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The children's hospital makes a memorable, charming music video ~ p 16

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Local HR directors sell the city to potential new employees ~ p 18

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Choose your own adventure in logistics: Runway, Road, Rail, and River ~ p 39

"Made in Memphis"

The Grizzlies develop their brand, and it's more than just a slogan ~ p 64

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MBQ

INSIDE MEMPHIS BUSINESS

"Students are our products, not our customers."

Dr. Rajiv Grover, Dean of the University of Memphis Fogelman College of Business and Economics ~ p 26

Supplement to
Memphis magazine

Financial Aid

Dean Rajiv Grover positions the University of Memphis business school to compete for students, while preparing his students to compete for jobs.

BY JOHN BRANSTON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LARRY KUZNIEWSKI

TAKE NOTE, ALL YOU MID-LIFE CAREER CHANGERS and college students and graduates looking for jobs. You never know where or when you will find your calling.

Dr. Rajiv Grover was 46 years old when he went to work for a dot-com company called Arzoo in Silicon Valley in 1999. Arzoo, which means “desire” in Hindi, folded in 2001, but the experience was life-changing for Grover, now dean of the Fogelman College of Business and Economics at the University of Memphis.

“I have been in business myself, and that makes a huge difference,” Grover said in an interview at his office in December. “The turning point of my life has been that two-year experience. Prior to that I was a nerd. I was a chaired professor. All I cared about was research, research, research. Only after Silicon Valley did I realize the importance of having these partnerships with businesses. Businesses are moving at lightning speed. Universities are moving really slow. How can we come to a sweet spot?”

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Grover’s previous stops in academia include Penn State, Pitt, Georgia, Stanford, Duke, and Johns Hopkins. His office is on Innovation Drive in a building named in honor of Morris Fogelman by his sons, Avron and Robert, who made their fortunes in real estate and development. Grover’s bookshelves are stocked with marketing tomes mixed with popular fare on “ideas having sex” and “the strength of weak ties” that promote cultural and intellectual diversity. The University of Memphis has 547 students who are nonresident aliens, including 148 from India.



Dr. Rajiv Grover

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS®

Fogelman College
of Business & Economics

THE RAJIV GROVER FILE

JOB: Dean of the University of Memphis Fogelman College of Business and Economics and Chair of Excellence in Sales and Marketing since 2007

BACKGROUND: Born in Calcutta, came to U.S. at age 27. Now 58.

EDUCATION: Catholic schools in Calcutta; Electronics Engineering at IIT; MBA from IIM, Indian Institute of Management. Ph.D. from University of Massachusetts

FAMILY: Married; two daughters, 21 (attending USC) and 27 (attended UCLA and now in the PhD program at UCSF)

FAVORITE YOUTUBE VIDEO: Matt Ridley on “ideas having sex”

WHO KNEW? Not on Facebook; lost 25 pounds on a low-carb diet

DRINK: Single-malt Scotch

HERO: Steve Jobs

ON STUDENTS: “Students are our products, not our customers.”

ON EXAMS: “Exams should be completely open book.”

ON COLLEGE FOOTBALL: “It’s a damn good business proposition.”

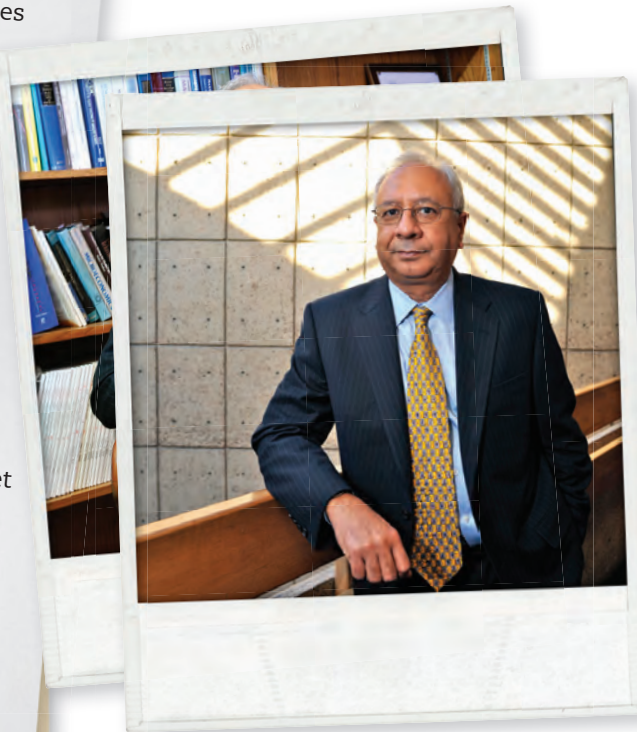
TUITION: Undergraduate \$7,696 a year; MBA is \$22,770 in-state, and \$50,700 out-of-state for the 45-credit program

Grover’s manner is pleasantly unaffected, and he was eager to talk for more than two hours about his background in India, his vision for the university as it celebrates its 100th anniversary, the value of a college education in a tough job market, and the issue that dominated the local news all that week — the search for a new football coach and athletic director following the team’s disastrous 2-10 season.

I wondered how the focus on football looks to a marketing specialist with a business perspective and an international pedigree.

“I think it’s a damn good business proposition,” he said without hedge or hesitation. “And it’s not just from a dollar perspective. It’s all the other emotional energy that gets monetized by different people in different ways. It is so much part of college life in American that I shudder to think of having universities without athletics.”

The athletic department isn’t the only one that faces



some tough opponents. The Fogelman College of Business and Economics, which includes 100 faculty members teaching 2,435 undergraduate majors and 519 students in the MBA program, competes with private schools such as Rhodes and Vanderbilt and public universities like Ole Miss and Tennessee with bigger endowments and traditionally higher ratings. Ten years ago, the business college was in danger of losing its accreditation.

In 2007, Grover was hired as an outsider to bolster the college's reputation and define its niche in a city that fancies itself the cradle of business entrepreneurs but also has one of the poorest urban populations in the United States. His innovations include "holistic" education of students and a "customer-driven MBA program." If those terms suggest unconventional ways of doing things, that was exactly the point.

"There's been a lot of change, the vast majority of it for the better," said Robert R. Taylor, an associate professor of management who has been at the college since 1983 and worked under several deans. Taylor said Grover has pushed students and faculty to be more involved in the community and vice versa.

"He's probably the best we have at doing that," Taylor said.

Holistic education, once the domain of Career Services, means encouraging undergraduate students to take non credit sessions in making speeches, preparing for interviews, business

Holistic education, once the domain of Career Services, means encouraging undergraduate students to take non credit sessions in making a speech, preparing for interviews, business etiquette, personal wellness, dressing for success, and even acting in a play to overcome inhibitions.

etiquette, personal wellness, dressing for success, and even acting in plays to overcome inhibitions.

To a visitor, business majors look like any other students — partial to jeans, pullovers, and ball caps. A total of 37 students completed all of the "holistic" sessions this year. Grover wants to bump that to 100. Sessions are taught by managers from Memphis companies, such as Amber Hood at First Tennessee.

"Business schools teach you how to do a job but not get a job," said Hood,

a 2004 University of Memphis graduate. "Networking is so uncomfortable but it is so important in the corporate world."

Like a coach who wants a team of overachievers who aren't afraid to bloody their noses, Grover wants business students who will impress employers with their scrappiness as well as their skills. He grew up in a country that, two generations ago, was a nation of serfs. He has not forgotten, and he has a soft spot for students who are taking 12 credit hours and working part-time at Subway. Be proud of that! he tells them. Put it on your resume! Differentiate yourself from the other 100 applicants! Make it part of your value proposition! When his daughter comes home from the University of Southern California for Christmas break, he urges her

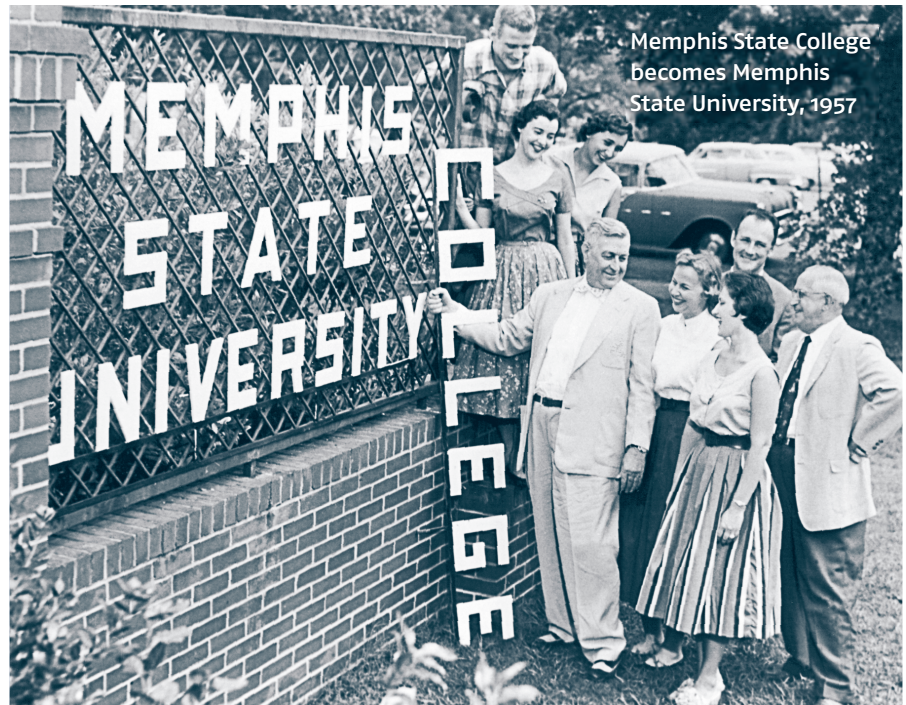


PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

THE CITY'S UNIVERSITY

Built on land once used as a cotton plantation by a Civil War veteran, the 80-acre West Tennessee State Normal School opened to great fanfare on September 10, 1912.

The normal school, which would eventually become the University of Memphis, started with 200 students and 17 faculty members. The only cost for students during the school's early days was a \$2 registration fee. Young men and women of good character were offered two years of high school education and two of college.

The earliest pupils chose the Tigers as the mascot and blue and gray as the school's colors — the story goes, the idea was to reunite two colors ostensibly separated during the Civil War.

The school changed its name to West Tennessee State Teachers College in 1925. At that time, the college began offering four-year degrees. Several departments were added to the campus, including physical education, biology, chemistry, arts, penmanship, and geology. The Brister Library opened in 1931.

Enrollment had climbed to about 1,000 students by 1941. This prompted another name change, to Memphis State College. Graduate studies began being offered in 1950.

By 1957, enrollment had doubled to about 2,000 students, when a proposal to make the school a branch of the University of Tennessee was shot down. Instead, then-governor Frank Clement endorsed a bill to grant the college "university" status. It was renamed once again, becoming Memphis State University (MSU). The institution admitted its first black students in 1959. Doctoral programs were offered beginning in 1966.

President Cecil C. Humphreys oversaw an expansion during the 1960s and '70s, including the building of the University Center and a 12-story library. MSU's entire curriculum was accredited in 1983 — it was the first public university to gain the distinction in Tennessee.

The last name change came in 1994: the University of Memphis. The Ned R. McWherter Library opened the same year. Two distinguished entrepreneurial brands lent their names to significant educational centers at the turn of the twenty-first century: the Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality and the FedEx Institute of Technology.

All told, today, the university stretches over 1,600 acres and has 237 buildings on eight sites. It is one of six universities in the Tennessee Board of Regents system. It has an annual budget of \$439 million and a local economic impact estimated at \$1.43 billion. Total enrollment for the Fall 2011 semester was 22,725.



Grover's pride and joy is the customer-driven MBA program, where the tuitions of 20 highly qualified students are paid by local employers in exchange for 10 hours of work a week during the school year and 40 hours a week in the summer for their future employer. Course content is customized to meet the needs of employers.

to mop floors and wash dishes at a community center.

"Those are the values we're trying to instill," he said. "It has been a difficult task, for sure. Primarily because [the business school] was always run as a social organization, with positions being made on friendship ties and community ties. If I'm given a chance, this place is going to be nothing like what it was five years ago and nothing like what it is now. My students are going to be so confident and so pleasant to work with because they will roll up their sleeves and do a yeoman's task as compared to some person who might have gone to Yale and thinks that they cannot do this thing ever."

It isn't clear how much that vision is paying off. The benefactors are clearly happy. Avron Fogelman said fundraising has increased and Grover "is doing everything a dean should do, and we are fortunate to have him." The college's website has a link to dozens of glowing testimonials from local employers and executives. But it doesn't have a placement office, and Grover concedes that its placement rate "is not very good" for undergraduate business majors.

"For us, it is a little bit more complicated," he said. "We have a lot of students, probably 50 percent, who are already working. It is difficult to figure out how many are full-time undergrads who will seek full-time employment."

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Thumbing through a stack of some 200 applications on his desk from students at Michigan, Texas, Georgia Tech, William & Mary, and Johns Hopkins, Grover calls this his niche strategy.

"We have people who could have gotten into Harvard," he said. "We will never be a Harvard. We will never be a top-50 school. But there are programs with which we can compete with Harvard. For a few selected companies, such as Medtronic, AutoZone, Smith & Nephew, and FedEx, our program will be as competitive as any program."

The customer-driven principle applies to all students. Students, he insists, are the college's products. Its customers are the businesses that will employ them. To those who might find the distinction crass or offensive, he can be dismissive.

"If I treat you as a product, that means you will get good, high-paying jobs. And if I treat you as a customer, that means I make the registration process easier. It

means that my faculty is going to quote unquote, treat you with respect. They're not going to be harsh with you. Blah blah blah. Tell me, do you want to be my customer or do you want to be my product?"

Steve Jobs is his hero — "he knew what customer satisfaction was" — and the Silicon Valley start-up that Grover worked for 10 years ago was mentioned in the same breath as Google in those heady days. Grover has two computers on his desk and obviously knows his way in and around them, but you won't find him on Facebook.

"Social networks have a place in a business program," he said. "In our marketing program we are starting a minor in social networking and commerce. This is the way technology is going, and we need to harness that. I am not on Facebook personally, because I don't think that is good for my career. I am in a government job and have to be responsible to taxpayers in terms of what gets said and how it gets said."

In an age in which a library full of information fits in an electronic device in your shirt pocket, Grover sees no point in closed-book tests.

"Absolutely useless," he scoffed. "How many times has a boss given a subordinate an exercise and said, 'I want you to go and develop this plan but I don't want you to open any book or talk to anybody?' So we tell our students the whole world is their resource, now go solve this particular problem."

At the conclusion of our second interview, I couldn't resist one more foray into the realm of athletics. It will be decades before a business school or any academic department gets as much publicity (or money) in a year as a football or basketball team gets in a month.

Madness? No, the business dean barely budged an inch.

"Expanding the pie, that is the whole notion of creativity," he said. "You can have the cake and eat it too. We can do it all. We can and should have a pretty darn good athletic program. The only thing I would do different, from a marketing perspective, would be to hire the athletic director first and then hire the football coach. Now the athletic director has no accountability for the choice."

Then he was off on another riff.

"Even when you have an innovative strategy that is win-win, people can still fall into the trap of asking, 'Why is this person winning more than I am winning?' How to split up the pie becomes a bone of contention and nothing gets done."

And Rajiv Grover is determined that his legacy will not be that nothing got done.