

September 19, 2007

N.Y. group offers classes in Stamford

By Julie Fishman-Lapin

One of Wall Street's top financial training companies is launching a Stamford campus, further solidifying the city's spot as a growing and influential financial services hub.

The New York Institute of Finance, founded by the New York Stock Exchange 85 years ago, will begin offering courses at the University of Connecticut this fall.

The goal is to make it more convenient for the thousands of financial services professionals who work and live in lower Fairfield County to take classes ranging from fixed income to credit derivatives.

The institute, which has boasted instructors such as Warren Buffet and Benjamin Graham, the "dean of Wall Street," teamed with **UConn's Connecticut Information Technology Institute** to launch its Stamford operations, said Patricia Sparacio-Don Diego, the managing director of the New York Institute of Finance.

Courses will take place in the classrooms and computer labs of the Connecticut Information Technology Institute at UConn's Stamford branch.

With UBS Investment Bank in Stamford and RBS Greenwich Capital in Greenwich and moving to Stamford - as well as many hedge funds and corporate headquarters in lower Fairfield County - it makes sense to try to reach those employees where they work, said Sparacio-Don Diego.

"We did some research and came up with a list of companies we felt were important that had moved to Connecticut," Sparacio-Don Diego said.

She said she thought about opening a Stamford campus about a year ago after observing how many people were commuting from Manhattan to Connecticut.

"I felt if they are going to take a course, they would want to do it where they work," she said.

About 17 percent of the work force in Stamford and Greenwich is employed in the finance and insurance industries, representing the largest share of employment in these communities, said Lisa Mercurio, director of the Fairfield County Information Exchange, a unit of the Stamford-based Business Council of Fairfield County.

About 10 percent of Stamford businesses and 13 percent of Greenwich businesses are in finance and insurance, said Mercurio, who collected the information from the state's labor department.

"The market is recognizing Stamford as a financial services sector, reflecting lower Fairfield County's role in the metro New York economy," Mercurio said.

New York Institute of Finance, which is now owned by Pearson, offers about 250 classes geared toward brokers and dealers from investment banks, as well as private equity and commercial bank professionals, and people who work for hedge funds, insurance companies and corporations, Sparacio-Don Diego said.

Courses range from Finance for Non-Finance Managers to Credit Default Swaps - a class that already has 16 students signed up in Stamford.

The institute also offers some of its most popular classes, such as Introduction to Credit Derivatives, Technical Analysis, Bond Math, Yield Curve Analysis and Overview of Structured Products. Depending on the topic, classes can be one-day courses or multiweek series.

Tuition, often paid for by employers, ranges from \$1,400 for one-day class to \$12,000 for an intensive four-week analyst program, Sparacio-Don Diego said.

Instructors have experience in the topics they teach, she said. "It is very much from a practitioner point of view; the classes are taught by people who have been or are still in the financial markets."

The Connecticut Information Technology Institute readily joined with New York Institute of Finance because the partnership enables local professionals to advance their careers and skills, said Debbie Gunzelman, director for non-credit programs with the Connecticut institute.

"We understand that not everyone has the luxury or time to take a full semester course," Gunzelman said. "This type of program keeps our community moving at a pace to be competitive and well-trained."

The Stamford campus of the New York Institute on Finance will kickoff at UConn on Thursday evening, with speaker Ralph Acampora, a technical analysis pioneer and an institute instructor.

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