

Angels have descended on the Hankamer School of Business—angel investors that is, in the form of a new organization called the Baylor Angel Network (BAN).

BAN is a seed and early stage investor network for friends and family of Baylor University and the Hankamer School of Business. It is “essentially a framework for connecting entrepreneurs with investors with a priority for involving students in internships,” said Dr. Bill Petty, professor and BAN executive director.

The network not only works to connect entrepreneurs with potential investors, it also serves as a fundraising tool for the Business School. “We feel like it is a win-win situation where students who are involved get great benefit, investors benefit from having investment opportunities, the Business School benefits because investors agree to share part of their gains...the spirit is to share any opportunity, any gains with the Business School,” Petty said. Each investor makes their own commitment on what percentage of their profits they will donate back.

While the network provides investment opportunities for alumni, and fundraising opportunities for the Business School, Petty said its “primary focus” is education. BAN runs with the help of student interns. Petty praised this year’s crop of student interns calling them “an integral part of logistics and communications.” BAN executive chairman Bob Brewton (Baylor BBA ’74) also highlighted the educational element of BAN saying it is “engaging students in the process of learning about entrepreneurship.”

Student intern and BAN deputy executive director Michael McSweeney called this educational opportunity “the best” in the Business School; “it provides an opportunity for students to parallel their academic studies with the hands-on analysis that is imperative to making good investment decisions.”

BAN represents not only innovation in investing, but innovation on many levels. “I think that BAN is all about innovation,” Brewton said. He highlighted the innovation it brings to the classroom for students and professors by providing a real-world situation to teach entrepreneurship, along with the innovative way it gets alumni involved in the Business School.

Petty said many of the companies submitting business plans are innovative. “At this point the companies...that these investors are looking at are high tech; they will change the way we live.” The organization is in itself innovative, Petty said, because there are only a few angel networks linked to universities.

With the first screening and deal presentation meetings behind them, what is ahead for this network of angel investors? “Our absolute hope for the future is that this (BAN) will become an organization Baylor alumni will become involved in,” Brewton said, along with it becoming a “dominant source of endowment.” Both Brewton and Petty highlighted increasing membership in BAN as a goal for the future. “We feel like we need approximately 35 investors actively involved in the network so that any time an entrepreneur approaches us, we have someone among the investors who is familiar with the industry.”

BAYLOR ANGEL Network

by Melissa Limmer

The Baylor Angel Network Board of Advisors:

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Bill Petty, *Executive Director*

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