

Rochester is on the analytical and quantitative side” of approaches, he says.

The fact that Simon has no internal departments fosters integrated thinking, Hansen says. “Most business problems don’t come neatly labeled, and you can’t just crank out a solution. When a product is losing money, it could be a marketing, or a design, or a cost issue, among other possibilities. The areas overlap.”

“I feel it’s a more global view than the previous economics major—more organization-wide and less theoretical,” says Yu (Bonnie) Xia ’13, from Shanghai, China. She hopes the major will enhance her employability when she returns to China—and she says it complements her interest in human behavior. She would like ultimately to work in human resources.

To all involved, the notion of increasing students’ options is compelling.

“The single most valuable thing” about the development of the major “is we’ve had students who’ve transferred out of Rochester saying the reason they’ve left is the lack of a business major,” says Burdick. Now he anticipates being able to attract transfer students into Rochester with the opportunity to major in business.

“We asked, how do we get the best of both worlds?” says Zupan. “We preserve liberal arts strength and include the Simon School approach to business.” Although “we looked at other schools’ majors closely, we wanted to break the mold, to leave the most space possible for the liberal arts.”

Their connection at the undergraduate level is crucial, Zupan says. “At too many universities, there’s a moat between business and other schools on campus.” That’s not true at Rochester, he adds, and the business major will strengthen ties, raise the Simon School’s visibility among undergraduates, and perhaps draw more of them to the school’s MBA program after graduation.


“I think the students who come out of this major and go straight to the job market will have strong economic training in solving problems, thinking analytically, and framing questions and issues that come up in terms of what they’ve learned,” says Bills. “And for those who go on for an MBA, graduate schools will be looking for a good background in math and economics.”

The question of what comes next is always on students’ minds when they choose a major, and Hansen suggests that a familiarity with the fields of business can enhance competitiveness on the job market.

“If the people hiring you expect you to have some understanding of marketing, some understanding of underlying economics, of how markets work, then you’ll have more value to companies if you have basic skills,” Hansen says.

“But this is a broad business major,” he adds. “We’re not trying to get students to specialize.”

Says Feldman: “Some majors are more aligned with career choices than others.

“I expect we’ll find business majors will go on to do many different things—just as students in every major do.” 



BUSINESS MAN: A key supporter of the new business major, Florescue himself majored in business as an undergraduate at Rochester.

Preparing Students for a ‘World of Business’

New major is named for Barry Florescue ’66, a trustee and longtime University advisor.

When Barry Florescue ’66 was an undergraduate at Rochester, he earned a business degree in a program that was retired in 1972, as the Simon School—then the School of Business Administration—turned its focus to graduate studies.

Now, as Rochester returns to undergraduate instruction in business, Florescue is lending his financial support, and his name, to the newly created major. He has contributed \$5 million to the University to support the business major. In recognition of his generosity, and other contributions he has provided for development of the major, it will be named the Barry Florescue Undergraduate Business Degree Program.

“When I learned that the University was considering reestablishing the business major that I pursued as an undergraduate, I knew this was an important area of the dynamic curriculum that was worth supporting,” Florescue says. “I am pleased to be a part of this new program, knowing that it will prepare our students to become successful players in the world of business.”

Florescue is chairman of the board of BMD Management Company Inc. A charter member of the George Eastman Circle, he is a member of both the University’s Board of Trustees and the Simon School’s Executive Advisory Committee. Through the Florescue Family Foundation Scholarship and the Florescue Fellowship Fund, he has helped both undergraduate and business school students in their quest to study at Rochester.

“Barry’s support ensured that we would be able to launch and sustain the new business major, and we’re very grateful for that,” says Peter Lennie, the Robert L. and Mary L. Sproull Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering. “Our undergraduates will greatly benefit from his generosity.”

—Melissa Greco Lopes