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# PennCurrent

News, Ideas and Conversations from the University of Pennsylvania May 10, 2007

## Lessons from Charleston

BY JUDY HILL

At the Penn Institute for Urban Research's third Urban Leadership Forum, held on April 26 in Huntsman Hall, co-director Eugenie Birch talked about sustainability, a theme around

which much of the Institute's work this year has centered. A "Growing Greener Cities" symposium earlier this year tackled the topic, and the Forum's keynote

### PUBLIC POLICY

Charleston mayor reveals keys to success in his Southern city

speaker, Charleston, South Carolina Mayor Joseph Riley has spent his career promoting that quality in the elegant Southern city he governs.

Riley, a native of Charleston who was first elected mayor in 1975, has been at the helm of the city for an unprecedented eight terms. During his tenure, crime has gone down in Charleston, while the size and population of the city have continued to grow.

The historic downtown district has seen a remarkable revitalization and citizens can now enjoy a beautiful waterfront park and an annual performing arts extravaganza—the Spoleto Festival—that is unrivaled in the U.S.

In his lunchtime talk to an audience of planners, architects and preservationists, Riley described his approach to making Charleston one of the most livable cities in the nation. For 32 years he has been guided, he said, by a set of simple yet unwavering principles.

#### Show some respect

"When we allow junk to happen," said Riley, "we'll have it for 30 to 70 years." Faced with ugly affordable housing that had been built in the '50s and '60s, Riley held an architectural competition to challenge architects to design something beautiful. "There's never any excuse to get something built that doesn't add to the beauty of a city."

He also worked hard to keep the bulldozers out and restore rather than raze, whenever possible. "It's about memories," he said. "Citizens badly need memories. We want the texture and patina and energy and vision of the people before us."

Enlisting help from Habitat for Humanity, Riley restored a neighborhood of dilapidated African-American post Civil War cottages. "Never say 'We don't have to worry how we do it because it's just affordable housing.' If people can see it, it will influence their lives."

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### Q&A Marketing buff



Candace ofCarlo

### Q&A Americus Reed II BY JUDY HILL

Since marketing is an applied science, reasons Americus Reed II, why not teach students to apply the theories taught in class to a practical setting? Reed, the Arthur Anderson Term Assistant Professor of Marketing at the Wharton School, had just that in mind when he applied for a grant to offer an Ideas in Action course to his students.

Initiated by the Office of the Provost and coordinated through the Fels Institute of Government, the Ideas in Action program consists of problem-based classes that bring students into contact with a leading public official who helps to guide their work.

Reed chose to focus on the problem of teenage obesity, teaming up with Wharton alum and fitness club owner Samuel

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## 'XPN's 'World Cafe' hits television

BY TIM HYLAND

WXPN is going national—and taking its eclectic musical vision to the world of television.

The Penn-owned radio station recently announced that PBS would begin broadcasting a new show, "On Stage At World Cafe Live," featuring live performances recorded at University City's World Cafe Live concert venue. The series premiered May 6, and its 13-show run will continue through July 29.

The show will be hosted by 'XPN's David Dye, host of the World Cafe Live radio show, and will also include interviews with the artists by 'XPN "Morning Show" host Michaela Majoun. In the Philadelphia area, it will air on Sunday nights at 11 p.m. on WHYI, with the exception of the June 17 and June 24 shows, which will air at 10:30, feature two artists and run a full hour.

The show is being produced by Philadelphia's Delilah Films, which has made a name for itself with a series of documentaries and concerts on legendary musicians including Joni Mitchell, Gram Parsons, Chuck Berry and Roy Orbison. The show's first season features a diverse range of artists straight from 'XPN's extensive playlist—guests range from singer-songwriter Steve Forbert (pictured) to blues songstress Shemekia Copeland to saxophonist Joshua Redman.

The season kicked off with a performance by Living Colour on May 6, and continues as follows:

May 13: Rhett Miller

May 20: David Poe

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### MUSIC





## Q&amp;A / AMERICUS REED II

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## "These things can work if the right tools are in place."

Botts and Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Calvin Johnson. Botts (pictured at right with Reed) had already begun to tackle the problem with a 12-week program called Youth Challenge offered at his Center City club, VIGORworks Fitness Center, in partnership with health insurer AmeriChoice. Reed had his students come up with marketing campaigns to increase signup and retention rates for Youth Challenge. They then presented their final reports and public policy recommendations to Secretary Johnson.

As the course wound down this spring, Reed pronounced it a "tremendous success." Twice as many teens had signed up for the program compared to previous sessions, and the students had learned to apply Reed's social psychology approach to marketing to a real-world problem, impressing Secretary Johnson along the way with their insights and energy.

**Q** Why did you choose teenage obesity as the focus of the course?

**A** Clearly teenage obesity is a huge problem, particularly in the inner city where choices are bad and cheap food is bad for you. So we felt there was a need there in the community to challenge ourselves to see if we could do some good.

**Q** How did you pick Youth Challenge? Did you know Sam Botts?

**A** Yes, he was a former student of mine. He's an MBA. He graduated from Wharton in 2002 and he would often come to my office just to talk and he very much had this entrepreneurial itch. There's a very strong pressure here to kind of go the typical cookie cutter I-banking, finance route. He resisted that because he felt he wanted to do something more grass roots, more entrepreneurial. So he opened up the fitness facility and I've been in contact with him talking about ideas for the marketing piece over there. He's a phenomenal guy. He cares so much about the community. It's really admirable. I think a lot of times what you see in business school is you come in and it's easy to put the blinders on and start thinking. "Well, my job is to make a lot of money." And Sam is a good example of someone who said, "No, you know there's a social responsibility as well." Like any business person you're trying to run a professional business but what I like about Sam's point of view is he has a very clear understanding that doing well in the community and doing well as a business person are not mutually exclusive goals and the one helps and complements the other oftentimes.

Sam extended his brand into this Youth Challenge project and he ran two pilot tests of the program and was disappointed with the response. He couldn't figure it out. You know, this is a free program why isn't there more interest? He was like, "I think there's latent demand out there but what am I doing wrong? Maybe I'm marketing this thing wrong, maybe I'm not reaching out to the segments and communicating the message in the right way." So we had the idea why don't we bring it into the classroom, give it

to these smart kids and see what they can do with it, partner up with the Secretary of Health to expand the focus a little bit and have this kind of multi-group multi-cross-disciplinary effort to try to attack the problem. So the Youth Challenge program was already up and running but in need of some energy from a marketing point of view, which was perfect for the synergy with the class.

**Q** What did it mean for the course that you got an Ideas in Action grant?

**A** It meant we got some money to use and then we worked closely with the Fels Institute of Government to connect the cross-disciplinary effort between the marketing piece, which is in my class, the entrepreneurial and business end piece, which is what Sam is doing, and the governmental piece, which is the Secretary of Health. So there were three different kinds of angles and we tried to coalesce the project in one group effort. Fels helped us coordinate some of that and I gave the money from the grant to the students to use as their marketing budget.

**Q** How did the students respond when you told them what their class project would be?

**A** They loved it. Here's the thing. In business school there's always this constant pressure between theory and applied. We're often criticized in academia for being in the ivory tower, pontificating about various kinds of things and not really having real-world impact, so I think the students really resonated to the fact that this is real. The students did something. Because of their hard work a message was received and people showed up and got involved and got signed in and are in the program right now changing their lives. It's very powerful. It's one thing to talk about concepts in the abstract, like how do you market a product, how do you speak to a niche. That's theory, but this is like, let's take all these concepts from the class, all the tools we learned from a social psychological view of marketing consumption and apply it to this specific project. And they really loved it. They loved the fact that it had that real world efficacy involved.

**Q** Talk me through the project.

**A** It basically involved three components. The first was secondary research. What we do in marketing is we always see what's out there. So the first thing you do is you go to the library and you see what you can learn about obesity and inner city youth and the preferences of these kids, their different psychographic and demographic backgrounds. Who are these peo-



Wharton marketing professor Americus Reed (right) with Youth Challenge founder Sam Botts. Above, students from Reed's Ideas in Action course.

ple? You develop a customer profile to try to understand not just who they are in terms of age and demographics, but try to delve into the underlying psychology, what are their motives what are they interested in, the culture, what speaks to them and all that.

Part two of the project was to develop an assessment tool to identify the parents that are particularly ready for change. So I had the students develop what we called parental support markers, which are basically just assessment questions that allow us to group people—here are people who really would be interested in this program whereas here are people who need to be possibly more motivated. Part three was developing a flyer to send to some of these people to communicate critical information about this program and why they ought to be interested in it. Part four was developing a telephone message, writing a script to reach out to them and tell them why it's important, why they

might be interested, why they ought to show up, sign up and get oriented and participate in the 12-week program.

Then we track who got what message from which group and we see who shows up and who signs up and who's currently still in the program and we track over time the progress of each participant to see how things have changed in their eating habits, their socialization process with respect to adopting a healthy lifestyle identity.

The fifth piece of it is, okay now you're in front of Dr. Johnson. Tell us the key things you learned from a public policy point of view. If you were going to try to build this line item into the state budget and make these kinds of programs readily available what would the key issues be, what have you learned, what would your recommendations be to Dr. Johnson to go to the legislators to push these kinds of programs?

So that's the entire project. Just now

## Upcoming Fall 2007 (to date)

**Blueprints on Crime, Education**  
*Instructor: John Dilulio Jr.* Students and private foundation executives

**Healthy Schools**  
*Instructors: Mary Summers and Jack* to implement the new federal market Philadelphia schools.

**Effecting Change in Philadelphia**  
*Instructor: David Grossman* Participating for ethical, efficient and effective

**Toward Environmental Sustainability**  
*Instructors: Robert Giegengack and S* now under consideration by the U

**Genetics & Social Policy**  
*Instructor: Ruth Cowan* This course is a joint effort by governmental jurisdictions





photos: Candace diCarlo

## g Ideas in Action Courses

ate)

### and Jobs for Philly's New Mayor

will engage in field work and meet with government officials, community leaders, journalists to develop outside-the-box strategic action plans for Philadelphia's new mayor.

*ie McLaughlin* This community service and research seminar will address the question of how updates for school "wellness policies" in ways that will improve the health environment in West

### ia: Reforming City Government

ants will work with the Committee of Seventy—a long-standing organization that actively works government in Philadelphia—on a project of vital interest to the incoming mayor and council.

### ability on Penn's Campus

*Stan Laskowski* Students will examine Penn's "environmental footprint" and review strategies University to reduce that footprint.

will focus on the policy implications of the aquisition and accumulation of genetic informa- s, physicians, insurers and employers since the mid 1960s.

we're at the point where we're giving stu- dents initial feedback on how well their ma- terials did, so it's very exciting.

#### Q How many students were involved?

A We had 16 teams. 106 students, some- thing like that. We randomly assigned each team to 188 eligible participants [Am- eriChoice members], so we had 3,000 total participants who could be eligible.

#### Q That's a lot of students to get organized.

A Yes, that was a huge challenge. When I first applied, Fels told me typically the sorts of classes that get ap- proved for this Ideas in Action course are really small classes with, say, 15 students, so you can really mentor and be really hands on with everything. So that was a huge chal- lenge, though the kids did a great job.

#### Q Tell me about the students who took the class.

A What's interesting about the class is that because it was cross-listed in other departments, we got a mix. So I would say about half were from outside of Wharton. The Wharton kids are all sort of slick and polished. They're like, "Here's my Power- point, let me just riff it." Some of the other students from the College were less used to that kind of discourse but what I like about the non-Wharton students is they come in with a kind of different perspective. I had some poli sci majors and one girl who was a biology major who was coming in from a really different point of view. The mix of business kids and non-business kids coming together made it its own little diversity thing.

#### Q Was the project a success?

A It was a tremendous success. So here's a critical point. Comparing the data points from the last two runnings of the program, the response to the outreach and the actual signup doubled. There was a huge spike in the actual response rate and the

showup rate, and then much less of a drop off and attrition. We're very excited about that. We think a lot of efficiency in the ap- proach has to do with the fact that the stu- dents used research and tools they learned in the context of the class.

#### Q How did the Secretary of Health re- spond?

A Dr. Johnson was just beside himself in terms of, "Wow! These kids are really impressive." He's really excited about trying to push the issue at the state level. These kinds of programs are really critical. Cur- rently there's no line item in the budget for these kinds of things. It made the point that these things can work if the right tools are in place.

#### Q What do you see as the most important lessons for the students?

A I wanted the kids to understand it's much more than, "Can I come up with a cool flyer?" You can kind of get stuck in these minutiae and the point of [our involvement with] Fels is really to help us make sure we step back and see this as a big- ger picture. There's a bigger public policy issue there that's critical to the health of the nation. Having to talk about it at a higher level with Dr. Johnson is what really allowed us to step back and see the forest for the trees. The other piece I really liked was this entrepreneurial aspect that Sam Botts brings to it. It's nice to have that kind of Wharton association there and it allows us to com- municate that it's not the case that the only thing we care about over here is profit. We also can do some things that can have some good impact as well.

#### Q Did one particular campaign stand out as a winner?

A Absolutely. Everyone did a great job, but one campaign did the best and these guys just really got into it and did a lot of research and just went out of their way to gather as much useful information and ap- ply as much of the concept as they possibly could. Every little part of their materials had a logic behind it. It was literally like, "We're going to use this color because it elicits this emotion. According to our research this emotion leads to a mood that makes you more willing to hear requests of your time." That kind of level of analysis. It was nice for us because it made the point that there's something systematic here and that these tools actually do matter. Originally the idea was I was going to do a sort of quasi "Ap- prentice" kind of thing but when I thought about it I didn't want to create that kind of "You're fired!" context. I wanted to keep it a healthy competition. Still, because this is the kind of place it is, these kids are pretty ambitious, they're all type A's, they all want to do well, so that kind of naturally comes out.

#### Q Will you run the class again?

A I would love to do it again. Given the success of what happened it would be great to keep doing it.

## SAM BOTTTS, WG'02

Owner, VIGORworks

Founder: Youth Challenge

#### Q Tell me about VIGORworks.

A We opened three years ago. I started working on it as soon as I graduated from Wharton in 2002. Most [Wharton grads] are looking to get some money together, so they go to work on Wall Street or do consulting gigs, but I didn't have the patience. The idea with VIGORworks was that we wanted fitness to be seen as part of people's lifestyle. [It's for] weekend warriors who need some- where to make their bodies endure things they do outside of the gym.

#### Q How did Youth Challenge come about?

A I have to give some credit to my mother. She asked if there was something we could do to help kids out and allow us to be more community ori- ented. So we put together this program to prevent adolescent obesity and we met up with some people from AmeriChoice who were looking for a similar program. We launched in April of last year. Each session we've learned a little bit more.

#### Q What did you learn from the students?

A There were a couple of takeaways. Most interesting, a lot of the teams didn't emphasize in their materials the fact that by being a part of it there's an op- portunity for the families to win a grand prize. It was on there but not the focal point. We had thought we had to use these incentives to get people enrolled, but they were able to market on other aspects. Some teams did in-depth research about flyer design, what color to use, how to position certain text copy. I found that to be incredibly useful and insightful.

#### Q Were you impressed with what they came up with?

A I was very impressed by them. There were times when I had to remind myself that they were undergraduates. They were very polished and I thought they did an excellent job.

#### Q How's the current session of Youth Challenge going?

A It's going very well. The kids are enjoying it. The families are actively involved. I couldn't be happier.

#### Q Looking forward?

A Ultimately we'd like to see the program rolled out into multiple facilities and to train other facilities on how to implement and execute Youth Challenge.