



Work in doctoral student association helps business professor earn tenure

By [Justin Hicks](#) on March 16, 2012

Samuel A. Spralls III has reached more than just a milestone in his career.

The PhD Project announced March 5 that Spralls has been promoted to associate professor with tenure at Central Michigan University.

“He has demonstrated dedication, hard work and intelligence in joining the rapidly growing ranks of minorities choosing to influence the next generation of business leaders as college professors,” said Bernard Milano, PhD Project president. “The PhD Project takes great pride in his achievement and looks forward to following his success throughout his career.”

Spralls becomes the 164th black marketing business school professor in the U.S., according to the March 5, PhD Project news release.

The PhD Project was created in 1994 with the intention of diversifying corporate America by increasing minority business professors in business colleges across the nation.

By increasing the diversity in teaching, the project expects an increase in minority business students and eventually corporate America workers, Milano said.

The project has seen a jump from 294 to 1,119 in minority business professors since its creation.

“At the time we started the project, about 1 percent of all business school professors were either African, Hispanic or Native American,” Milano said. “We’re fortunate now to have increased it to about 3.5 percent, but there’s still a long way to go to equal the representation of students on campus.”

Starting with 10,000 applications, Spralls said the project narrowed down its selection to 500 people to be invited to the 1997 PhD Project Conference in Chicago.

As a member of the project’s Marketing Doctoral Students Association, Spralls began a 15-year journey that eventually landed him the tenure position at CMU.

“The project changed my life,” Spralls said. “A lot of people helped me and saw something in me along the way and I’m thankful for that.”

He was admitted into the Ph.D program at Texas Tech University and spent the next five years working on coursework and writing his dissertation.

“The two years of coursework was the easiest part, because there’s structure,” he said. “Then you have to come up with an idea and a theory, gather data and eventually prove your theory. That’s five years that you are living on about \$15,000 a year.”

After publishing his dissertation at Texas Tech University, Spralls received a professor position at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga for three years, but moved to CMU in July 2006.

“I came here and got the support and advising I needed,” he said. “I published three papers with Dr. (Michael) Garver and Dr. (Richard) Devine, and then two more with another group.”

Spralls teaches introduction to marketing, marketing communications and services marketing, among other courses.

“I think he’s a great professor who really knows what he is talking about,” said Allen Park junior William Pfafflin. “I feel like he wants us to learn and cares about his students.”

With his 15-year task completed, Spralls said he is continuing to set further goals for his teaching future.

“Initially, my reaction was anti-climactic, because you work so hard to get to a point and then it’s done,” he said. “You think to yourself, ‘What’s the next mountain?’ It feels good, and I’m focusing on my next mountain, like becoming a full professor.”