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KELOWNA

Mentoring students his new business

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A dedicated entrepreneur with expertise in the dynamic world of software has accepted the role of entrepreneur-in-residence this year at Okanagan College's school of business.



Gopal

Raghwa Gopal is the fifth renowned

Okanagan business professional to bring his expertise to students at the college.

Gopal is a longtime Kelowna entrepreneur and president of the Okanagan Angel Network. Gopal co-founded and established Vadim Software, where he retired as president and chief technology officer at the end of 2006. He is a certified business coach, certified executive coach, a lead mentor with the British Columbia Innovation Council and venture adviser with Accelerate Okanagan.

Barry McGillivray, associate dean with the Okanagan School of Business, said Gopal comes by the role naturally, having already served as one of the key supporters of the school's many programs.

"Raghwa has a long history of involvement with students as a mentor and as a judge in our competitions, which includes working with our award-winning SIFE (students in free enterprise) team," McGillivray said. "I know the students will benefit from the many opportunities they'll have to meet and talk with Raghwa. He'll add tremendously to our program and to the student experience at Okanagan College."

As entrepreneur-in-residence for the academic year, Gopal will guest-lecture and provide one-on-one mentoring, giving students the opportunity to learn and examine in a personal way what entrepreneurs do to become successful.

"My vision is to bring a 'real world' perspective to the classroom by offering students pragmatic advice on their entrepreneurial ideas, business plans, strategies and pitches," Gopal said. "I want to meet with students in groups, and in one-on-one sessions, and take time as well to collaborate with various faculty members on cases, courses and other activities."

The role of entrepreneur-in-residence is yet one more way Gopal continues to serve the Okanagan College community. He also sits as a member of the advisory committee for the bachelor of computer information systems degree program and serves as a director of the Okanagan College Foundation.

Over the years, Okanagan School of Business students have had the opportunity to learn from many well-regarded Okanagan entrepreneurs with a wide variety of business interests. Previous entrepreneurs-in-residence were Mel Kotler, who launched Fabricland, food distribution supplier Bill Redmond, who sold his HRI Supply company to Sysco, retirement residence developer Ed Hall, and Doug Manning, who founded the online career information company Bridges Transitions.