

WORKING WITH BARD a 'Simple Decision'



Joshua Churlik

In Simple Decisions, Bard alumnus Joshua Churlik is using advanced technology to make online and in-store shopping a breeze. The support of the Bard Center for Entrepreneurship and the Rutt Bridges Venture Capital Fund has made the challenge of starting a business easier as well.

"The Rutt Bridges Venture Capital Fund allowed us to achieve our product development goals and is enabling us to remain focused on bringing our product to market," says Churlik, MBA 2005. "The Bard Center has been an excellent resource for me. In fact, it was one of the reasons I chose to study at the Business School."

As with most innovations, Churlik's idea arose from a recognized need. He spent several years managing a retail chain in North Carolina but struggled with product information and sales training.

With Simple Decisions, consumers can access complete product information through an "all knowing" virtual sales representative, enabling them to make informed purchasing decisions, Churlik explains.

With the continued support of the Bard Center and the Rutt Bridges Venture Capital Fund, Churlik and his team of software developers anticipate full product release in the next few months. They are not alone. Simple Decisions is one of dozens of success stories fostered since the Bard's inception in 1996. Of the six incubated businesses currently housed in the center, recent start-ups include: Ken Dropiewski's (MBA 2005) Prime-Core, which provides a unique blend of human capital management services to companies and candidates; and Nate Braden's (BA 1990, MBA 2005) America and the World Inc., an online multimedia history textbook for high school and college students.

"The Bard Center's network of connections and business references available to entrepreneurs has been a great benefit to me," Churlik says. "Entrepreneurs can utilize the Bard Center to augment their experience in most any field of knowledge simply by tapping into the network of high quality individuals willing to have conversations." <

NEW UNDERGRADUATE REQUIREMENTS Meet 21st Century Business Demands

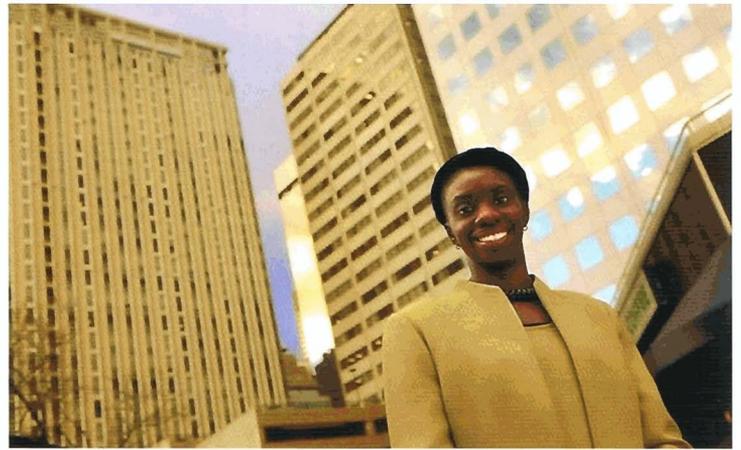
Last year, a task force reviewed the undergraduate business program. The cross-functional team included faculty members Jim Morris, Peter Bryant, Linda Fried, Ann Martin, Ron Ramirez and Mary Lee Stansifer, staff Nancy Reed, and advisory board member Karen Niparko.

Together the team looked at the state of today's work environment and asked what qualities businesses seek in the graduates they hire. Then they compared their findings to the undergraduate requirements and proposed enhancements.

"One major change we made was to require some form of experiential learning activity," says Morris, committee chair and professor of finance for the Business School. "Beginning fall 2007, incoming freshmen will be required to participate either in some form of experiential learning, such as an internship, or study abroad."

Morris notes that experiential learning will better prepare students for the work world and, in the case of an internship, position them to transition easily into a full-time job upon graduation. "There has been a marked increase in the use of internships by businesses to evaluate potential hires," adds Morris. "Students will not only get hands-on business experience that will benefit

ALUMNA OVERCOMES FEAR, Finds Flexibility



LaSheita Sayer

Overcoming the barriers of a new language, tough classes, and personal and academic challenges isn't easy. But by spending six months in France as part of a UCDHSC study abroad program, Business School alumna LaSheita Sayer not only acquired a valuable education, she gained direction and confidence on the journey.

"I used to fret over small things," admits Sayer, who received her BS in business and marketing in December 2006. "Being in France, where you don't understand how to get around town or how to ask for help, made me realize I had to stay in touch with the bigger goal. I had to learn flexibility."

Sayer couldn't read the bus schedule; she missed it several times. Her daughter, Kytiana, then 4, struggled to assimilate and was teased by other children for not speaking French. "The challenges kept piling up. I had to maintain my sanity dealing with the day-to-day. I had to step back, to say 'Yes, this class is important, but not as important as why we're doing this.'"

Sayer's journey to France began with a comment by a Business School administrator. "Nancy Reed said she believed every student should study abroad," Sayer recalls. With the assistance of Reed, the Office of International Education and a grant from the Gillman Foundation, Sayer was able to accomplish something that she'd never dreamed possible.

"In six months, I received a more powerful personal and professional education than I'd gotten in 15 years of school," Sayer stresses. "In France I got experience not only in business but in the international economy."

Sayer was educated by professors and with students from all over the world. "It was the best cross-cultural experience you can get most of the time. I was the only American working on* the team and the competition was stiff.

"As a single mom I wanted to show my daughter the world, for her to know first-hand how diverse the world is," she stresses. "I wanted to set an example."

Within months, Sayer was no longer missing her bus and had mastered "Frenghish." The children that once teased Kytiana helped with her fifth birthday party.

After graduation, Sayer used her new skills to begin her own