Our Mission

Future Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs (FBLE) is a unique program that develops the business, problem solving, and leadership skills of our youth through “real-world” learning. FBLE creates a visionary pipeline enabling youth to see how the skills they learn in school prepare them for their role as our next generation of business leaders.

FBLE is a 12-week summer program that meets in Saturday sessions. Some sessions are joint working sessions with faculty, Saunders College students, and the high school students. Others are separate sessions with high school students learning business concepts while Saunders College students work on higher level data analysis and planning. An important part of the program is the end presentation, during which the students meet directly with the “client” to outline their solution in a professional presentation.

The Experience

Project teams gain insight from the analysis to develop cost-effective, practical solutions business partners can implement. Project teams are comprised of select Rochester City School District (RCSD) high school juniors and experienced RIT Saunders College of Business (SCB) Students and faculty spend 12 weeks gathering and analyzing relevant data about a specific business partner’s challenge.

No other single factor has greater impact on the future Rochester business climate than the leadership skills and business knowledge developed by the next generation of employees and entrepreneurs. One of the most important elements impacting skills development is the ability to reach and engage students in their high school years, especially in the case of underrepresented minority students. Honing students’ problem-solving, leadership and basic business skills, and introducing real-world project work helps build interest in business as a career. In addition, these young people are better prepared for the next level of study if they choose to attend college, or better prepare them to enter the workforce after graduation from high school.

Wo We Are

Saunders College of Business at RIT is partners with Rochester businesses and corporations in a summer program to reach high school students in the Rochester City School District (RCSD). FBLE is designed to help RCSD students in grades 9-12 develop important business skills by working with RIT faculty and Saunders College business students on a project addressing an important need for a local company. Students work on a real-world problem and help develop plans that will actually be executed by the business partner. Moving students from textbook and theory to real business experience is the key to success.

FBLE is a program of the Center for Urban Entrepreneurship (CUE) at Rochester Institute of Technology. Under the leadership of Saunders College of Business CUE is helping to reshape the regional economy and build wealth within the urban community through entrepreneurial programs and research.

Our Success

The FBLE was piloted during the summer of 2009. One project from the initial effort included investigating the target market and best marketing methods for a local insurance business.

The students brought a fresh perspective to this full-service insurance agency, encouraging the company to reach more parents with children who were turning 16 years of age and people who were purchasing a car who needed automotive insurance for the first time. The FBLE team developed a new marketing plan for the client based on data for the younger target audience segment. The project was a great example of the unique perspective student teams can bring to businesses.

Another project in the pilot program included a local manufacturing business that wanted to maintain competitiveness while continuing to use local labor, instead of the inexpensive outsourcing by competitors. Students assessed labor rates in various countries and recommended that they focus on quality and efficiency throughout their marketing efforts. In addition, students explored the under-utilization of the company’s Enterprise Resource Planning System and made recommendations to improve the company’s use of the system.