

**Program Title:** ACHIEVE

**Institution:** Oakland University

School of Business Administration

**Innovation Category:** Career Development and  
Job Placement

**Point Person & Contact Information:**

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**Website:** <https://www.oakland.edu/business/undergraduate-students/achieve/>

**Program Description:**

ACHIEVE is a professional and career development program designed to provide students with critical career support through all the stages of educational development. ACHIEVE is a zero-credit required component of the undergraduate degree program of the School of Business Administration. The program consists of three separate courses: SBC 1990, 2990, and 3990.

**Program Objectives:**

Our mission: Inspire and guide students toward their ideal career in business, and provide skills to equip students for excellence in their chosen fields through:

- Exposure to Careers in Industry: Career and Business Major Exploration, Personal Assessment, Interaction with Business Professionals
- Student Success Initiatives: Early introduction/Welcome to the SBA, Money Management workshop, Introduction to Advising and Career Services resources.
- Job Acquisition Skills: Internship Preparation, Company Research, Job Market Analysis, Resume Preparation, Job Search Skills
- Workplace Skills: Personal Introduction, Networking, Business Ethics, Professionalism

**Target Population:** All undergraduate Business majors.

**Quantifiable/Qualifiable Outcomes:**

Retention: Data shows that students who completed our entry-level SBC 1990 course during their first year at OU have a higher retention rate than students who did not.

Placement: Employer feedback overwhelmingly affirms that SBA students are better prepared than students from other Schools to interact with employers and recruiters at job fairs, networking events, and in their first professional jobs. Our most recent First Destination Survey gives an overall SBA graduate placement rate of 94%.

Student feedback confirms that the knowledge gained through ACHIEVE has been instrumental in helping students find internships and professional placement

**Challenges/Problems Encountered:**

1) The program experienced some initial challenges in supporting the large number of students who needed to fulfill the new requirements. These challenges included issues such as adequate staffing, course scheduling, and room allocations.

2) A second challenge was students' perceptions of the program. Students struggled to see value in a zero-credit course which required extra work and time. However, the added volunteer component, support from the community and perceived job opportunities through networking has greatly improved student attitudes toward the program. Students now look forward to meeting business professionals at events, and the pass/fail rate has improved.

**Evaluation Approach:**

Students enrolled in ACHIEVE courses are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. 100% of requirements must be met in order to earn a grade of Satisfactory. Also, students are required to complete a final survey as part of the requirements for each course, and results are tallied and evaluated to guide program improvements.

Each year, the ACHIEVE Program Manager and staff report to an Oversight Committee comprised of faculty representatives from each of our departments, the Dean, Associate Dean, the SBA's Director of Employer Relations, and the Director of Undergraduate Advising. This committee reviews proposed program improvements and existing program components.

**Value Proposition, Financing Strategy and Return-On-Investment Indicators:**

Because the ACHIEVE Program is zero-credit, it is financially supported by the university and school's general funds.

Non-monetary benefits: Through its extensive use of volunteers and collaboration with employers, business partners, and recruiters, the SBA has risen in visibility among the region's businesses. ACHIEVE has contributed to the School of Business becoming a "School of Choice" for many employers, and has afforded our students more visibility and interest among employers. By volunteering with the program, employers, recruiters, retirees, alumni, and local business professionals have an opportunity to interact with SBA students in small group settings within the classroom, and in one-on-one settings in mock interviews. Students have been hired into positions with these companies as a result of meetings within the ACHIEVE program structure.

Finally, portions of the ACHIEVE program have become options for corporate sponsorships. Sponsorship options have increased in recent years from workshop presentations to sponsorship of Capstone networking events. This interest from our local employers for the ACHIEVE program has also heightened visibility of the SBA in our business community. ACHIEVE was named a "Best Practice" by the AACSB in 2014 and commended in 2019 during the school's accreditation reviews. AACSB commended the program for our volunteer involvement and mentorship opportunities for students.

**Potential for Replication:**

This program could definitely be replicated not only within individual colleges and schools, but also university-wide. With collaboration from career services and advising, the technology to develop hybrid courses, effective program management, and volunteer support from the community, the ACHIEVE program model can be replicated in any academic setting.

**Vendor Involvement:** None

**Requisite Program Manager Competencies:**

The ACHIEVE Program Manager is essentially a team leader; blending the talents of a professional educator, a certified human resource professional, and volunteer coordinator to manage and deliver the program to over 2000 students participating annually. Strong problem-solving, technical, and organizational skills are also essential. The current Program Manager is an experienced Career Development Professional with an MBA (Concentration in Human Resource Management) and a B.S. in Mathematics.

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