal, operations, human resources, marketing and communications, information services and product/business development functions. HSB faculty members will shadow the C-suite executive related to their respective teaching area.

"I wanted us to have an experience and interact with senior leadership. When you're seeing things from the top, that is a different perspective," Lindsey-Warren said.

Not only do faculty gain a bird's-eye view from a pinnacle position, but they also can bring back experiences to the classroom to give their students an edge.

"Our faculty can discuss case studies and teach using the most current terminology," Lindsey-Warren said. "They can invite TIAA executives to speak to their classes. We also hope to have access to research data if our professors need it."



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Igniting academia-industry relationships

The HSB Faculty Shadowing Program has the potential to cultivate strong academia-industry relationships that ultimately aid HSB students. Lindsey-Warren points to how she used personal relationships that she developed from

working in the advertising industry to help several students obtain summer internships with a global marketing and communications agency. One of the students won the agency's summer internship case competition.



"Education is one important aspect, but opportunity and access are also important," Lindsey-Warren said. "The HSB Faculty Shadowing Program and the Office of Industry Relations and Experiential Learning are helping faculty members strengthen their relationships and get introduced to industry opportunities. It is all about access and opportunity."

Academia's chance to inspire industry

Brown Duckett acknowledged that while talent is created equally, opportunity is not, which is why she is inspired by the program.

"As a CEO, I am privileged to be able to give back to this extraordinary community, provide additional support and resources for educators, and hopefully foster the next generation of great talent," she said. "Perhaps faculty members who participate in this program will ultimately inspire the next CEOs of TIAA."

Shared enlightenment and inspiration? That is a win-win. 