



A Season of a Thousand Opportunities

Vision Meeting Presentation

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At a time when it seems the educational institution options in the Church are shrinking down to three letters, we at LDS Business College are grateful to offer a more expanded acronym for your fund-raising efforts.

It appears, at least for the foreseeable future, that LDS Business College will hold a place of honor as the only non-BYU college in the system.

There was a time, however, in our 115-year history when we were a BYU. In 1952, the College became a branch of Brigham Young University to provide students with a wider curriculum. Five years later, we went back to being ourselves.

A UNIQUE PLACE

I think the change back to LDS Business College illustrates the unique place the College holds in the Church Educational System. Our mission statement says that LDS Business College exists “to provide a spiritually grounded education founded on the divine doctrines and principles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It accomplishes its mission by offering one- and two-year programs to

train students in career fields that lead to productive employment.”

Our focus is careers. Our goal is to graduate students who have the necessary spiritual and employment skills to improve their lives. We offer training in six areas as well as a business oriented, general education degree that can transfer to other institutions. We are an open admission college, meaning that we have no academic entrance requirements. We are small, with an enrollment of about 900. As with the other institutions, each student receives an ecclesiastical endorsement before attending. We deliver a to-the-point curriculum that results in employment.

Because of that, we serve a specific kind of student. For example, those who come to us may not have received the best grade-point average in high school. They're bright, but they learn best in a hands-on environment that emphasizes participation. They want a one-on-one relationship with faculty who work for their success. They want an education in an environment that fosters faith and high standards. Many are the first in their family to attend a college

and the one- and two-year programs we offer seem achievable for them. More than half of our graduates gain enough confidence to continue their education, but many of them receive all they need in one or two years and build successful careers and strong families.

We have a unique student body. Our students range in age from 17 to 61, with an average age of 24. Last year our students came from 34 states and 45 different countries. Thirty-three percent of our students are returned missionaries and about 20 percent are international. Our traditional student has recently graduated from high school or returned from a mission. With our expanded programs we are no longer just a secretarial school.

I would like you to get to know our students just a little bit better. Every year my wife Sytske and I ask the students to write a personal letter telling something about themselves as well as the circumstances that brought them to LDS Business College. Their stories are inspirational and I'd like to share just a couple of them with you.

STUDENT STORIES

Karla Hill enrolled at LDS Business College simply to fill a void created when her youngest child started school. But for Karla, the College quickly became her hope after divorce and tragedy changed her world.

Karla described herself as a stay-at-home mom when she enrolled at the College to study medical record transcription and coding. But her life immediately began changing. On her first day of class, Karla's daughter-in-law was nearly killed in an automobile accident and Karla became her nurse. Three months later, her husband filed for divorce. Two weeks after her husband left, Karla's mother had a massive heart attack.

Karla said, "I'd go see mom at the hospital and cry all the way to my night class."

But despite the emotional strain, Karla persisted, taking a full class load.

She said: "I'd wake up in the middle of the night and wonder what I was going to do. I told my kids

we were in our own Winter Quarters for awhile."

With her life changing, Karla's studies took on more practical and immediate implications. She finished her coding and transcription training and began a two-year medical secretary program. Her 4.0 grade-point average caught the attention of the director who asked her to help in a medical records class. That temporary assignment quickly grew to include a 12 credit-hour teaching load.

Karla graduated in 1997 and went to work at the University of Utah Hospital where she now serves as the executive secretary for the OR (operating room) department.

Karla said: "The College believed in me so I could believe in myself. Everything I've been able to do with employment is because the College has been so good to me."

Karla still cares for her mother, has sent a son on an LDS mission to Thailand and has become a grandmother.

Melinda Brown writes:

My experiences here have been nothing but positive from beginning to end. That is not to say there have not been obstacles or trials to overcome and even endure, but my memory will be a positive image of this fine institution.

The instructors I've had have all taught me something. Sometimes not what "I" had in mind, but wonderful lessons because I learned...I really learned. Before I came to LDSBC I had about a 2% level of confidence in my learning abilities, self-confidence and self-esteem.

I never describe myself as a Single Mother, but I am. My son doesn't care if I'm single, only that I'm there at night when he wants me to rub his little back, stroke his beautiful chestnut hair, read him a story or sing to him a little song when he asks.

Three year ago I came to Salt Lake with five suitcases, literally homeless and newly divorced (my parents took me and my son in). This was not part of the plan seven years ago when I married. Well as the saying goes...plans change.

I tried to get into school right away but had to

wait a bit. There was no time to sit and cry about the lot I had created in my life. My son and I needed a future. I needed a plan. After my third failed attempt at community college I got the idea, which was divinely inspired as I look back now, and called LDS Business College.

I called late on a Friday afternoon and was connected with the Director of Admissions. Before we spoke I already knew there was no way I could financially attend school, but I wanted to know the cost regardless.

When he delicately asked if I was a single mom, he unknowingly gave me the key that opened a door to progress, self-esteem and knowledge. He shared with me the information on the Single Mother's Scholarship. I didn't get too excited as it just sounded too good to be true. Life's experiences had made me bitter and untrustworthy of any "too good to be true," experiences. There was in my opinion, nothing good about life and I just had to endure it the best I could.

Now, two years later, three days from graduation I stand corrected and better educated. Life is what we, I, make of it. But, none of us, no matter who we are, can be successful in life if we choose to be alone, proud and ignorant, as I was. –End quote

During this last year, I am pleased to note that the LDS Foundation has helped raise many donations for single mothers that have given us ample funding for that area. We and our students are grateful. We do have other needs, however.

Our greatest short fall now lies in helping students who have financial needs. They may be international students who find themselves without funds and without a sponsor, but mostly they are students whose families cannot afford to help them and who may not qualify for financial aid. The Lord brings them to us and we would like to help. Just this week, a lady told of how she wondered what to do with her life. She was driving down South Temple and almost subconsciously pulled into one of our driveways and walked into the building. When an admissions counselor asked how he could help, she burst into tears. "I don't even know why I'm here," she said.

She felt unsure of herself and had no idea of how to pay for an education. The counselor helped resolve her fears, financial help was made available and she starts this fall. She said: "This is a great blessing. The Lord brought me here."

In addition, the College provides a great option for many returned missionaries who had not thought of college before their mission, but have decided to learn a skill. We would like to provide more scholarship opportunities for them.

'A Glorious Future'

The years ahead look most promising for LDS Business College. We are entering a period of focused and controlled enrollment growth.

We, as faculty, staff and administration have the greatest desire to serve our students as directed by the spirit of the Lord. In fact, our theme for this past year has been taken from the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants verse 10, which reads, "For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man." We have attempted through spiritual guidance to learn the secrets of the Lord's will concerning LDS Business College.

Now as we look forward to the future, we must not be fearful about trying new things. The market place is changing very rapidly, especially in the technology sector. It is a constant challenge to listen to our advisors and then implement programs, certificates and degrees, that are responsive to these great changes.

As the gospel continues to roll forth at a rapid pace to every corner of the world, we are faced with the challenges of providing temporal and spiritual education to those who are embracing the gospel.

Educational institutions are generally slow to facilitate change. We believe in this arena, our smallness is a great advantage. We can adapt quickly, but many times we are afraid to take that step forward into the darkness in order to find a greater light.

Perhaps we can find some guidance as we reflect upon King Arthur and the Round Table in Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." President Boyd K. Packer spoke of this in April Conference of 1989. Herein we find some good counsel.

Tennyson told of Gareth, a prince and knight of King Arthur's Round Table, and of his quest. Lady Lyonors had been stolen away by the horrible black knight, who held her in his castle. Many young knights tried to rescue her and failed. They returned defeated and broken, with tales of the awesome power of the black knight; they begged Gareth not to go. But Gareth went to the castle, with the drawbridge, the tower, and the window where, quote "Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept." Then, high on a night-black horse, in night-black arms with white breast-bone, and barren ribs of death," a laughing skull engraved upon his helmet, "in the half-light thro' the dim dawn—advanced the monster, "more awesome, more terrible even than Gareth had been told." The black knight lowered his lance and thundered forward. Gareth, who had been defeated in more than one tournament, sensed his terrible fate. Every logic and emotion shouted, "Flee for your life!" But he could not turn away. Not, that is, and keep his honor. Gareth lowered his lance and met the charge. And then, to his surprise, Gareth unseated the black knight and tore his helmet away. There in the black armor with the bones engraven on it sat a little boy who began to cry and beg for mercy." End quote. ("Gareth and Lynette, from Idylls of the King," in *The Complete Poetical Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1898, p. 332.)

There are several underlying morals to this story. I want to address three.

First: Even though others have tried and failed, it doesn't mean that it's impossible for you.

Second: Some things aren't as bad as they seem.

Third: Weeping in the window will get you nowhere.

As we look on our past, we see many occasions where the College has been preserved by prophets and nurtured by men and women of strong faith. Some may wonder why the Lord would preserve such a small institution as part of His kingdom. We know as Alma wrote that "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass." (Alma 37:6) The scriptures also provide other insights into our role.

We feel that in our realm and sphere of influence our graduates can, I quote from D&C 109: 23, "bear exceedingly great and glorious tidings, in truth, unto the ends of the earth, that they may know that this is thy work, and that thou has put forth thy hand, to fulfil that which thou has spoken by the mouth of the prophets, concerning the last days." (D&C 109:23) End quote

We hope that our students, who seem at first unable, "might bud and blossom, and bring forth in abundance," as written in the 117th section of the Doctrine and Covenants.(D&C 117:7)

Therefore, it becomes our charge (I quote from the Prophet Isaiah) to "strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees." To "say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing;

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa 35:3-10) End quote. This is what we desire for the students of LDS Business College.

We are honored to be in this great work with you and look forward to what Karl G. Maeser described as our "glorious future."