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UNH Business School Creates International Center for the Study of Franchising

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DURHAM, N.H. -- University of New Hampshire President Ann Weaver Hart and Steven Bolander, dean of the Whittemore School of Business and Economics, announce a new international center for the study of franchising. Hart says it will position the school as the pre-eminent academic institution for research and teaching about franchising.

The William Rosenberg International Center for Franchising is named for William Rosenberg, founder of the successful worldwide Dunkin' Donuts franchise, who passed away this fall. Rosenberg made a gift of Wilrose Farms, his horse breeding complex in East Kingston, to UNH in 1980; proceeds from its sale were used to establish the Rosenberg Center.

Bolander and Udo Schlenrich, associate professor of hospitality management at the Whittemore School, said franchising has become a major contributor to the economy, but as an industry it has received relatively little attention from economists, business analysts, and academic researchers. It deserves much more, Schlenrich said. "American businessmen such as Bill Rosenberg with Dunkin' Donuts seem very quickly to have grasped how to package an idea, a label, a product, to perfect that package and zoom it into success," he said. Schlenrich spent hours with Rosenberg before he died, discussing details of UNH's new multidisciplinary center for study of this uniquely American phenomenon.

The school soon will launch senior-level undergraduate and MBA "cutting-edge" courses on franchising that will teach the history and evolution of what is now an

international multibillion dollar industry. No doubt one of the texts will be Rosenberg's own life story, Schlenrich said.

The entrepreneur started with a cart serving coffee and pastries in 1946, and grew the business into Dunkin' Donuts by 1950. Today, there are nearly 5,000 Dunkin' Donuts franchise shops in the United States and 40 countries. Accepting his role as a pioneer in franchising, in 1959 Rosenberg helped to found the International Franchise Association (IFA).

The Whittemore School's Rosenberg Center board of directors plans to collaborate with the IFA to design research projects on such topics as economic indicators of franchise performance, the industry's overall contribution to the economy, labor and employment issues, and more. The center will organize international symposia allowing for interaction of academic and industry leaders in the field, and will offer seminars for people interested in franchise opportunities, perhaps growing an annual event such as a "franchise fair," Schlenrich said.

Believed to be the first of its kind anywhere, UNH's William Rosenberg International Center for Franchising now is positioned to be the recognized international center for understanding and teaching how managers, firms and investors make value-creating decisions in the field of franchising, and how institutions and financial markets evolve as part of this process, Bolander said. "We intend to establish proactive relationships with researchers in related fields both at the Whittemore School and at other institutions in order to expand the center's scope of teaching and research."

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