

BEHREND BEACON YEAR IN REVIEW

A look back at the stories that define the 2009-2010 academic year at Penn State Behrend

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GE CEO Simonelli advises Behrend students

RYAN FRANKOWSKI
engineering reporter • industrial engineering
February 19, 2010

Lorenzo Simonelli provided advice for students staring down the barrel of a bleak job market on Monday.

Simonelli, the current CEO of GE Transportation, spoke to a packed Samuel P. "Pat" Black III Conference Center. Those students in attendance came from a variety of backgrounds – business, engineering, communication – but all were united by a common desire: attaining a job.

Since Simonelli's section of GE employs over 10,000 people worldwide, he was a prime candidate to answer questions regarding that crucial job-seeking programs that many students will soon face.

Much of the presentation was question and answer, and students could voice their own concerns as they stared down the job market.

"What attracted you to the position as a CEO?" one student asked.

"When you are given the opportunity to become CEO, you take it," Simonelli responded.

His career as a CEO speaks for itself as a success story. Originally from Italy, he has spent time in a variety of nations in various capacities for GE. His last residence was in Budapest, Hungary. He can speak French, English, Italian, and German after having moved 27 times.

Having a second language, or even a third, is very important, he said, because it can greatly assist you in moving up the corporate ladder.

Much of language-learning deals with expanding your own intellect, which Simonelli emphasized as a huge part of moving through a career. He recommended trying for a minimum GPA of 3.2 coming out of undergraduate studies.

Still, when it came down to it, the biggest driving force in Simonelli's ca-



Photos by Jon Klein / The Behrend Beacon
CEO of GE Transportation Lorenzo Simonelli spoke to a large assembled group of students regarding their futures with jobs, careers, and internships.

reer was hard work, he said.

"I'm no different than anyone else," he said, "I just did hard work. GE is unique because you can start off at an entry-level position, and with hard work, you can work your way to the top."

With the economy in a downturn and even GE experiencing difficulties, many students had a bleak view on the job and internship market.

That outlook, Simonelli said, "depends on what businesses of GE you apply for. With engineering, there definitely are opportunities; you just need to apply. There's no doubt we need leaders for tomorrow."

For those who might not get hired right away, the operant idea is to maintain focus and effort in getting the position. Many complaints he hears from applicants, he said, came from people who applied and were



turned down once and then quit.

"If you don't get hired in summer, keep applying, keep at it, and eventually you'll get in."

So what type of engineers are GE looking for?

"All types of engineers, all across the board," he said, "there's a need for smart engineers."

For Simonelli, his routine is fairly set, and he knows how to organize his priorities.

"I get up early, and leave the office

late," he said, saying he had woken up at 4 a.m., having visited Milwaukee before his 7:00 speech in Erie.

It's all in a day's work for Simonelli, who was named one of the top CEOs in 2009 as one of Fortune's 40 under 40.

"Being a CEO can be a relatively easy occupation," he said. "Depending, of course, on the quality of the people surrounding you."

New Faculty

Dr. Yongfang Zhong

Education:
Ph.D. in M. E.,
University of
Illinois

Teaching:
Fluid Power
(M E 432)

Industry
experience:
Refrigeration; coolant systems
Researching:
Energy efficiency



Mr. Ralph Sprang

Education:
Masters in
E.Eng., Johns
Hopkins
Teaching:
Processors;
electrical systems program



Industry
experience:
20 years as an electrical engineer
Researching:
Working on Ph.D. at Pitt

Dr. Gary Smith

Education:
Ph.D. in
Chemistry,
SUNY Albany

Teaching:
Intro to plas-
tics; plastic
materials

Industry
experience:
30 years; plastics at General Electric
Researching:
Composites, polymers



Plastics engineering students blog through Europe

Behrend Engineering Division Through Europe

Day 1: "We traveled from Erie International Airport to Detroit, where we boarded another flight to Frankfurt, Germany. After we arrived in Germany, we started traveling via train from Frankfurt to Heidelberg..."

Day 2: "Upon arrival in Heidelberg we found our way to the hostel... everyone got settled into their rooms and then we ventured out on the town to get some much-needed food..."

Day 7: "Early rising today for an hour and a half-long train ride to Diessenhofen, Switzerland, where we toured Schottli. Schottli is a Swiss high precision injection mold manufacturing facility that specializes in molds for the medical and packaging industries..."

KRISTIN SLIWINSKI
engineering editor
October 16, 2009

On Thursday, Oct. 8th, a group of 17 plastics engineering technology students and five faculty members set off on a ten-day journey through Germany and Switzerland. Among faculty is Ralph Ford, Director of the School of Engineering, and Jonathon Meckley, associate professor of engineering. Three seniors - Tim Farrell, Jessica Patz, and Keith Maloney - are blogging about their experiences as they travel.

Aside from the experience they will gain in regards to German and Swiss engineering, the students on the trip are also experiencing foreign travel, many for the first time.

"Students are learning how to navigate through foreign countries using different transport modes," said Ralph Ford, the director of the School of Engineering. "For example, to get from Switzerland to Germany today for the Fakuma Injection Molding Trade show, we started on train, switched to a ferry boat, then had to catch a bus to

the show. That combination was by far the fastest way to get there."

Wednesday, the group woke early to take a train to Diessenhofen, Switzerland to tour Schottli, "a Swiss high precision injection mold manufacturing facility that specializes in molds for the medical and packaging industries."

Johannes Strassner, a managing director for sales and marketing showed the group around, educating the group on "what Swiss technology brings to the plastics industry." The group then broke up into three smaller groups, each receiving an extensive tour of the factory.

"In terms of insights, this is a good example of a company being able to stay competitive by adapting to their markets," Ford said. "[Students] also got to see a very technically advanced company that is staying ahead of competition based on value of technology."

On Thursday, the group visited the Fakuma injection molding show.

"This event put students outside of comfort zone - which I see as a good thing," Ford said. "They had to interact with company representatives to understand their technology, most of the

time discussing with people for whom English is a second language."

At press time, the group was located in a small town in Switzerland, where they are seeing some cultural sights before a day of rest which, Ford says, "we all are looking forward to."

Some mishaps have accompanied the group, but most have bordered on amusing rather than troubling.

Ford recounts a faculty member who stressed the need for students to be on time, then missed a train after locking himself out of his room during a shower at a youth hostel. Though he caught up with the group later, the faculty member has been "razzed" by students all week.

Another incident, perhaps less amusing, occurred when a faculty member left their Eurorail pass in his room, and was caught by authorities without it on the train.

The engineering students and faculty will continue blogging about their experiences until they arrive back home on Sunday, October 18th.

Russell Warley settling in as M.E. program chair

CONNOR SATTELY
editor-in-chief
February 5, 2010

After half a year in his position as the Department Chair of the Mechanical Engineering program, Russell Warley is starting to feel like he should really be there.

He has become, in his words, a "leader among peers."

Warley took over the position last July, when it was vacated by William Lasher's resignation. He has used the friendships and relationships with faculty and colleagues to create a type of "consensus" leadership of the department. This has presented what Warley thinks is the best way to lead, but has also given several distinct challenges.

"You don't just hit the gavel and have it done," he says, drawing from his 20 years of experience managing in industry, rather than a university.

"We have very competent, very collegial, cooperative faculty," he said. "We haven't had any issues with faculty even for a second, so that makes it very easy."

Lasher, who held the chair position for a decade, still remains as a "fallback" for Warley, giving advice and as-

sistance when he can.

"I help with developing schedules for teaching - what classes are held when, who teaches what, and so on - as well as problems with students," he says. "Graduation requests, transfer credits, that type of thing."

Despite the fact that Lasher advises the faculty member who is now the chair for his own department, he thinks Warley is off to a good start.

A lot of that good start is due to the transition which actually began fairly well before Warley took the post.

"Really, I ramped into the position," Warley said. "He became the Dean's Representative to University Park, and dealt with a lot of students who needed to transfer after two years. That helped him prepare for many of the issues which come to his desk on a daily basis today."

"Bill [Lasher] and I knew a little early that it was likely me that would be taking the role," he said, "so I started to work with him in advance on some things, start training early."

Amongst those early training opportunities was the Fall 2009 Semester schedule, which the two created together last spring.

"There's a lot of potential repercus-

sions there for even a minor error," Warley said. "If a certain class overlaps and you don't notice until after the semester starts, then you've got to deal with contacting every student in a certain section of a certain class, and for many it can severely impact their semester schedule."

The continual flow of problems has presented its challenges as well.

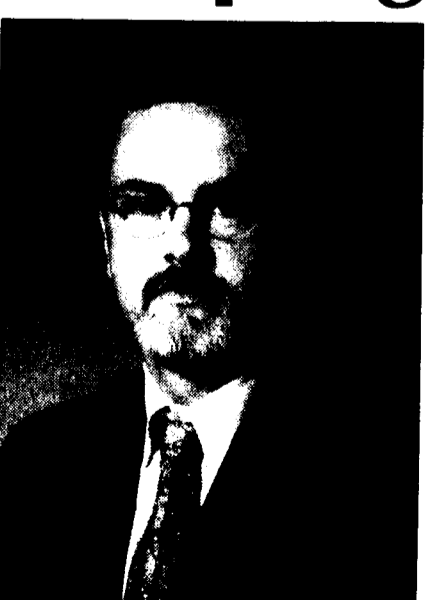
"It feels like I'm a bit less in control, because you can't necessarily foresee the workload coming at you," Warley said. "It makes it hard to plan for and accomplish longer- or intermediate-term goals."

And it's taken its toll, he says.

"Psychologically, I feel like with the flood of things that are coming in, that I'm somehow going to drop the ball or let something fall off the bottom of the to-do list. There's a little bit of apprehension, I think, but just mainly because I'm new."

But he's quick to say that there's a lot still to do and accomplish.

"I knew what I was getting into when I agreed to take the position," he said. "It'll probably take a full year cycle including the summer to see how I'm really doing in the position, assess how the last year went."



Penn State Behrend Marketing
Russell Warley.

WHAT'S NEXT?

RUSSELL WARLEY'S LONG-TERM GOALS FOR THE M.E. DEPARTMENT

1. E-Learning

More classes online, larger online element in classes that aren't online. Involve faculty and students to see how much of this is appropriate to do.

2. Wider reputation

Many local M.E. employers are impressed with Behrend. Warley wants to expand Behrend's good reputation outside of just Erie or Pennsylvania.

3. Promote innovation

Employers know about the research and technology at Behrend - Warley wants to let employers know about the educational innovation that occurs in the classes.

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