

Peter Veruki

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Business is all about networks and connections - both technical and personal. Business schools operate in much the same fashion. In 2006, Owen took steps to strengthen its many connections within the business community at large.

To help the school grow the number and quality of business relationships, Dean Jim Bradford has called upon Peter Veruki as Director of Corporate Relations. In this newly expanded role, Veruki serves as Owen's ambassador, extolling the benefits of hiring our graduates, engaging with faculty and students on real-world projects and contributing perspective and knowledge as speakers or panelists.

Formerly head of Owen's Career Management Center in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, this role leverages Veruki's exceptional knowledge of the MBA marketplace and his strong relationships with graduates of those years.

Owen lures back Veruki to role in career planning

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By J. Holly Dolloff

A prominent expert in career planning and human resources and former Vanderbilt administrator will rejoin the staff of the Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University in early 2005.

Acting Dean Jim Bradford says Peter Veruki's role will be to complement the school's career planning center, following his retirement from Rice University in Houston.

Bradford says Veruki's knowledge of the corporate arena and his personal relationships with alumni are invaluable.

"I spend a lot of time traveling - I've been in over 250 corporations in the last 18 months -- and I spend a lot of time talking to alumni," says Bradford. "I kept hearing his name and he's been very supportive of Owen, so I approached him about returning."

Veruki says he was easily won over. "Those were the best years of my life - I've always stayed close to the school," says Veruki, who served as director of Owen's career planning and placement center from 1987 to 1999.

For the past five years, he has led the admissions and career planning department at Rice's Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Management.

Veruki's 1999 departure followed the death of longtime Owen Dean Martin Geisel and coincided with an exodus of senior staff members, all factors in what Veruki refers to as the school's "loss of institutional memory."

"Business schools go through changes when you lose deans, and the media - U.S. News & World Report, Business Week - will beat you up for that," he says, referring to those magazines' annual rankings of business schools.

Owen dropped from 27th in 2000 to 45th on the U.S. News ranking before moving up six places to appear at 39 on the 2004 list.

Veruki's role, in large part, will be to reconnect alumni to the school.

"One reason the great schools, like Tuck (Dartmouth University) and Harvard, are successful is because they have long-serving administrators," says Veruki. "I know most of the alums from the '80s and '90s."

"Business schools need to keep alums connected - not for contributions - but if schools are to succeed they have to stay in contact with the corporate world," says Veruki, explaining successful alumni are a school's best recruitment and referral tool.

"Peter helped place quite a few people, and he'll be able to tap back into us and reconnect us," says David Stringfield, a member of the school's alumni board. Stringfield graduated in 1995 and works as a real estate investment banker in Dallas.

Alumnus Jack Harrington agrees that Veruki's return bodes well for Owen's prestige.

"He's well regarded, he's really polished," says Harrington. "And he understands how business schools work: They are businesses."

Veruki's hiring is the latest of several administrative changes Bradford has made since becoming acting dean after William Christie's resignation last spring.

In September, Bradford hired Veruki protégé Tami Fassinger as associate dean for executive programs. Fassinger served as director of admissions and marketing from 1990 to 1997 before taking a corporate recruiting position with Cap Gemini.

Before his initial Vanderbilt tenure, Veruki served as an executive with Bethlehem Steel and as an investment banker with Chemical Bank, now J.P. Morgan.

He is also the author of several books, the most recent of which is "250 Job Interview Questions (You'll Most Likely be Asked and the Answers That Will Get You Hired)," published in 1999.

"This is an opportunity for him to continue to do what he does very well, but for the right team," says Bradford.