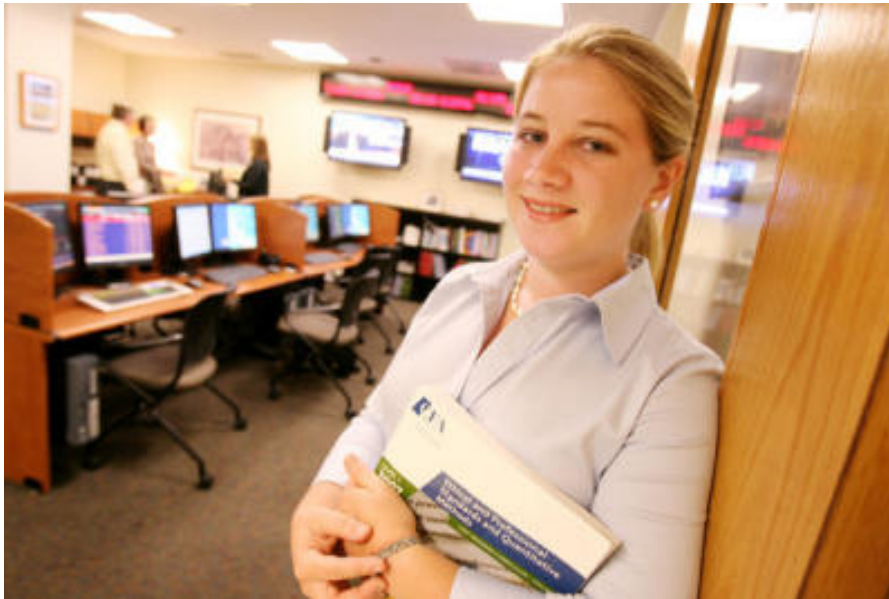


MU to recruit more women into investment program

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by [Jennifer Batog](#)



Scott Paulus

Nicole Roden . . . "When you have women in finance in college, that's going to feed into the workplace and hopefully in 10 or 15 years there will be more diversity."

A half-dozen women graduated from Marquette University's applied investment management program this year, compared with one in 2006, the program's first year. However, the number of women expected to graduate next year has dropped, and officials plan to boost efforts to recruit women.

The six women graduating from the program this year represent a third of the 18-member class.

Sarah Peck, chairwoman of Marquette's finance department, said she believes a panel discussion held in the fall of 2005 featuring prominent women in the finance industry helped spark interest in the program for this year. A similar panel was not held in 2006. Peck said that likely played a role in the drop in women in next year's class to two. The department plans another panel this year early in the fall semester.

"We definitely learned a lesson," Peck said. "To cultivate female students to pursue careers in finance, you really have to continue to nurture that. It's so useful for them to see a role model, to see there's a woman who can talk about their experience."

Diversity matters

The finance industry wants a diverse work force because that brings different opinions and approaches, which can help the industry form better client relationships, she said.

Program administrators want to work with recent female graduates to bring them back to campus so they can promote the program. Also, two of the women from this year's class plan to write an article on their experiences for the program's newsletter.

The AIM program is limited to about 18 students. Applied investment management blends traditional investment theories with practical experience. Marquette's program includes real world portfolio management, security analysis and summer internships. Students apply in the fall of their junior year. There has been an increase in women students interested in applying for the program, said David Krause, AIM's director. Of the 50 incoming juniors who have expressed an interest in the program for the 2008-2009 school year, 19, or 38 percent, are women, he said.

The program also is reaching out to younger students, bringing high school classes or small groups to campus to visit the AIM program, and working with guidance counselors or business teachers, he said.

Showing students, especially young girls, the finance industry's career opportunities might help boost female interest, said Nicole Roden, a program participant who graduated May 20.

Role models

Often the male students have been interested in finance since childhood, wanting to emulate fathers or other male relatives in the business, while women discover their interest much later, she said. Roden didn't realize she would like to explore finance until she was a college sophomore.

An accounting and finance major, Roden decided to apply for the program after speaking to Krause and the first woman to graduate from the program.

Having other women in the class creates a comfort zone because many women in finance don't have much in common with their male counterparts, Roden said. During a summer internship at JP Morgan in New York, Roden worked primarily with older men, which sometimes made the job difficult, she said.

Still, diversity in the classroom makes for a stimulating exchange of ideas, she said.

"It's just interesting what everyone brings to the table," she said. "When you have women in finance in college, that's going to feed into the workplace and hopefully in 10 or 15 years there will be more diversity."