

Pearlstein Center Inspires a Look at College of Business' Long History



Artist's rendering of the new Pearlstein Business Learning Center for the Bennett S. LeBow College of Business and Administration

The construction of a new facility for Drexel's Bennett S. LeBow College of Business and Administration is just the latest in a long series of successes for one of the University's oldest and most important colleges. Classes in business subjects have been offered at Drexel from its inception in 1891.

During the early years, it was primarily women who attended Drexel's business classes. They studied stenography and typing in order to become office workers, a new career path and one of only a few open to women at the time.

In 1911, the school was reorganized and began to move toward college status and away from the secretarial school model. In 1922, as part of a concerted effort to attract more male students, the school's name was changed from Secretarial School to the School of Business and Administration. Nevertheless, the number of female students enrolled continued to be high until the 1950s when fewer women in general worked outside the home.

The school granted its first undergraduate degree in 1926 but it was not until 1949 that the graduate M.B.A. program was established. In the 1950s, the school enjoyed robust growth under the stewardship of Dean Kenneth G. Matheson, Jr. Course offerings were revised to establish a core curriculum and students were required to take more courses in the liberal arts. The Business School was also an important force behind the establishment of Drexel's first educational computer center in 1957.



In 1965, the school moved into its first home, [Matheson Hall](#). Constructed for a cost of \$1.6 million, Matheson Hall was the fifth major building constructed by Drexel. In 1970, the School's name was changed to the College of Business and Administration, when Drexel Institute of Technology became Drexel University. In 1974, the Saturday M.B.A. program was introduced. This program has become one of the School's most popular offerings.

In September of 1999, the College of Business and Administration changed its name once again. In grateful acknowledgement of a \$10 million gift to the University, it is now known as the **Bennett S. LeBow** College of Business and Administration. Mr. LeBow is a 1960 graduate of Drexel University who is chairman and chief executive officer of Brooke Group, Ltd., which includes among its holdings the Liggett Group and several real estate development projects.



Groundbreaking on the **Pearlstein Business Learning Center** was held last fall (November 21, 2001). The building is named for Leonard Pearlstein, the founder of Confab, Inc. of King of Prussia. Pearlstein, who died in 1996, was a major benefactor of Drexel University. The University plans to renovate Matheson Hall for faculty and administrative use.

For more information about the history of Drexel University, please contact Archivist Stephen Janick at janick@drexel.edu or 215.895.1757. The Information Services Librarian for Business is Emily Missner, who may be reached at emissner@drexel.edu or 215.895.6164.