



University of Florida Foundation, Inc.
Public Relations

32603

(352) 392-1633
100 NW 20th Street
Gainesville, FL

cbrazda@ufl.edu

Date Issued: April 13, 2004

Contact: Chris Brazda
(352) 392-1633

**UF MASTERS IN FINANCE PROGRAM THRIVES IN THIRD YEAR
Benefactor William R. Hough pledges additional \$500,000**

GAINESVILLE, Fla. -- Success appears to be catching on with the University of Florida's Masters in Finance (MSF) program, now in its third year. And the principal benefactor of the program, William R. Hough of St. Petersburg, is making sure the program has the funds it needs to continue. Hough has pledged an additional \$500,000 to the \$1 million he pledged in 2000.

The MSF program, which began in 2001, is unique. It's one of only a few such programs in the country that allows a student the opportunity to earn a graduate professional degree at a highly-ranked business school without having full-time work experience.

The program is an alternative for the potential MBA student with a strong interest in finance. Most MBA programs require students to take at least half of their coursework outside of finance.

"What appeals to me is offering a bright student with no work experience the chance to build on their undergraduate courses in accounting or finance," says Hough. "They move right into and through this program and then out into their work experience. It's educationally efficient and less costly."

Hough, a member of the first graduating class of the UF's MBA program (1948), speaks from experience. He recently sold William R. Hough and Company after 38 years in business. Hough and Company underwrote more public financing deals in Florida than any other company.

Interest in the program is growing, according to UF's William R. Hough professor of finance, and MSF program director, David Brown. "The ideal candidates considering the program tend to look at where our graduates get placed in the job market. These students are highly motivated by what they believe the program can do for their career prospects."

UF Masters in Finance – ADD ONE

Of the 43 graduates from the first two years of the program, nearly 90% of those continuing their finance career were placed in jobs following graduation. Seventy percent of the domestic students were placed with employers in Florida. MSF alumni currently hold positions with William R. Hough, Prager, McCarthy & Sealy, Winter Group, Evergreen Securities, Raymond James and the State of Florida Board of Administration.

Several students in the current class have already received job commitments from Goldman Sachs and UBS in New York and Wachovia Securities in Charlotte upon graduation.

“The most rewarding aspect, besides gaining extensive knowledge in finance, was being contacted by a variety of employers and having job offers to choose from months before my graduation,” according to Fernanda Haido, a 2003 graduate of the program and now employed by Prager, Sealy and Company in Orlando.

“The MSF program serves as a gateway to help establish a career path,” said Angela Beneventin, a current student in the program. “It gives us the opportunity to work with our peers to solve real financial problems, which give us valuable skills that we can carry throughout our careers and lives.”

Another attraction of the MSF program is the Finance Professional Speaker Series, now in its second year serving students in the MSF, MBA and undergraduate programs. The presenters in the speaker series are finance professionals discussing real-life experiences in the financial markets and how they approach specific problems. Often the companies represented in the speaker series are the future employers of the students attending.

“Growth and success with a program of this nature directly results from the success and caliber of our students,” says Brown. “So far, we seem to be onto something good.”

###

Sources:

William R. Hough 727-895-8861

David Brown – 352-392-2820

Kelly Herring – director of admissions and student services, UF Warrington College of Business Master of Science in Business Administration – Finance – 352-392-9249

Fernanda Haido, Prager, Sealy & Co., LLC, Orlando – 407-481-9182

Angela Beneventin – (contact Kelly Herring {above} to make arrangements)