

Fogelman College of Business focuses on wellness, soft skills

- By James Dowd
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PHOTO BY [BRANDON DILL](#)

Imelda Quidachay leads a Zumba dancing demonstration during a kickoff event for the new Fogelman Fit and Professionalism First programs at the University of Memphis Fogelman College of Business and Economics on Wednesday morning.

Although Rajiv Grover didn't participate in the lively undergraduate Zumba demonstration that commanded attention in the lobby of the [Fogelman College of Business and Economics](#) at the [University of Memphis](#) on Wednesday morning, his support of the high-energy exercise was obvious.

"Nice job. It's wonderful to see students moving and having fun," said Grover, dean of the business school. "We're committed to developing students' minds and bodies and helping them be more competitive in today's job market."

As part of Grover's holistic approach to business education, students are being offered myriad opportunities beyond the classroom. A social etiquette program has proved particularly successful, and on Wednesday, Grover launched two more initiatives, one aimed at boosting physicality and the other designed to improve soft skills.

The "Professionalism First" program, sponsored by [First Tennessee](#), will be available cost-free to 50 seniors who complete a detailed application process and agree to attend six one-hour meetings. Students will work with First Tennessee mentors who will offer career counseling, provide tips on résumé building and guide students through mock interviews.

One of the mentors, Rhomes Aur, said the program offers a way for bank employees to give back to the community and in turn create a stronger local work force.

"We're able to provide a sense of professional expertise that may give these students an edge when they finish school and start looking for a job," said Aur, executive vice president of wealth management and private client services at First Tennessee. "The hope is that they'll take these skills and use them in jobs with local companies, which will help them on the front end and benefit our larger community in the long run."

In addition to polishing their professional appearances, students may improve their physical conditions through the "Fogelman Fit" program. As with the First Tennessee program, this school-sponsored initiative will be available to 50 seniors who commit to fully participating in activities.

Centered on wellness, the initiative will encourage participants to make healthier eating and lifestyle choices and become more active. There will be walking and running groups, weight loss and strength training courses and healthy diet offerings.

And that could make students more competitive when seeking jobs, said Jasbir Dhaliwal, director of the systems testing excellence program at the FedEx Institute of Technology at the U of M.

"These days, more and more employers are considering the wellness of their workers, so it's something applicants need to consider," Dhaliwal said. "We're taking the angle that students should be as fit as possible, mentally and physically, and these programs support them in those efforts."

-- James Dowd: 529-2737

Fogelman College of Business and Economics

Dean: Rajiv Grover

New programs: Fogelman Fit wellness initiative and Professionalism First development training

Launch: Fall 2010

Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free, but students must apply to the programs, which will accept 50 participants each semester

Phone: 678-2432

Details: fcbe.memphis.edu

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