Fogelman donation builds career development program

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A $1.25 million donation from Avron Fogelman has resulted in the Avron B. Fogelman Center for Professional Career Development at the University of Memphis Fogelman College of Business and Economics.

The new center initially could draw 150 students to seven different supplemental courses in business.

Fogelman, previously president of Fogelman Properties and the namesake for the business school, says the donation is the first step in a 25-year commitment he is making to the school that will help develop the personal and interpersonal skills of its students.

“All business schools teach the same undergraduate curriculum, but you have to give our students a better chance to get a job,” Fogelman says. “There are several simple things that are taken for granted that could give them an advantage.”

The seven initiatives will include ethics and professionalism courses; Fogelman Feeds, a program that will aid the Mid-South Food Bank; Fogelman Fit, a health course; a program on resume writing, interviewing, networking and office etiquette; “The 4 Cs program,” which will include courses in creativity, critical thinking, communication and emotional control for graduates; and a Toastmasters public speaking course.

The seventh initiative includes internships and job placement for participants. A student who completes all seven of the initiatives will receive a certificate that states they have completed all segments of the program.

Rajiv Grover, dean of the Fogelman College, says the school is currently working with local corporations to “popularize” the certificate.

“It’ll build a brand equity that will differentiate our graduates from graduates of other schools,” Grover says.
Gaylon Hall, the school’s director who is also chairman of First South Bank, says another initiative of the center will be to take students to monthly Memphis-area Rotary Club meetings.

“This builds on something,” Hall says. “We’ve always had a good business school, but if the students don’t know how to talk to and make an impression on an employer, they will have a hard time getting a job.”