

Gift Helps Launch Enterprise Architecture Program at School of Digital Sciences

A gift to Kent State University's new [School of Digital Sciences](#) will allow students to pursue a first-in-the-nation concentration in Enterprise Architecture at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Enterprise Architecture is a concept used by Fortune 500 companies, the United States government and major organizations around the world to assist those entities in creating technological roadmaps that match their business needs. Using these roadmaps, organizations develop tools and processes to help their employees work smarter and more efficiently.

Through this partnership, the Enterprise Architecture Center Of Excellence ([EACOE](#)) will donate to Kent State a five-year license to use its courseware in the School of Digital Sciences' curriculum, a gift valued at \$3.2 million.

Samuel B. Holcman, chairman of the Pinnacle Business Group Inc. and managing director of the Enterprise Architecture Center Of Excellence, calls the collaboration with the university exciting because of the school's multidisciplinary approach to the topic.

"What students will gain is a series of transferable skills that will make them extremely valuable to organizations around the world," Holcman said. "But while Enterprise Architecture is of interest to people around the world, work in the field from an academic standpoint is very thin. We believe academic institutions like Kent State can bring discipline to this, with the university becoming the foremost authority in the world."

Holcman is one of the field's early pioneers; his organization has educated more than 130,000 people on the topic and works with corporate and government clients around the world. EACOE's U.S. offices are located in Pinckney, Michigan.

"In the last 20 years, people have started to pay attention because of one word, and that word is complexity," Holcman said. "The business and technological needs of modern organizations are extremely complex. The analogy I like to give is if you're building a rowboat, you don't need information and planning. If you're building a cruise ship, you better do a lot of planning and architecture."

Dr. Denise A.D. Bedford, the Goodyear professor of knowledge management in the

Information Architecture and Knowledge Management program of Kent State's School of Library and Information Science, also serves as a faculty member in the School of Digital Sciences. She calls EACOE's courses "the best training you can get."

"They start with the idea that information technology is really about business and performance, and looking at whether you have gaps," Bedford said.

"Organizations today are struggling to manage all of their I.T. components and to see how those components align with business goals. Enterprise Architecture puts the focus on business goals to create systems that work together - so that tools work for users, rather than users working for tools."

Kent State's newest school will operate under a multidisciplinary model that incorporates faculty and courses from existing programs, including computer science, computer information systems, technology, library and information science, visual communication design, communication studies and instructional technology. The first classes will be offered in fall 2011.

"Sam's gift is a strong endorsement of our forward-looking program, which is poised for tremendous growth," said Dr. Robert A. Walker, director of the Kent State's School of Digital Sciences. "Courses will be available through online distance learning, allowing students from around the world to 'come to Kent State' and tap into this unique curriculum."

The school fits within the university's vision of driving knowledge and economic growth in the region and beyond.

"The impact on Ohio, in particular, could be meaningful," said Bedford, who joined Kent State's faculty following her retirement from the World Bank. "We are in very tough economic times. One of the things Enterprise Architecture tells organizations is how they're spending money inefficiently. I think the jobs in this field are going to be significant."

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