

## Third Opinion

**Making Rady A 'Hub of Networks'**

Saj-nicole A. Joni 10.15.07, 3:05 PM ET

With surging application numbers and an ever-increasing demand for top management talent, American business schools are enjoying a period of unprecedented success.



And the boom is global: China has had more growth in their management education in the last 15 years than the U.S. has seen in the last 50; trends show Europe leading the way with the master's in management (MSc), typically offered as a one-year degree for students before they gain work experience. But nothing is standing still--all business schools, both domestic and international, must continually confront questions of relevance and purpose in the evolving global marketplace.

The University of California, San Diego (UCSD), recently joined the B-school ranks with its new Rady School of Management, graduating their first M.B.A. class this past summer. In an environment already crowded with management education, the Rady School is defining itself as a haven for high-tech and life science leadership studies. This groundbreaking course has been set by founding Dean Robert Sullivan.

Dean Robert Sullivan

**Saj-nicole Joni: Why do we need a new business school at UCSD? What's your focus and how do you compare to the top schools?**

**Sullivan:** There is an important cadre of people capable of "walking and chewing gum at the same time,"--that is, developing bilingual and bicultural capabilities as scientists and business leaders. Despite noise to the contrary, there are many talented scientists who can also be inspiring communicators and great business leaders. That's the focus of our school--and that's why we created Lab to Market (L2M), the capstone of the Rady MBA program. It's an intensive three-course study sequence that begins in the classroom and moves into a project-based environment. And sometimes it translates into real commercial success. For example, Avitacor, a growing contract research firm based in Encinitas, [Calif.] is an outgrowth of that program started by three of our MBA grads.

**Does this imply that you think leadership and management is different for high-tech and life sciences industries?**

Our students' demographics are different. About 40% of our students have advanced degrees, about 80% have science, technology or engineering backgrounds, approximately one third have a Ph.D. or an M.D. degree. Diversity is very important to us: about 35% are women, and 30% are international students.

**But does that make leadership different?**

There are many traits of leadership and management that are independent of industry segment. At the same time, great leaders are in part defined by the traits and needs of their followers. In high-tech and life sciences, leaders need to be credible across communities of broad, competitive and highly committed scientists. In essence, their leadership mission is to get the most value out of the science that is being created, and to diffuse it throughout society for the greatest good. In addition to being credible with financial analysts, first and foremost, they need to have the intuition and expertise to understand and appreciate value when it is being created in the lab.

**What's more, leaders in these fields must confront great moral dilemmas and make decisions that are complicated by intertwined technical and ethical challenges.**

Yes, exactly. We have put a great deal of thought into creating a curriculum that prepares our leaders and teaches them how to frame the questions, how to do the full job of inquiry, how to look for unintended consequences.

**And this is where the environment really matters. No great leader can sustain sorting out these dilemmas on their own--they must develop a network of advice and counsel.**



**The UCSD Rady School of Management**

This is one of the two pillars of our program. The Rady School of Management came into being because we serve a business community that is an integral part of our existence. There are more than 600 biotech firms within a five-mile radius of UCSD. We have to be a place that not only teaches, but regularly practices reinvention. And we must be a hub of networks--for expertise, resources and talent, but also for provocative thinking, for moral direction and for inspiration.

**What's the one thing you wished you had known when you were first starting out? What do you want your students to know?**

Students need to realize that whatever happens in, for example, a finance or marketing class will basically become obsolete in a year or two. The greatest value comes from learning how to learn, and being excited about doing this for life. That's why networks for provocative thinking are so very important. You live a lifetime of leadership by combining the passion for always pushing the envelope with the expertise of knowing how to continually find the right sources of information and the skills of attracting and inspiring the very best people.

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