

The Steppingstone

Fall 2007

Class of 2008 Breaks Records



The Acton School of Business opened its doors to 24 new students on August 27th. The Class of 2008 is comprised of more minority and international students than any class before. This diversity is a result of a record number of applications, up more than 40% from last year. Out of those applications, Acton had an impressive 80% admissions yield, results equal to that of Stanford's on the Forbes 2007 Best B-Schools List.

The incoming class, primarily referred to Acton by its alumni and supporters, has a GMAT average of 670 and degrees from a wide variety of institutions including Rhodes College, Washington & Lee, Pepperdine Law School, and the Indian Institute of Technology. Thirty percent of the class already has a Masters, Law degree, or Ph.D. With a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, the Class of 2008 includes:

A former member of the Peace Corps who has spent the last year helping indigenous Guatemalan women develop and sell handmade goods; The founder of a successful dog toy company; A chemical engineer who founded an online tutoring company; A World History teacher and soccer coach who owns and manages a bait and tackle shop.

"Acton has given me the chance to learn from successful, practicing entrepreneurs and allowed me to see first hand that it is not only possible, but probable, that I can have a rewarding life at work as well as a fulfilling life with my family and in my community."

- Angèle Dupré
Class of 2007

ACTON MBA
in Entrepreneurship

INFORMATION SESSIONS

The Fall 2007 Information Sessions will be led by Acton Master Teacher Jeff Sandefer in Houston and Austin this October. To RSVP, visit www.actonmba.org or contact Acton's Director of Enrollment, Jessica Blanchard, at jblanchard@actonmba.org.

BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

The Fall 2007 Alumni Case Discussion will be led by Acton Master Teacher Jeff Serra on September 27, 2007 at the Acton classrooms. To RSVP, contact Acton's Director of Programs, Tracy Balboa, at tbalboa@actonmba.org.

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Information Sessions



For three consecutive years, the Princeton Review has ranked Acton MBA students as the “Most Competitive” in the country. This recognition and growing international press coverage have made The Acton MBA program more popular than ever, driving a record number of potential students to Acton’s Information Sessions. These sessions are held several times a year throughout Texas and Oklahoma, and bring together alumni, teachers, supporters and prospective students in an interactive environment. Many Acton Scholars tell us that alumni they met at these sessions were invaluable resources throughout the application and decision-making process. Having been through the program themselves, alumni are experts at recognizing qualified Acton candidates and are able to give prospective students a clear picture of what the twelve-month journey entails.

“Attending an information session allowed me to meet and talk with current students on the ‘front lines’ to see how Acton truly sets itself apart from other MBA programs.”

- Will Tippen
Incoming student, Class of 2008

Potential students are not the only ones who benefit from information sessions. Alumni who attend are reminded of how they began their own Acton journey. “Not only do I rediscover the drives and motivations that brought me to and through Acton,” says Alumnus, Chip Rankin, “but it’s also a great way to re-ignite those core values while helping out the school and future students.”

Last year’s information sessions were extremely effective; fifty-two percent of Acton’s incoming class attended one of the six sessions offered. If you know someone who would be a great Acton Scholar, encourage them to attend an information session to learn more about the program.

THE ACTON MBA INFORMATION SESSIONS

Acton will be hosting two Information Sessions this Fall

Houston

Wednesday,
October 17, 2007
6:00 to 7:30pm

Four Seasons Hotel
1300 Lamar Street

Austin

Monday,
October 22, 2007
6:00 to 7:30pm

Four Seasons Hotel
98 San Jacinto Blvd

The Alumni Beat



Acton Scholars 2007 celebrate their graduation in May

ACTON MISSION:

Our mission is to prepare talented and dedicated students for extraordinary lives as principled entrepreneurs.

THE ACTON MBA PROMISES TO TEACH STUDENTS TO:

Learn How to Learn

Learn How to Make Money

Learn How to Live a
Life of Meaning

Alumni Profile: Brandon Willard '06

Fresh out of college at the age of 22, Brandon Willard was the youngest member of Acton's Class of 2006. Just one year later, Brandon is now running his own business. Fearless, and inspired by one of his most valued lessons learned, he confidently and gladly recalls, "I learned that not knowing everything can be beneficial."

Brandon's post graduation journey began with a common first step – the job hunt. He was becoming quite frustrated however, "Companies seemed to have a problem with my age," and as the frustrations began to mount, Brandon went to see a man who was often able to lend a hand of guidance when it mattered most, his mentor and former teacher, Greg Fitzgerald. "Every time I meet with an Acton teacher, we don't talk about the stock market; we talk about our passions. This is what makes Acton unique." This particular conversation turned out to be no exception, and in fact a new business plan was born for DisplayPoints, a maker of digital advertising tabletop displays. Shortly after he began to meet with Greg, he accepted a full-time position at TippingPoint, a high-tech network security company, while Greg continued to advise him on his side venture.



Using the Acton business model, Brandon is now enjoying great success, having built and launched his company in an incredibly short period of time. His tabletop units are currently in three Austin restaurants, with seven additional locations in the works. Advertisers from several industries have shown serious interest. "One of the biggest challenges I am facing now is how to deal with day-to-day activities while still focusing on long-term strategies," Brandon admits.

Brandon discovered his entrepreneurial potential during college while volunteering for the non-profit, Young Life. "I was working on a new way to start Young Life chapters in lower income communities, but at the time I did not know enough to bring my ideas to fruition." Today, using the skills and lessons he assembled at Acton, Brandon is once again pursuing this venture and is excited about the prospects it presents. "The greatest thing Acton has taught me is that pursuing your calling is the most important thing in life, and that it is even possible to make a little money doing it."

Brandon's early career frustrations are long gone, and have been replaced by the calming energy of a most worthwhile pursuit – one's calling.



FEE MISSION:
The Foundation for Entrepreneurial Excellence is dedicated to creating a revolutionary case curriculum, teacher training program for entrepreneurs and free market governance model for business schools.

We're Looking for New Mavericks

Do you have strong ties to your alma mater or local university and a desire to teach the next generation of entrepreneurs? If so, The Foundation for Entrepreneurial Excellence (FEE) is looking for you. In a continuing effort to spread entrepreneurial, case method teaching across the country, FEE is searching for successful practicing entrepreneurs interested in teaching.

Providing extensive resources and teacher training, FEE packages its curriculum as a cohesive unit or as individual courses. Its courses are among the top-rated classes currently taught at the University of Oklahoma, Hardin-Simmons University and the Holon Institute of Technology in Israel.

For more information about FEE and what it takes to become a FEE Master Teacher, visit www.feexcellence.org.

All Acton, All the Time: The Acton Podcast Series and Best Books List

- Wish you were back in the case classroom? Now you can be. The Acton Podcast Series features sessions with Acton's best Thursday Speakers as well as our Entrepreneur-Teachers. To see the list of speakers or to subscribe to the series visit www.actonmba.org and click on Press.

- You've seen it before, but now you have the chance to rate books on Acton's Best Book List! Acton's version of the New York Times' Bestseller list is comprised of books nominated as essential reads by members of Acton's faculty. Each listing has a short commentary on the book and the name of the teacher who suggested it. In homage to our Socratic roots, alumni and friends now have a chance to rate each book and provide comments. Alumni can also make suggestions on what books should be added to the list. Log on now to www.actonmba.org/alumni to rate our favorites and nominate some of your own.

Helping Austinites Find Their Callings

Acton Master Teacher, Steven Tomlinson, and his business partner, Margaret Keys, are leading an abbreviated version of Life of Meaning - one of Acton's most popular courses. Twenty-five members of the Austin community began the course in early September, delving into topics including exploring success, looking and finding role models, facing adversity, and defining responsibilities to others.



Acton Mavericks

“I try to live faithfully with
what I teach.”

- Steven Tomlinson,
Master Teacher for The Acton MBA

Professor Profile: Steven Tomlinson

Steven Tomlinson practices what he preaches. Teaching the Life of Meaning (LOM) course at the Acton School of Business means that his students naturally look to him to set an example, and they're never disappointed. The most recent illustration of how Steven lives a Life of Meaning is *American Fiesta*, an off-Broadway play that Steven wrote and performed in New York City this Spring. It showcases an honest conversation about overcoming political divisions in our country and speaks directly to the universal issues of compromise and true understanding. This experience embodies the lessons learned in Life of Meaning. “I’m doing something I’m good at, something I love to do and something that makes a difference,” says Steven, who closed *American Fiesta* after 40 performances.

In turn, Steven continues to be inspired by the insights and openness of his students. He explains why the Acton environment is so conducive to the LOM course: “The size of the program allows students to have intimate conversations about their lives. Other MBA programs are not focused enough to do this.” In 2004, Steven joined former colleagues Jeff Sandefer, Jack Long and Phil Siegel at the Acton School of Business. As a former Director of Professional Development at UT, he quickly recognized the opportunity that The Acton MBA program presented. “Most people go back to school to re-invent themselves and figure out what their role is in the community. Acton students learn how to do this without abandoning their values or the prospect of a happy and fulfilling life.”

Experimentation is both useful and often crucial, and Steven knows this all too well. To fit the LOM puzzle pieces together successfully, a person has to experiment in life and should never take “any old job off the rack.” During his own journey, he attended Seminary school, wrote numerous plays, performed at local coffee houses, and taught finance at UT. Through this process of life exploration, he found a way to combine what he loves to do, what he has a gift for and what makes a difference. Steven has not only done this with *American Fiesta*, but with every other aspect of his life and reminds us in no uncertain terms: “I’m not doing anything now I don’t want to do. I am living for the people and the principles that matter most to me.” No doubt that as his journey continues, Steven will keep trying new things, learning from the people around him and sharing his experiences with his students and the world.

Class of 2008 Breaks Records

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Acton is now accepting applications for the Class of 2009. If you know someone who exhibits perseverance, integrity and a curious intellect, please have them visit www.actonmba.org.

Accolades

The Princeton Review ranks Acton MBA students as the “Most Competitive” in the country and rates Acton’s professors among the top three business faculty in the nation.

BusinessWeek’s “Best-Schools” edition says, “Acton puts a premium on learning by doing... Half the length of traditional MBA programs, Acton’s one-year stint radically intensifies the learning experience.”

Forbes says, “Acton is a radically different MBA program... different from the ground up. To pass, you have to complete real-life assignments.”

ACTON MBA
in Entrepreneurship



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Austin, Texas 78701

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**THE ACTON MBA
INFORMATION SESSIONS:**

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Wednesday, October 17, 2007

Austin

Monday, October 22, 2007

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