

# A DAY in the LIFE OF...

## A USD Professor in Vermillion

By Zach Wetzel  
For the Plain Talk

Brent Clark, a professor at the University of South Dakota School of Business, makes a consistent effort to provide his students with real-life experiences that will prepare them for the world of business. Clark has been teaching for two years at the USD School of Business. He received his PhD from the University of Missouri. For Clark, every day is important, and every day is busy. "I start the day by answering a bunch of e-mails," said Clark. "I answer e-mails from students about assignments, and meet important deadlines." Clark also answers faculty questions and prepares for meetings at the beginning of the day. "I usually have a meeting or two during the day," said Clark. "It is important to know what the schedule is for the day." Before classes begin, Clark will also go over research he is currently working on. To prepare for class for the day, Clark will review lecture slides. "At any given time, I will teach up

to three classes four days out of the week," said Clark.

In addition to his classes, Clark is also co-authoring nine different papers and projects. The topics for these projects usually include themes such as innovation and technology.

"One project addresses how technology makes people more optimistic than they should be," said Clark. "It explains the unconscious association people have between technology and success." Clark currently teaches two big classes: Business Strategy and Financial Literacy. The literacy class is open to all majors, and the strategy class is for upper-level business majors.

"The purpose of the Financial Literacy class is to prepare students to understand financial decision making," said Clark. "The classes are very interactive, and the strategy class is designed around concepts of case discussion."



Brent Clark, a professor at the University of South Dakota School of Business, works hard to prepare his students for successful careers.

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On certain days Clark will give class lectures, and on other days the class will engage in group discussions. One case discussion involved an analysis of the carbonated beverage industry, where the class studied the strategies of companies like Pepsi and

Coca-Cola. "For this project we analyzed the industry and asked why different companies were so successful making high profits," said Clark. "This is an opportunity for the students to debate things back and forth."

Clark hopes that when students take his classes, they can think about issues, develop an opinion, and be able to explain that opinion. His goal is for students to be able to apply what they have learned in the real world.

"My classes are a balance between lecture and learning activities," said Clark. "Students will often divide into teams and solve problems as a group."

Some business classes are more interactive than others. The level of interactivity depends on the individual class.

"Testing strategies also vary based on the class," said Clark. "In the strategy class I don't administer tests. Students' knowledge is assessed through quizzes and projects."

Many of these projects require students to analyze a real industry or company, such as Netflix or Amazon, and make recommendations based on their analysis.

"The students will divide into groups, pick a company to ana-

lyze, and then give a presentation about that company in front of the class," said Clark. "The projects in this class are all about nuance. The strategy class teaches students how to come up with solutions to problems."

One particular project has been a favorite of many students. This project is very substantial, and gives students the chance to participate in a business simulation. "Students participate in the simulated running of a company over the course of a semester," said Clark. "In this Business Simulation Game, groups of three run a company and compete against other groups in the class. Students run all of the aspects of the company such as marketing, production, and finances."

Outside of the School of Business, Clark enjoys spending time with his family. He also plays intramural basketball and soccer with other professors.

"I like to sing in our church, work in the garden or yard, and fix stuff around the house," said Clark. Clark is committed to excellence at the School of Business, and enjoys watching his students succeed.

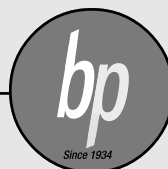
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