

BY FRANCI ROGERS

PIONEER PHD PROGRAM CELEBRATES 4 YEARS

AS THE FIRST
DEPARTMENT TO OFFER
A PHD PROGRAM AT
BAYLOR'S HANKAMER
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,
ALL EYES WERE ON
INFORMATION SYSTEMS
TO SEE JUST HOW THEY
WOULD MANAGE THIS
PIONEERING
STEP.

Now, four years later, the university has conferred two doctoral degrees in the program, has eight current degree candidates, and will welcome another four students in the fall.

"We are definitely where I hoped we would be at this point," said Dr. Dorothy Leidner, Ferguson Professor of Information Systems and director of the PhD in IS program. "We are very pleased with the success. Our students are publishing in respected journals and are getting very good job placements."

Of the two graduates of the program, the first is currently working as an assistant professor at HEC-Paris, a top business school in Europe. The second recently accepted an assistant professor position at California State University, Fullerton, after completing a term as a visiting assistant professor at Washington State University.

One student is currently writing his dissertation and interviewing for positions at a variety of schools. He has been invited to spend a month working on his research at a prestigious German university this fall.

Baylor funds two incoming students, stipend and tuition, each year. However, some students enroll using funds they have received from other places. The U.S. Army, for example, is paying for one student. Another is receiving funding from his home university in another country, where he will return to teach. Yet another is being funded by his employer.

"Because of students getting alternative funding, we've seen the program become bigger and more diverse, and that is a great benefit to us," said Leidner. "We can continue to provide very personal instruction and direction, and at the same time have the students learn from each others' areas of strength."

Dr. Timothy Kayworth, chair of the information services department, is also pleased with the growth of the program.

"A major factor in our success has been getting high caliber students to join our program," he said. "We need to continue to be intentional in recruiting talented, highly motivated students from around the globe and then placing these students at leading universities upon graduation."

Part of that intentional growth will be making the program more international than when it began. The faculty wants to make sure their candidates are maintaining a global focus. Leidner is working with universities in Europe and Asia to that end.

She is also hoping to start an executive PhD program at Baylor. While the current program focuses on the candidates becoming educators, this program would see people with doctoral degrees returning to the corporate world.

"It's much more common in Europe already for executives to have PhDs," said Leidner. "In this global economy, it's a matter of time before it becomes more common here."

Forward thinking and good outcomes are beginning to get outside recognition for the young program.

"Every year we increase the quality that we provide our students, and every year the quality of the research our students are doing improves," said Leidner. "We're becoming well-known as a good, well-rounded program."

Soon, the business school will be home to another PhD program. Baylor Regents recently approved a PhD in health services research offered by through the school's Robbins Institute for Health Policy and Leadership.

bbr.baylor.edu/pioneer-phd-4-years