

CAMPUS LIFE

Back to (Stock Market) School



It wasn't so long ago that on college campuses briefcases were the new backpacks, and Meeker the new Madonna. But with the market's current sorry state, you might expect educators to scale back on Wall Street 101.

Not Bryant College in Rhode Island, where a Gwathmey Siegel-designed "simulated trading environment" opens in October as part of the school's new IT center. The trading lab boasts two Big Boards wired for real-time market data or simulated trading software, TV monitors (tuned to CNBC, natch), wall clocks for world economic capitals, a floor-to-ceiling ticker, and 28 Reuters terminals. And each station has that ultimate symbol of corporate excess, a brand new Aeron chair (they were unveiled the same week Enron auctioned off hundreds of them).

A handful of colleges like MIT and Baruch have trading floors, but they built them back when the stock market was ascending. Bryant threw its grand opening days after the Dow hit a four-year low. But assistant professor Asli Ascioğlu insists that those involved are "more motivated now," adding that having stock prices closer to their fundamental values is helpful in a classroom. She's more worried about the market-savvy students, so a strict no-cellphone rule will be enforced. Says Ascioğlu: "We don't want them calling their brokers." — *Rob Turner*

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