

# Investing in the Student Experience

## ***Students Learn Interdisciplinary Teamwork In Technology Innovation Challenge***

"Finishing second in the Technology Innovation Challenge (TIC) was a positive thing," We have a cutting-edge technology with broad product and market potential," insists graduating senior marketing student **Patrick Shea '07**. Coordinated by the Isenberg School, the College of Engineering, and the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the TIC is an annual business plan competition in which interdisciplinary student teams on the UMass Amherst campus vie for a first-prize award of \$45,000<sup>1</sup> in seed money for the subsequent commercialization of the winning plan.

Patrick Shea's second-place team, Surya, proposed to replace traditional solar cells with nanostructured solar counterparts that substitute flexible organic polymers for traditional silicon. Surya's technology will offer applications in military use, disaster relief, and other low power devices (LEDs). It will also serve as a supplemental residential energy source.

"Our technology offers several advantages, including cost savings, material efficiency, and flexibility," observes Shea, who teamed up with a postdoctoral research associate in chemistry and two Ph.D. students—one in polymer science and the other in chemistry. "My role was to take technical concepts and illustrate the market applications of the core technology in a way that readily speaks to firms and investors," he emphasizes.

<sup>1</sup> The competition's principal sponsor was Wolf, Greenfield, & Sacks. Other sponsors were Paul Carney BBA '82, Forge Partners LLC., Eric Janszen BS '04 and Candy Janszen, Scott Perry BS '82, Karen Lauter Utgoff Consulting, Kodiak Venture Partners, Brook Venture Partners, Long River Ventures, Signal Lake, Michael Tunstall BS '82, and VISTAGY, Inc.



Patrick Shea '07 (third from left) and Team Surya

## ***Ph.D. Student Receives National Award***

In November, **Tina Wakolbinger**, a management science student in the Isenberg School's Ph.D. program, was honored with the Judith Liebman Award at the INFORMS (Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences) national meeting. The Liebman Award recognizes outstanding student volunteers who have been "moving spirits" in their universities, student chapters, and the institute itself. Wakolbinger revitalized the UMass Amherst INFORMS chapter as its president in 2004-2005. In 2004-2006 she coordinated a highly successful interdisciplinary Operations Research/Management Science speaker series on campus



## ***Undergraduate Dean Carol Barr***

Carol Barr's first year as undergraduate dean saw record-high enrollments and admissions standards at the Isenberg School. Under Dean Barr's leadership, the School achieved impressive rankings—1st in the Northeast among public universities and 58th overall nationally—in *Business Week's* annual survey of undergraduate business programs. "My exceptional staff of Joan Spalding and Melvin Rodriguez helped us to support the best possible overall experience for our students—both inside and outside the classroom," she emphasizes.



Dean Barr is Associate Professor and former Associate Department Head in the Department of Sport Management. She has Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in sport management from UMass Amherst and a B.S. degree in athletic administration from the University of Iowa. Dr. Barr's research interests include gender equity and management issues in collegiate athletics. For several years, she was faculty coordinator of SoccerFest, a community-event management learning experience for sport management students.

# Research Highlights

## Isenberg School Professor Examines Business Liquidations

Isenberg School finance professor **Ben Branch** and two colleagues have authored *Last Rights* (Oxford University Press), the first step-by-step guide to liquidating a business. Professor Branch's extensive research and experience as a practitioner—he has served as trustee for the failed Bank of New England and chief representative for the creditors of the defunct First Republic Bank in Dallas—give him authoritative insights into his subject. Following a nuanced discussion of the costs and benefits of Chapter 7 and Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code, Branch and his coauthors (both of them bankruptcy lawyers) consider the gamut of bankruptcy activities—everything from the day-to-day management of the business or liquidating estate to the sell-off, spin-off, or (in some Chapter 11 cases) restructuring of divisions, businesses, and other assets. Case studies based on the authors' personal experiences illustrate bankruptcies and some of their variations.



## Computer Tool Identifies Most Vulnerable Links in Complex Networks

John F. Smith Memorial Professor of Operations Management **Anna Nagurney** and Isenberg School Ph.D. candidate **Patrick Qiang** have developed a computer-based tool that can identify the highest-use, most expensive, and most vulnerable nodes and links in complex networks involving transportation, communication, distribution, and other critical activities. Funded in part by the National Science Foundation, the research will help companies and government agencies to protect their networks against natural disasters and terrorist attacks, emphasizes Nagurney, who is director of the Isenberg School's Virtual Center for Supernetworks.



Anna Nagurney



Bob Munroe '82

The *Munroe Family Scholarship* was one among many new scholarships offered to Isenberg School students at the School's annual awards banquet in May. Created by **Bob '82** and **Erin '82 Munroe**, who met at the Isenberg School while both were majoring in marketing, the scholarship went to an Isenberg School freshman. In May Bob was promoted from president of Reebok USA to senior vice president and general manager of Reebok North America. In his new position, Bob is responsible for the geographic management of Reebok's North American businesses. Bob joined the firm in September 1997 as Vice President of Field Sales for the North American operating group. A year later, he took on the added responsibility of overseeing sales operations. Reebok is a leading employer of Isenberg School and UMass Amherst graduates.