

## Student Profile

### Re-earning Loyalty

Kevin Lytle

When Kevin Lytle enrolled in the MMCCU program in 2005, he had no idea how much he would come to rely on what he would learn. In fact, at Orientation he confided to then-Program Director John Chamard that he wasn't sure it was the right move for him.

"I told him I didn't have the passion for the philosophy. I was really looking at this from a business standpoint. He said, 'We don't need more cheerleaders. We need people who can apply these principles and values to make co-operatives work better.'"

As a product manager for a company serving primarily credit unions, Lytle recognized early in his career that "the credit union governance structure, and the idea of using it to offer people financial services, was a perfect fit with my personal values and my interest in business."

He went on to become Vice President for Professional Development at Credit Union National Association (CUNA) based in Madison, Wisconsin, where he

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Kevin Lytle



Every MMCCU class goes on a two-week Study Visit to Italy or Spain halfway through their courses. In their online Profiles, students address how profoundly this has changed the way they look at and manage their co-ops and credit unions. ([www.mmccu.coop](http://www.mmccu.coop))

## "Come Together, Right Now"

### MMCCU's Global Vision

If there is a silver lining behind the dark clouds of worldwide economic recession, climate change, and escalating armed conflicts, it is an increased awareness of the interconnectedness of the human race.

At the International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly in Geneva in November, these priorities were echoed in the event's theme and were explicitly laid out in a series of Resolutions passed by nearly 800 delegates.

Clearly, if humanity is to prosper in the twenty-first century, it is imperative that we learn how to work together to achieve our basic needs: healthy food, clean air and water, access to good housing, good educational opportunities, good health, good work.

No internationally organized sector of humanity is in a better position to rise to

this challenge than the nearly one billion members of the world's co-operatives and credit unions.

### A Model That Works

Co-operatives are different. Their purpose is to meet member and community needs as distinct from maximizing shareholder value. People confronted by unfair economic or social circumstances have formed co-ops and credit unions to provide equitable solutions. The lessons and stories gleaned from their experience offer hope to the world.

The co-operative way is not a silver bullet. But it is a workable, tried and true alternative to transnational, exploitive, speculative investment gamesmanship that has so badly tarnished the name of 'capitalism'. (See <http://www.ica.coop/coop/statistics.html>)

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learned about the MMCCU program as an option for CUNA employees.

Though cheerleading may not have been high on Lytle's action plan, he was drawn to the MMCCU by his own code of conduct. When Program Manager Tom Webb made a presentation at CUNA, Lytle decided to enroll.

CUNA was an original member of CMEC, the co-op that created the MMCCU program. Lytle's boss was supportive, acknowledging that this would require more flexibility in the VP's schedule.

## **The Study Visit: 'A Game Changer'**

His first year, Lytle gained a fundamental understanding of the issues that all co-ops face. Then he moved to California and went to work for WesCorp, a credit union corporation serving 28 credit unions on the West Coast.

Lytle calls the study visit to northern Italy halfway through the program "a major turning point. I could see hard-headed business decisions being made using the co-op principles and values, and see how that worked in actual communities. That was a game-changer for me."

**"The transformational process gives us an opportunity to decide to what extent we will live according to our co-operative principles and values."**

As he progressed in the program, exchanges with other students and instructors became deeper and richer. He began to formulate the idea for his final paper: how to build and increase the loyalty of WesCorp members.

In his capacity as VP of Marketing and Product Development at WesCorp, Lytle

was instrumental in getting the well-known firm Satmetrix to help assess member loyalty. They received the highest scores Satmetrix had ever seen in the business-to-business financial services sector.

## **Oopsadaisy!**

Still, there was work to be done. Lytle says, "We started to ask why some members go out of their way to tell people about us, and others don't. How could we manage those relationships, moving the 'passives' to become 'promoters'\*—and track our success, so we could start managing our organizations accordingly?"

Then it was 2008, and the bottom fell out of the global economy. Kevin Lytle recounts his company's chronology of events:

"Part of WesCorp's role as essentially a credit union of credit unions was to be a source of liquidity for members. With the implosion of the housing market, we lost a lot of money from investments backed by assets tied to mortgages."

In March, 2009, WesCorp was put under conservatorship by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA—the federal regulator in the US). Since that time, losses have wiped out all of the members' capital investment.

## **Game Over?**

But Kevin Lytle and WesCorp are not giving up. Instead, they are using what Lytle learned in the MMCCU program to approach this crisis as a golden opportunity.

"We are implementing a management team to determine how to rebuild members' trust so we can re-capitalize and turn WesCorp back to the members." He emphasizes, "We will emerge from conservatorship, I have no doubt. But we are going to be a different company."

In part this will be because NCUA is adopting new regulations that will take effect in 2010. (These are in the public

**"At a time when so many people around the world have a heightened interest in doing business with organizations whose values reflect their own, raising awareness of co-operatives and what they stand for is very important."**

Kathy Bardswick, President and CEO of The Co-operators

December 18, 2009—on UN naming 2012 International Year of Co-operatives

record and the 90-day period for comment is open until February 20, 2010. See the Federal Register, Nov. 20, 2009).

## **Back to the roots**

In part, the change in WesCorp will come from within. Says Lytle, "The transformational process gives us an opportunity to use the lessons we have learned and decide how we are going to be different, to what extent we will live according to our co-operative principles and values.

"Not a lot of companies get this kind of opportunity," he points out. "It's as big a challenge as a marketing, communications and product VP can have!"

He is eager to take the challenge on, to restore and increase the all-important trust of WesCorp's members. And he is clear about why he feels qualified to lead.

"I'm fortunate to have gone through the MMCCU program. Because of it, I'm much more confident about how to do this. The courses were not some academic exercise that I could check off my to-do list. I'm using everything I learned, and bringing it back to my desk at WesCorp."

\* Reichheld, Frederick F. and Thomas Teal, *The Loyalty Effect: the hidden force behind growth, profits, and lasting value*

# “Come Together, Right Now” continued from page 1

## Educational Imperative

A rapidly growing need for senior co-op and credit union managers steeped in this ‘co-operative difference’ puts the MMCCU program—designed from the bottom up by and for co-operators—on the hot seat, because it is the only post-graduate program in the English language offered by an accredited academic institution.

In interviews with nearly three dozen MMCCU graduates and students—most of them seasoned managers—an oft repeated observation is that the MMCCU approach of comparing one hundred percent of conventional business education to co-operative principles, values and practices is an eye-opener that alters the way they manage their co-ops and credit unions.

**Sometimes in more affluent countries there are unexpectedly high hurdles for managers whose employers support their pursuing a higher degree.**

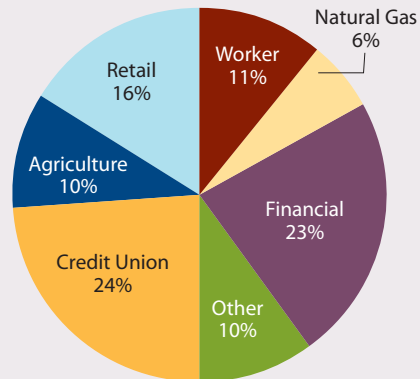
The creators of the program recognized from the beginning that it was needed throughout the English-speaking world. While the office is located in the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the vast majority of students have come from outside the Maritime Provinces and forty percent from outside Canada.

## Focus on Diversity

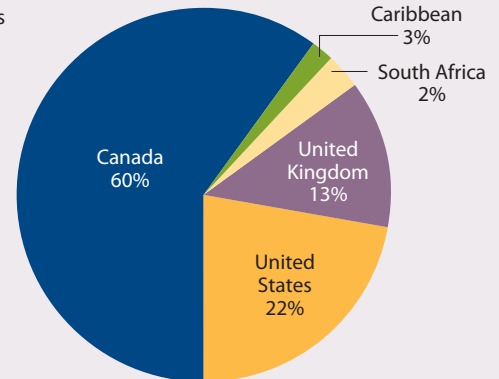
Every year, vigorous outreach by MMCCU administrators, faculty and graduates results in inquiries from Africa, Oceania, Europe and the Caribbean. Co-operatives and credit unions in Finland, Portugal, and other countries have even expressed a desire to enroll their English-speaking managers.

## MMCCU Students (2001–2009)

### By Type of Co-operative



### By Country of Origin



Students frequently comment about the value they derive from the geographic diversity, as well as from the range of sizes, ages and types of co-ops represented.

The diversity is not surprising, given the makeup of the Co-operative Management Education Co-op (CMEC), the group largely responsible for creating the MMCCU program (see Members on page 7).

## Removing Roadblocks

But the commitment to be a truly international program requires an enormous amount of outreach. Says program manager Tom Webb, “There are a lot of national, regional and international organizations and academic conferences in which we need to keep a presence.

“We collaborate with CMEC members in six countries, faculty in four, and students and graduates in seven. And we have to keep down costs and be environmentally responsible. That’s a tall order!”

In developing countries, there is strong interest in the program but there is often little if any support from governments, and the co-operatives cannot afford the full costs, even though tuition is quite low compared to the typical MBA program.

Sometimes in the more affluent countries there are unexpectedly high hurdles for managers whose employers support their

pursuing a higher degree. (See MMCCU Student Profiles online for examples of how being in the program has led to improvements in their co-ops and credit unions.)

A law passed in the US recently treats the program as a Canadian one, and therefore ineligible for federal student loans. John McNamara, MMCCU graduate who is a manager at Union Cab in Wisconsin and President of the US Federation of Worker Co-operatives, nearly had to drop out of the program because of this.

He received financial aid from Canadian co-operators and a couple of US co-ops, so he was able to graduate. In November, he sent a letter to his Congressional delegation and the US co-op leadership asking them to support a waiver for managers who want to pursue this unique degree. (See *CMA* v.2 no.1 at [www.mmccu.coop](http://www.mmccu.coop))

## Breaking down walls

Good news from the US for the globalization of co-operation came on October 27, 2009, when Leo Gerard, president of United Steelworkers (USW, the nation’s largest and one of its strongest trade unions), announced they would join Mondragon Internacional, SA, “to establish manufacturing co-ops that adapt collective bargaining principles to the worker ownership model of ‘one worker, one vote.’”

# Co-operative Management ADVANTAGE

*Cooperative Management Advantage* is the newsletter of the Master of Management—Co-operatives and Credit Unions (MMCCU). The MMCCU is the result of a partnership between Saint Mary's University and the Co-operative Management Education Co-operative. The mailing address is Room 330, Sobey Building, St. Mary's University, 923 Robie Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3H 3C3.

## Staff

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## International Co-operative Identity Statement

"A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others."

## The Seven International Co-operative Principles

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Co-operation Among Co-operatives
7. Concern for Community

— International Co-operative Alliance ([www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop))

## "Come Together, Right Now" continued from page 3

Josu Ugarte, president of the world's largest industrial worker co-operative, based in Mondragon, Spain, called this "a historic first step toward making union co-ops a viable business model that can create good jobs, empower workers, and support communities in the United States and Canada."

### Visions+Values+People

Gerard commented, "Too often we have seen Wall Street hollow out companies by draining their cash and assets and hollowing out communities by shedding jobs and shuttering plants. We need a new business model that invests in workers and invests in communities..."

"Gerard continued, We have lots of experience with ESOPs, but have found that it doesn't take long for the Wall Street types to push workers aside and take back control."

"We see Mondragon's co-operative model ... as a means to re-empower workers and

make business accountable to Main Street instead of Wall Street."

"We feel inspired to take this step based on our common set of values with the Steelworkers who have proved time and again that the future belongs to those who connect vision and values to people and put all three first," Ugarte added. The full text of the Agreement is available at [http://assets.usw.org/Releases/agree\\_usw\\_mondragon.pdf](http://assets.usw.org/Releases/agree_usw_mondragon.pdf)

**"We see Mondragon's co-operative model... as a means to re-empower workers and make business accountable to Main Street instead of Wall Street."**

LEO GERARD,  
PRESIDENT UNITED STEELWORKERS



**On an MMCCU Study Visit to Spain a group of students meets with Fred Freundlich (far right) of the University of Mondragon. From left: Cerise Ligneel (The Wedge food co-op, US); Mo Ladak (Van City CU, Canada); Ana Freundlich; MMCCU instructor Jim Smith (National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, US), and Andrew McLeod, a consultant with California Center for Cooperative Development.**

## Co-operative Identity continued from page 8

of business tools and ideas that are just as powerful, but different.

Furthermore, in regard to the question: Do the business solutions to problems differ in successful co-operatives and credit unions as compared to those that perform weakly or poorly, or de-mutualize? The answer is yes. The MMCCU program rests on the best examples from around the world of co-operative business solutions. Is there a conflict between being a co-operative and being successful? We believe the answer is a resounding 'No.'

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of written material (in English) that speaks directly to the management of co-operatives, although thanks to MMCCU students that is changing. To deepen the curriculum materials available, we decided to hold symposia where specialists from academia as well as practitioners could present the latest thinking on co-operative business issues.

MMCCU held its first Symposium in 2006 on "Co-operative Accounting". The very idea was new to the co-operative world but is now, happily, much more widely accepted. "The Co-operative and Its Workers" was held in 2007, and the third Symposium, "Co-operative Legislation and Public Policy" was held in 2009.

One result of these symposia was the creation in 2007 of the Centre of Excellence for Accounting and Reporting in Co-operatives (CEARC), with strong funding and support from the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, Canada's Accounting Standards Board.

**FRANK:** *Credit unions in the U.S. may not think of themselves as co-operatives. Any thoughts on why that is, and what they may be missing in not doing so? Are there co-operative partnerships you feel U.S. credit unions should be leveraging?*

**TOM:** If credit union managers were to visit either the Mondragon co-operatives in the Basque Country or the Italian co-operatives in Emilia Romana, they would

quickly realize the enormous business opportunity they are passing up. If for some reason credit unions imagine a benefit from being isolated from the other businesses in their world that understand, support, and share their ideas, they might choose isolation. But in fact isolation leaves them weaker.

Imagine if credit unions were linked to co-operative businesses and provided their financial services. Imagine if credit unions provided 'co-operative capital' to fuel co-operative growth.

[The co-op image in the U.S. of 'commune-dwelling, Grateful Dead following hippies'] is out of touch with reality. Two hundred forty-five thousand co-operative businesses in Europe have an output equal to the ninth largest GNP in the world. The three hundred largest co-operatives in the world have a similar output.

**The purpose of co-operative business is different from that of investor owned business, so it needs a set of business tools and ideas that are just as powerful, but different.**

Co-operatives employ more than the largest 500 multinational corporations combined. There are three billion people who have needs met by co-operatives, and one billion members. The Mondragon co-operatives we visit nearly every year are fifteen to twenty percent more productive than their investor owned competitors.

Do co-operatives work? Clearly, they do.

So why do we too often think we are inferior? Perhaps, because there is so little study of co-operative business and credit unions. Perhaps, because many of our own managers do not believe in the power of

### What Students Say [mmccu.coop/grad\\_profiles](http://mmccu.coop/grad_profiles)



**Kathy Phillips, MMCCU Graduate:**  
*"I am amazed at the ability of the co-operative structure to help those in society who don't interest investor-owned business."*

the co-operative business model. Perhaps, because our education system does not allow people to learn about co-operatives, nor does our media cover them except when they fail. Perhaps, because we are a relatively small percentage of the GNP in Canada, the USA and the UK.

The business alternative we offer is critically important to today's world. We need to use the opportunity to expand and strengthen the worldwide co-operative business sector by focusing on our unique co-operative identity.

Managers who have an MMCCU degree are demonstrating that they are ready, willing, and able to handle these and other challenges they will face in the coming decade. We will need many, many more people and programs like this, all over the world, in many languages, focusing on the Co-operative Identity Statement and linking to one another for mutual benefit, if co-operation is ultimately going to fulfill its potential for good.

## ICA Assembly 2009 Highlights

Dame Pauline Green, former Leader of the European Labour Party and first female CEO of Co-operatives UK, was elected President of the International Co-operative Alliance at its General Assembly in November. Green is the 114-year old alliance's first woman president.

The Assembly's theme was 'Global Crisis—Co-operative Opportunity.' ICA members elected Kathy Bardswick of the Canadian Co-operative Association and Paul Hazen of National Cooperative Business Association (US) to the board and adopted resolutions by ICA on several critical issues including the economic crisis, sustainable energy, climate change, peace, and nuclear disarmament. Nearly 800 delegates took part in the event which was held in Geneva, Switzerland.

The ICA keynote was delivered by Jeremy Rifkin of the US, a longtime advocate of clean energy and sustainable development. He spoke about how co-operatives could be the lead organizers of distributed energy around the world. This and other presentations will soon be available for downloading at [www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop).

## MMCCU Director Wins Research Grant

Larry Haiven, MMCCU program director and instructor, and a member of the faculty at Saint Mary's University, has received a \$7,000 grant to research governance in co-operative enterprises. He shares the award with his wife Judy Haiven who is also on the SMU faculty and an instructor in the MMCCU program. The grant comes from the Institute for Nonprofit Studies at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta.

Haiven comments, "In the accounting and reporting function, many co-ops not only pay lip service to a 'triple bottom line' but specifically demand accountability. They have developed sophisticated instruments to measure these criteria. This in-depth study will explore the extent to which governance is practiced and impacted by these principles."



**MMCCU Program Director Larry Haiven (second from left) on a tour of a fishing co-op as part of the Study Visit to Emilia Romana, Italy. At left is John Restakis, ED of the Canadian Co-operative Association - British Columbia. MMCCU students Adrian Crowley and Alan Dootson, both from the UK, are on the right.**

Says Judy Haiven, "we want to investigate the relationship between co-operative governance and their performance and whether co-operatives, as a subset of the not-for-profit sector, have lessons for governance in the nonprofit sector as a whole."

## New CMEC Member Plants the Seed

Lana Gray, Chief Marketing Officer for Concentra Financial, a Canadian credit union company, announced in October that they would be joining the Co-operative Management Education Co-operative (CMEC) and would contribute to the co-op at the level of \$2,000 per year for five years. CMEC is the group that helped create the MMCCU program.

"It is a small start, but it gets the seed planted," she wrote to MMCCU program manager, Tom Webb. "As well, I hope to have employees actually involved in the Master's program, which will be additional support through direct participation." That's the kind of support we like best!

## More Kudos for iNova

MMCCU graduate Willy Robinson, GM of iNova Credit Union based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, recently accepted an award from the Better Business Bureau of the Maritime Provinces for the credit union's exemplary business ethics.

iNova was nominated and selected as a result of its ability to demonstrate that it is a responsible and sustainable organization that has ethical leadership, programs and practices. Steve Scanlan, Chair of the iNova Credit Union Board, and Robinson accepted the award at the 5th Annual Maritime Ethics Dinner. A staff member who attended said, "It was like the Academy Awards... it was most exciting and I was very proud."

## January 11 Deadline for Abstracts/Proposals

The Canadian Association for the Study of Co-operatives invites researchers, students and practitioners to submit abstracts and proposals for panels that reflect on the importance of co-operative research to building equitable and sustainable communities. Deadline for submission of abstracts and panel proposals is January 11, 2010. For details: <http://tinyurl.com/coopresearch>.

# MMCCU News

**From left: incoming MMCCU candidate Stephanie Guico joins Lily Ng (Class of '07) and April Bourgeois (Class of '09) at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation in November.**



## More from Moore's Film On Capitalism

In his latest documentary *Capitalism*, filmmaker Michael Moore introduces viewers to several worker co-ops in the United States. While in production, Moore taped a number of additional interviews with co-operators, including a three-hour con-

versation with MMCCU program manager Tom Webb.

Last November, Moore contacted Webb to let him know that the interview will be part of a DVD being released in March by Moore's film company Dog Eats Dog.

At a lecture Moore gave in the US that was recorded by National Public Radio, a

## MMCCU Applications Due May 31, 2010

Saint Mary's University sets the deadline for applying to all programs based there, including the MMCCU program (late admission may be possible with permission from the program manager).

Prospective MMCCU candidates with questions or in need of financial aid, please contact us soon at [larry.haiven@smu.ca](mailto:larry.haiven@smu.ca)

member of the audience asked why Dog Eats Dog was not a worker co-op. Moore's reply? He is looking into transferring ownership of the company to the workers, although he will retain creative control of the films' contents. We guess those co-operators he talked to had some convincing arguments!

# CMEC Membership

Co-operative Management Education Co-operative—October 2009

## Co-operatives and Credit Unions

Concentra Financial, Canada  
Cooperative Fund of New England, USA  
Co-op Atlantic, Canada  
Credit Union Central of Prince Edward Island  
Northumberland Co-operative Dairy, Canada  
Fredericton Direct Charge, Canada  
The Co-operators, Canada  
The Co-operative Group, UK  
Scotsburn Co-operative Dairy, Canada  
Sydney Credit Union, Canada  
Credit Union Central of Canada  
Midcounties Co-operative, UK  
Credit Union Central of New Brunswick  
Newfoundland Labrador Federation of Co-ops  
FirstOntario Credit Union, Canada  
Meridian Credit Union, Canada  
Central 1, Canada  
Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada  
Gay Lea Foods, Canada  
Ontario Natural Food Co-operative, Canada

CUMIS, Canada  
Scotian Gold Co-operative, Canada  
Canadian Co-operative Association  
United Farmers of Alberta, Canada  
Scottish Agricultural Organization Society, UK  
Envision Financial Credit Union, Canada  
Arctic Co-operatives Ltd., Canada  
Credit Union Central of Alberta, Canada  
Federation of Alberta Gas Co-operatives  
National Co-operative Bank, USA  
Boeing Employees Credit Union, USA  
Wedge Community Co-operative, USA  
Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, Canada  
Brattleboro Food Cooperative, USA  
Hanover Consumers Cooperative, USA  
Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation  
York Credit Union, Canada  
ACA Poultry Co-operative, Canada  
GROWMARK Canada/USA  
VanCity Credit Union, Canada  
Credit Union National Association USA

## Educational Institutions

Saint Mary's University, Canada  
Co-operative College, UK  
Center for the Study of Co-operatives,  
National University of Ireland, Cork  
Co-operative Development Institute, USA  
New Zealand Association of Co-operatives  
Co-op Federation of New South Wales  
National Coop Business Assoc., USA  
Co-operatives UK  
NW Coop Development Center, USA  
Co-operative Fed. of Victoria, Australia  
Lappeenranta Univ., Co-op Business Unit, Finland

## Individuals

Marshall Winkler, Hawaii, USA  
Sir Graham Melmoth, UK  
Dr. Leslie Brown, Nova Scotia, Canada  
David Blackburn, Michigan, USA  
Peter Podovnikoff, BC, Canada  
Geoff Southwood, Alberta, Canada

## What Is MMCCU?

The Master of Management—Co-operatives and Credit Unions (MMCCU) degree program was created in 2002 by a partnership between the Co-operative Management Education Co-operative (CMEC) and Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

It is the only Master's degree in co-operative management offered in English by an internationally accredited business school.

Each August, an international group of students and faculty meets in Nova Scotia for Orientation Week. Then students return to their respective countries and communities to begin the 12 online courses of individual and group studies that lead to earning a Master's degree. Half-way through the program there is a 10-day Study Visit to an exemplary region of co-operative business activity, such as Mondragon, Spain or Emilia Romana, Italy.

All course work reflects the needs of, and is applicable to, the candidate's sponsoring co-op or another co-operative organization. Many of these are members of CMEC, listed on page 7. New members are welcome.

Registration closes May 31st for the course beginning in Fall, 2010. Later admission may be considered.

**Tel (902) 496-8170**  
**www.mmccu.coop**

To read interviews with MMCCU graduates and students on the MMCCU web site, go to Candidate Profiles: <http://www.mmccu.coop>.

# The Statement of Identity

## A Power Tool for Co-operative Development

**FRANK DIEKMANN**, *Publisher of Credit Union Journal (USA)* interviewed *MMCCU Program Manager Tom Webb* in Fall 2009. This edited version is used by permission. Access the Journal at: [www.cujournal.com](http://www.cujournal.com).

**FRANK:** *What is different about the Master of Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions degree, and how did the program come about?*

**TOM:** Our research showed there was only one graduate level course on co-operatives in the English speaking world and only a few lone undergraduate courses in departments of economics, sociology or history. There were no co-operative programs. Research on co-operatives in business schools was very limited. Only thirty percent of basic business texts mentioned them, and half the references were *negative!*

Meanwhile, co-ops struggled to maintain their co-operative identity. Importing managers from investor-owned business—and failing to provide strong management education—exacerbated this condition, and deepened internal ‘self doubts’ about the value of the co-operative business model.

Co-operatives needed a source of co-operative business solutions as an alternative to investor owned business solutions. The assumptions were, one, that if co-ops were not significantly different, people wouldn't need them and, two, bankrupt co-operatives cannot meet members' needs.

Another fundamental assumption is that the International Co-operative Values and Principles are widely respected and admired around the world, appealing to the best in humans. They are not a drag on the business, but the source of its power and potential.

Our intention from the start was not to offer an MBA with a bit of co-operative content thrown in. We deliberately built a program dedicated to the co-operative business model. All courses were built from the ground up. Several courses place co-operatives within the context of the political economy and examine the political economy of co-operation.

Even the functional business disciplines like accounting, finance, marketing, and people management are taught with an analysis based on the co-operative business difference. At the heart of that difference is an understanding of co-operative business purpose, values, principles and ethical stance.

The question of how co-operative and credit union experience differs from that of banks and investor owned companies during the current financial meltdown would not be explored in an MBA program—or even likely seen as being of interest.

For one example, the concept of Human Resources, when looked at from a co-operative perspective, has less potential to contribute to co-operative business success than the co-operative values of ‘self-help’ and ‘caring for others’.

Another example is accounting only for how resources are used to maximize the rate of return on financial investment, which leaves other yardsticks of co-operative business success unmeasured. Far too often, this means these areas will also be un-managed.

Because the very purposes of co-operative business—meeting member and community needs—are different from those of investor owned businesses, they need a set

**“The Co-operative values and principles are not a drag on the business, but the source of its power and potential.”**

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Say what?  
See p.1