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News from University of Southern Indiana

Contact information, Dr. R. Eugene Klippel, dean,
College of Business, 465-1681 and Dr. Sang Choe,
chair, management and marketing, 464-1822

Coslett family gift to fund lab at University of Southern Indiana

High-tech facility will serve growing number of students
pursuing marketing careers

A sophisticated new sales management development laboratory where growing numbers of students majoring in marketing can perfect their personal-selling techniques and sales-presentation skills is planned for the Orr Center at the University of Southern Indiana.

The new facility will be named to honor the Joe Coslett family, whose generous gift of \$25,000 will equip a laboratory with state-of-the-art technology and equipment for video recording and editing and the creation of high-quality advertising and sales promotional materials. Plans call for an existing classroom on the second floor of the Orr Center to be reconfigured to provide appropriate space for the lab.

USI President H. Ray Hoops said, "The generosity of our good friends the Joe Coslett family will benefit many future USI students as they work toward degrees and careers in marketing."

Joe Coslett is a retired businessman whose innovative career in sales spanned more than 40 years. He came to Evansville in 1964 as a sales manager for Bartel's furniture and the following year became associated with L.B. Jones, a furniture manufacturing company. Coslett headed the company from 1967 until 1971, changing it during that time from a manufacturing company to a retail operation. He bought the business in 1972 and developed it into a furniture gallery with brand names such as Broyhill, Pennsylvania, Tell City, and Kinkade. In 1978, he was the first to introduce "free financing" in Evansville. Upon his retirement, his son Patrick assumed leadership of the company.

Coslett earned a bachelor's degree in business administration, majoring in merchandising at the University of Cincinnati. He is a former member of the Chamber of Commerce board and the USI Foundation board. He was a member of the Evansville Regional Airport board from 1980 until 1989, during which time the present terminal opened.

Dr. R. Eugene Klippel, dean of the College of Business, said the Joe Coslett Family Sales Management Development Laboratory will provide an outstanding facility where students can develop expertise in sales in situations that simulate sales jobs in the workplace. The video capabilities will provide students a heightened awareness of their sales skills and developmental needs and will allow instant feedback as they learn sales management.

Dr. Sang Choe, chair of the Department of Marketing and Business Communication, said that Dr. Carl Saxby, associate professor of marketing, and Dr. Beth Mott-Stenerson, who will join the faculty in August as assistant professor of marketing, put together the proposal for the lab. Mott-Stenerson, an instructor at New Mexico State University,

recently completed requirements for a doctorate in marketing and moved to the Evansville area this summer. Both Saxby and Mott-Stenerson specialize in personal selling and sales management. They will provide consultation on the final design of the space and selection of equipment in order to develop a laboratory that aligns with the goals of the sales curriculum.

The proposal for the Joe Coslett Family Sales Management Development Laboratory includes the following:

- a group presentation studio with multimedia equipment, including an LCD projector, speakers, video capability, and boom microphones
- two personal selling studios for recording one-on-one personal selling presentations
- a control room for digital recording, video production, and editing
- graphics production station for production of high-quality color advertising and sales and promotion materials
- storage room
- observation area featuring one-way viewing of the studios from the control room

Choe said that other departments of the University and the community will benefit from the sales management development lab. For instance, students interested in interpersonal communication in the College of Liberal Arts often choose careers in sales and may receive instruction and practice in the lab. The College of Business plans to share the lab with area companies for training and development of their sales forces on an as available basis. Also, the video production capability will allow the college to videotape presentations made by visiting sales professionals.

Development of the new laboratory will allow the College of Business to provide better resources to increasing numbers of USI students who plan careers in marketing.

Choe said, "This lab is a valuable resource to help us educate our students to be ready to go into the workforce after graduation. Because more of our students are going into sales, this is an important facility."

From fall 2000 to fall 2004, the number of students majoring in marketing more than doubled. In fall 2000, 103 students declared marketing as a major. By fall 2004, the number of marketing majors had grown to 223 students. In addition, 83 USI students majoring in various disciplines throughout the University have chosen marketing as a minor. The marketing course in professional selling and sales management enrolled 53 students in 2000-01. In 2004-05, 88 students completed the course.