



DR. LENITA DAVIS

# Real World Sales Lab

Program prepares business students for future careers.

By Tiffany Fountain

Nervous students dressed in business attire anxiously paced the corridors of Bidgood Hall. They were not awaiting the results of their latest exam but were about to dive headfirst into the first of three job interviews on this busy day. The interviews were not real job interviews, but they were close.

The role playing the students were experiencing is the vision of Dr. Lenita Davis, assistant professor of marketing in the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration. A year ago, she envisioned a real-world lab to prepare business majors for future careers. Now, with the help of Dr. Rob Morgan, head of the department of marketing and management; Dr. David Mothersbaugh, associate professor of marketing; and J. Barry Mason, dean of the business school, Davis expects her sales lab to be constructed by Christmas and fully functioning by the spring semester.

After graduation, students face daunting job searches and interviews, Davis said. In a professional sales lab, students learn skills that will help sell themselves to prospective employers and that will prove useful for the rest of a student's career.

"Our vision is to be the best in the U.S.," said Davis, who is already running her sales lab on a small scale. With the new lab, she wants to add larger student sections, additional staffing, more corporate involvement and more activities, such as opportunity fairs and executive boot camps. Davis also envisions having at least eight cameras to film the mock interviews and help students review their progress.

The professional sales lab will have its own customized, secure Web site. "The idea is to get the students to really open up," Davis said. "I also want to create an environment where it is safe to make mistakes." Students will have complete control over the release of anything on the Web site.



## Dr. Lenita Davis info.

### Specialty Areas:

Sales Techniques, Sales Management, Customer Relationship Management, Customer Service, Experimental Methods and Online Retailing

### Education:

Tuskegee University (B.S.), Xavier University (M.B.A.), University of Cincinnati (Ph.D.).

### Honors, Achievements and Affiliations:

Dr. Davis received her B.S. in mechanical engineering from Tuskegee University. After graduation, she was employed at Proctor and Gamble as a processing engineer and a project engineer for disposable diapers from 1985-1991. In 1991 she became the current products brand manager for Puff Facial Tissue and in 1992, became program manager for Always packaging at Proctor and Gamble. From 1993 to 1997 Dr. Davis served as a product development manager at James River Corporation. In 1998 she received her M.B.A. from Xavier University and in 2001 graduated from the University of Cincinnati with her Ph.D. Awards and nominations include: Consortium Fellow, AMA Doctoral Consortium, 2000; nominated for Graduate Assistant Teaching Award, University of Cincinnati, 2000; presenter, Haring Symposium, 2000; University of Cincinnati Scholar, 1999; and Yates Fellow, University of Cincinnati, 1997.

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Students attending Davis’ classes say they feel she prepares them well for the real world. “She keeps you busy,” said Leslie Brewster, a senior majoring in marketing. “Dr. Davis encourages you to get as much hands-on experience as possible.”

Last year Davis also helped create Pi Sigma Epsilon, a sales fraternity. The University had the largest founding chapter of PSE, with 78 members in the fall of 2007. Trace Gallant was the fraternity’s first president. Gallant graduated in May and now assists Davis with the role-play exercises.

PSE holds a number of activities for its members, including etiquette dinners hosted by well-known corporations, picnics, resume workshops, bowling nights and dinners on the Bama Belle cruise ship. All the occasions offer business students the opportunity to network with major corporations.

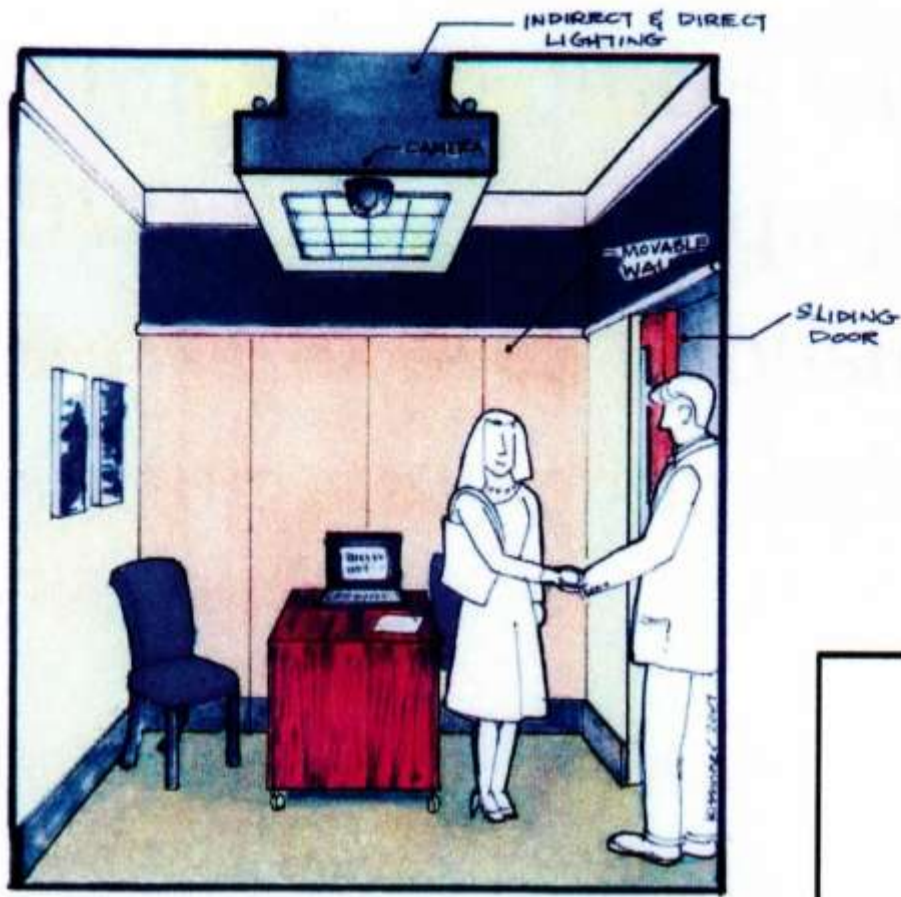
Davis drew ideas for her lab from Eli Jones, a

professor at the University of Houston. “Eli runs a wonderful sales lab program,” Davis said. Jones also wrote the textbook Davis uses in her classroom. Davis took cues from successful methods Jones used, such as professional selling classes, advanced sales classes and sales management classes, replicating and improving as she went.

Davis said she hopes the sales lab will eventually be open to all UA students. Davis said she feels the skills learned in this type of lab could benefit any student, no matter what their degree.

Nicholas Esposito, a senior marketing major who will graduate in December, said, “In Dr. Davis’ class you learn a lot about yourself. You really learn confidence, how to think off the top of your head, and how to stay calm in a real-world situation.”

*Tiffany Fountain is a junior majoring in journalism.*



- Role plays will be conducted in eight mock offices outfitted with cameras and microphones
- Role plays uploaded to secure server
- View and critique role plays remotely

