

step. Up ahead on the park bench, you can sit next to a life-size bronze statue of Mark Twain or William Shakespeare. You continue on to a Morton's-style steakhouse, where you dine on a five-course meal of international cuisine while learning from experts around the world. Once finished, your car driver escorts you to your room, where you'll bask in the hot tub or pool, all protected by top-level security. Sleep soundly, knowing that if you wake up late, your breakfast will be served in your room. Extraordinary, no?

This is not a resort. It's a campus for college students.

Welcome to High Point University, the brainchild of business master Nido Quebein.

Most colleges today are struggling. Just as businesses are cutting costs in order to survive, many schools are losing enrollment, decreasing services, and nickel-and-diming students for everything from copies to meals. Yet in less than ten years, High Point University has transformed itself from a little-known North Carolina school into a boutique institution. Any business would turn green with envy for these results: enrollment jumped 197%, the number of faculty members increased by 152%, eighty-two new buildings were built, with a total investment of \$1.2 billion. *US News and World Report* gave High Point University three number one rankings.

How did this unremarkable college soar over an economically depressed time and location? It applied Prestige to fascinate applicants, parents, teachers, and donors. Here, average is out. Extraordinary is in. Each corner of the campus is intended to inspire a positive and enlightened mind-set. Everything is intended to remind you, each step of the way, in each and every corner, that your life too can be extraordinary. Students are being prepared for the world as it is going to be, not for the world as it is.

For instance, that restaurant I described earlier? It wasn't created to pamper students, but to push their understanding of

business-meeting etiquette. This dining room is a learning lab. There, the servers teach students dining protocol, and the menu illuminates a different international cuisine each month.

All visitors are welcomed with personalized signs printed with their name and city, and a student guide to escort them. Golf carts are available 24/7 for any student who wants a secure ride on campus. After all, the school believes, how can students reach their highest and best if they have to worry about security?

Success coaches guide each student through a four-year plan. After graduation, students can continue on in the college's funded business incubator, pursuing new business goals with capital and mentorship provided by the university.

Rather than merely differentiating itself as a school, High Point applies Prestige. It teaches students how to differentiate themselves.

### What Is "Prestige"?

Athletes have medals. Bake-off champions display blue ribbons. Twitter stars have Klout scores. Mary Kay's top employees drive pink Cadillacs. Children collect autographs from Mickey and Minnie at Disney World. Girl Scouts wear badges on uniforms. Proud fathers of newborns have hospital bands. Alcoholics Anonymous members mark sobriety with medallions. Scholars frame Phi Beta Kappa keys.

Prestige is the mark of excellence, in every form. Fancy logos and designer brands might come to mind when thinking about excellence, but that's merely the obvious side of this respected Advantage. It's the line that forms when a local hero signs autographs. When Sephora gives exclusive early access to its top customers. When collectors show off a signed Jackie Robinson baseball from their childhood.

Prestigious people evoke admiration, competition, and envy. In corporate circles, fascination might be triggered by a framed Princeton diploma or an invitation to speak at a TED conference.