

October, 1994 - Richard J. Caccamise, Management/Marketing

For the last five years during the fall semester, the College Conference Room has been transformed into a corporate boardroom where a visiting executive meets with students in the Saint Peter's Honors Program to discuss current business issues. Under the sponsorship of the Honors Program and the Management and Marketing Department, the group meets for two hours each week and includes students from **all** majors with a GPA of 3.25 or higher.

Prior to the seminar the students conduct extensive research on the company and the industry in which it operates in order to build a basis for a highly interactive dialogue with the visiting executive. The executive typically begins with a description of the industry followed by an overview of a current corporate problem. Ensuing discussion usually revolves around a prominent case study or problem, which may have received national attention. Of paramount importance in this process is the extent to which the corporate seminar leaders are willing to provide extensive details about the topic, even when those details are extremely sensitive and proprietary.

Another aspect of this program is the requirement that students must assume various leadership roles prior to and during the program. For example, some students function as escorts for the executive, others are host or hostess at lunch. Still others are assigned the role of moderator, introducing the speaker and presenting a memento to the visitor at the conclusion of the seminar.

The classroom exercises are designed to provide the students with an in-depth view of life in a corporate boardroom where discussions such as these take place every day. Students gain insight into problem solving and how alternatives are selected for implementation while others are rejected. Additionally, they learn about occupations in banking and finance, manufacturing, accounting, advertising, retailing, and law in a way that few others experience. For example, students have the opportunity to discuss the executive's life experiences and career track from the entry level position to the current assignment. Invariably, this includes a discussion of the pitfalls to success and how to avoid them.

This seminar provides the instructor with an excellent opportunity to create a nexus between the classroom and the external environment. Students learn that their academic study in the liberal arts is preparing them personally and professionally for their life's work.