

# DBU Students Apply Creative Problem Solving to the Marketplace

Written by Sara Thetford

**K**athleen Beathard, Methodist Health System public relations and marketing vice president, recently met with DBU students from the Graduate School of Business and Dr. Toni McNutt, professor of marketing. The 21 students enrolled in the spring 2010 semester of Creative Problem Solving for Marketing Decisions, MRKT 6301, were given an opportunity to experience service-learning.

Dr. McNutt said that the purpose of MRKT 6301 is to discuss and learn about creativity and innovation in business—specifically marketing. To accomplish the class objectives, creativity theory was discussed during the first part of the semester. The second half of the semester concentrated on the application of what was learned in theory, as well as the use of a specific creative problem solving model (CPS). As a result of using the CPS model on a client project, theory has been further integrated into a student's skill set, which can then be transferred to practically any situation that has no clear cut solution. Dr. McNutt suggested that students



*Dr. Toni McNutt's Creative Problem Solving for Marketing Decisions class*

learn exponentially more about real issues impacting real business organizations, consumers, suppliers, and the public at large through service-learning.

The students were challenged to utilize social media tools to enhance the marketing strategies for Methodist Health System, as well as create a strategy to measure effectiveness of social media use. Students developed several unique solutions and presented their ideas for the Methodist Health System corporation to Kathleen Beathard. The students' efforts towards achieving Methodist Health System's goals were very successful and well received by Ms. Beathard. "We appreciated the creativity and thoughtful research that went into the students' recommendations. They exceeded our expectations!" she said.

*"Service-learning allows course content to move from an exercise to an experience."  
Dr. Toni McNutt*



*Methodist Dallas Medical Center*

Methodist Health System immediately implemented two of the recommendations and is evaluating the possible implementation of a third. Ms. Beathard expressed great satisfaction with students' outcomes. Not only were the students able to serve Methodist Health System, but they also gained knowledge and experience from the project.

According to Dr. McNutt, "Service-learning provides invaluable experience for students. Service-learning allows course content to move from an exercise to an experience." She believes students will use this experience to enhance their ability to serve others in the future.