$10 million gift supports newly named Trott Business Program

A $10 million gift to the University of Chicago from University Trustee Byron D. Trott, AB '81, MBA '82, and his wife, Tina, will help support and expand the UChicago Careers in Business Program, which will be renamed the Trott Business Program.

Trott, the founder, chairman and CEO of merchant bank BDT & Company, originally helped to launch the program in 2006.

Over the last 10 years the Trott Business Program has significantly increased the career development opportunities available to undergraduate students interested in business, providing more than 600 students with invaluable business education, experience and mentoring. The selective three-year program brings together the capabilities of the College, the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, the Office of Career Advancement and UChicago's alumni community to help students develop professionally.

“This program helps students connect the distinctive and rigorous education they have in the College with their future life. It has dramatically enhanced students’ opportunities after graduation. We are extremely grateful to Byron and Tina for providing this long-term support,” said President Robert J. Zimmer.

The Trott Business Program provides students with an opportunity to supplement their undergraduate classes with courses at Chicago Booth during their second, third and fourth years in the College. Students also have access to advisors with industry experience, workshops focused on business skills and cohorts focused on industry interest. Like the seven other "UChicago Careers In" programs that grew out of the original UChicago Careers in Business program, it also assists students in securing Metcalf Internship opportunities, connecting them with business internships in a wide array of industries around the world.

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—President Robert J. Zimmer

“All of our career programs are meant to complement the intellectual character of the College, and the Trott Business Program embodies that idea perfectly,” said John W. Boyer, dean of the College. “By allowing our students to learn about real businesses and apply the knowledge they gain in the classroom, it gives them a perspective that will
$10 million gift supports newly named Trott Business Program continued

serve them well throughout their lives. I am delighted that this gift will benefit our students for many years to come.”

The College is holding an event on November 15 to honor the Trotts and their support of the Trott Business Program, including current students and College alumni who have benefitted from the experience.

Trott also played a key role 20 years ago in the founding of the Metcalf Internship Program, which was named, on Trott’s recommendation, in honor of Harold R. “Jeff” Metcalf, AM ’53, a former dean of students in the business school and UChicago athletic director who helped Trott get his first summer job. The Metcalf Internship Program, which has grown from eight internships in its first year to more than 1,900 this year, provides paid, substantive internships for UChicago undergraduates.

Trott said one of his reasons for supporting the program is to provide more students with the kind of practical education, experience and mentoring opportunities that helped to launch his career.

“The combined education that you receive in the College and at Booth has significant benefits and has provided me with a distinct advantage throughout my business career,” Trott said. “It’s gratifying to see that this program has helped so many students who are seeking to get the most out of their University of Chicago experience. Combining a world-class college education with graduate school business courses provides a unique foundation that will continue to benefit these students well into the future.”

Trott added: “We are hopeful that this gift assures that this impactful program continues to provide students with a differentiated platform from which to excel.”

“I think one of the big things for me in college was I had so many different mentors at different stages,” said fourth-year Ben Veres, who plans to graduate in the winter and work for McKinsey in Chicago.

Veres said he was initially attracted to the University in part because of the business programming. “I thought it was great that the program supported me throughout my years here, instead of just being one Booth class,” he said. “It follows you all three years and keeps you constantly engaged.”

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Fourth-year Joanna Harris, who will join commodities trading at Barclays after graduation, credited the skills she gained through UCB with helping her career exploration and academic pursuits. She said that by encouraging students to take classes at Booth, the program opens the door to possibilities that would not normally be open to undergraduates.

“In my internships I used a lot of the skills I got in those Booth classes, and I’m now writing a BA for econ and using the statistics skills I’ve learned in Booth classes,” she said.

Veres and Harris will soon join the Trott Business Program alumni network, which currently has more than 600 members and is on pace to increase to 1,000 in the next three years. The endowment from the Trott family will allow the program to continue to expand its resources to students in order to ensure student success both in and after college.