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Innovations in Undergraduate International Business Curricula

IN RECENT YEARS OUR STATE OF KNOWLEDGE on undergraduate international business education has advanced as new models for teaching/learning have been developed. Innovations in curricula and pedagogy have coalesced with the needs for a global society and business education that transcend borders, cultures, politics and economies. Technology has been a real leveler of the playing field, but it has not solved the growing income disparities among and within nations.

This issue contains three articles that demonstrate the state of advancement in undergraduate international business education. The first article, written by Clifford Wymbs of Baruch College, City University of New York (CUNY), shows how one large public system has responded to the increasing needs created by the advancement of both globalization and technology. Using mostly available courses from the curriculum, Professor Wymbs shows how Baruch College developed an undergraduate IB program that offers proficiency in a foreign language, study abroad, specialization in a functional area, and an international practicum, all at a fraction of what it costs to attend one of the *U.S. News & World Report* top-ranked IB programs.

The second article featured dovetails with the first by showing how a small, liberal arts college conceived a bachelors in international business. As one of the founders of the International Business Department at Rollins College, which ranked number 1 by *U.S. News & World Report* in South East USA, Professor Donald Rogers explains how this degree, based in the School of Arts & Sciences, is differentiated: global citizenship and responsible leadership is driven by the mission of the school. The program requires area studies, a language, an international internship, and a study abroad. All business disciplines are taught from an international perspective only. A student can develop a functional expertise by taking his/her IB electives in a single area.

The apparent similarities between the two programs—language, international practicum and study abroad—is striking despite the contrast between the large public university featured in article 1 and the small private liberal arts environment featured in article 2. While CUNY is rooted in the disciplines, requiring a functional expertise, Rollins is rooted in area studies borrowing from anthropology, history, sociology, religion, politics and economics among the key subjects.

The last article, written by Kimberly Howard and Brian Keller from Grant MacEwan University, Canada, is a useful manual for those who want to conduct a study abroad program for undergraduates. Their study shows the anatomy of a study abroad program consisting of corporate, academic and cultural components. They stress the need to develop learning outcomes and good assessment methods, training the students prior to going, and providing meaningful experiences.

What these three articles about international business education show is that experiential learning coupled with relevant experiences are maybe as relevant as the core functions of business. Furthermore, the “international” component of business is nuanced, requiring a multidisciplinary approach. Enrichment from disciplines outside business and actual experiences can go a long way towards developing global citizens capable of leading tomorrow’s businesses.



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The Launching of a New International Business Major in the Digital Age

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CREATING A NEW MAJOR IN A LARGE, 250,000 student university is both an exciting and challenging proposition. As one would expect, there are extensive policies and procedures to follow; however, at the end of the day, following them allowed us to better understand our students, the role our program would have in the college and university, and our delivery capabilities. The new International Business major at Baruch College/ City University of New York is to begin in Fall 2010.

I hope this short article can serve as a road map for any institution thinking of creating a new undergraduate major in International Business and then marketing it in a digital age. Some of what I present is unique to my home institution, Baruch College/City University of New York, particularly its location in a large global city, its extremely diverse student body, and its place in a federated college system with state oversight; however, I believe the basic principles I outline here can be effectively used by other institutions desiring to pursue a similar path.

Organizationally, the paper is straightforward. It begins with an “Overview” of the process used, followed by a “Needs and Justification” statement for an International Business program. A statement of the “Curriculum” is presented, followed by a discussion of the “Marketing of an IB Major in the Digital Age.” The paper concludes with a brief assessment of “What We Learned” during the process that might be helpful to others starting a program. One final note: we encourage any of you who find parts of this program useful to borrow liberally from our experience.

Overview

In developing this program, faculty members of the Allen G. Aaronson Department of Marketing and International Business searched the websites of all the leading business schools with programs offering International Business majors. (See Table 1 for a brief comparison among several leading programs.) The Department of Marketing and International Business also consulted experts in the industry about the program. Since we target our students to work for New York City firms, we paid particular attention to suggestions from

professionals with significant experience in import/export, banking, government and major non-profit organizations. In this regard, we relied on members of the International Business Major Curriculum Advisory Board, industry leaders, and listings from the job markets as reasonable indicators associated with placing Baruch students with New York City firms.

After we gathered all information on competing BBA International Business programs and consulted experts in the industry and our own faculty members (Zitting & Vincze, 2008), the Executive Committee of the Department of Marketing and International Business and the Zicklin faculty finalized the curriculum of our BBA in International Business program. We believe that the curriculum is business relevant and includes the most up-to-date thinking about international business undergraduate-level education.

Needs and Justification

Finger and Kathoefer (2005) observe that in a globalized business world, the need for an internationally competent workforce is increasing exponentially. Rogers et al. (2009: 403) go further and state: “every business is an international business, either because they do business internationally or because they compete with other businesses that are international.” Students who complete the BBA in International Business will possess a broad array of skills necessary for this environment. We believe the study of international business should be undertaken in conjunction with a strong functional program. While international business specialists are increasingly attractive to many firms, many entry-level positions are still in the functional business areas.

Upon completion of the International Business program at Baruch, students will be well prepared to pursue a career in an IB-related area because they possess:

- Comprehensive international business academic training achieved through a seven course, 21 credit major;
- Functional area knowledge in finance or marketing, with a three-course minor;

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Table 1: Comparison of International Business Programs

	Rank by US News*	Proficiency in a second language**	Study Abroad**	Tuition 2009-10* (In-State)	Specialization in a functional area**	International Business Practicum**	Degree**	Overall* Acceptance Rate
University of South Carolina	1	Required	Required	\$9,156	IB and functional area Co-major	Not Required	BS Degree: IB major Co-major	58.5%***
New York University	2	Not Required	International study trip for all students	\$38,765	IB and functional area Co-major	Required	BS Degree IB major Co-major	32.1%
Temple University	7	Required	Strongly Recommended	\$11,764	Strongly Recommended	Required	BBA in IB	60.8%
Northeastern University	Top 20	Required	Required	\$34,950	Required	Requires overseas work	BS in IB	35.2%
Baruch College	New Fall 2010	Required	Required	\$4,920	Required	Required	BBA in IB	23.5%****

* Numbers obtained from *U.S. News and World Report* (2010).

** Information obtained from college web sites and verified via phone and email conversations with school personnel.

*** Separate application for admission to the IB major with students required to have at least a 3.5 GPA, and then they must compete for a limited number of openings.

**** Separate application for admission to the IB major, expecting that most students have at least a 3.0 GPA for their core courses but not a firm requirement at this time, and planning to limit the number of openings to 55 students per year.

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- Global project management skills obtained by working with multicultural students on case studies and global projects;
- Foreign cultural experiences through a study abroad program for credit (travel expenses will be subsidized), e.g., Jean Moulin University, Lyon, France; Berlin School of Economics, Berlin, Germany; Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, etc.;
- Fluency in a second language (Chinese, Hebrew, French, Japanese, Italian, or Spanish are currently offered at Baruch) with at least three courses beyond the elementary level or demonstrated proficiency through testing;
- Breadth of business knowledge and the ability to “think outside the box” which is necessary to provide dynamic, innovative solutions to complex problems.

In addition, International Business majors will have access to:

- Opportunities for further specialization in certificate programs offered in emerging areas such as International Trade and International Supply Chain Security and Compliance;

- Ongoing activities including special visits to global corporations and institutions headquartered in NYC, one-on-one meetings with senior international managers before their university-wide presentations, Baruch’s extensive alumni network of international managers to help in employment searches;
- International business working experience through an IB internship and opportunities to engage in paid, leading edge research with top IB professors.

Curriculum

In the development of the curriculum we reviewed various undergraduate programs around the country. In addition, we looked at the strengths of our existing international faculty, the resources of the Weissman Center for International Business and the advantage of being located in a world city in developing the proposed curriculum. We sought and received advice and guidance from the International Business Curriculum Advisory Committee.

Core Requirements for All International Business Majors – 12 credits

The intent of the core courses is to provide our students an eclectic understanding of political, social and economic dimensions of international business and to obtain cultural fluency (Wymbs & Kijne, 2003). We place the multinational corporation as the focal actor and host and home governments, local societies, and consumers as key supporting players. The International Competitiveness course is an information intensive course that includes international team projects, a practicum and a variety of written and oral assignments (Lorange, 2003). Collectively, the core courses provide the fundamental building blocks for the functional minors as well as the students' chosen elective courses.

12 credits

MKT 3400	International Business Principles	3
IBS 4200	Foreign Markets, Cultures and Institutions	3
MGT 4880	Management of Multinational Corporations	3
IBS 5750	International Competitiveness (Capstone Course)	3

Electives Available to All International Business Majors – 9 credits

The elective courses provide students breadth in the study of international business. Students are to choose courses from five different areas, three of which are in the Zicklin School of Business, and two of which are not. These courses provide a broad spectrum of topics, including law, supply chain management, technology, intercultural communications and political organizations. Two additional courses are offered. The first is a special topics course that will be taught by Zicklin faculty and will address timely emerging areas in the discipline. The second will offer students the opportunity to engage in a research project sponsored by a professor in an area of mutual interest. Students are free to select any three of these electives to fulfill the requirements for an International Business major.

9 credits

MKT 4410	International Trade Operations	3
MKT 4460	International Supply Chain Management	3
COM 3069	Intercultural Communications	3
LAW 3111	Law and International Business	3
POL 3344	International Organizations	3
IBS 3000	Innovation, Technology and the Global Enterprise	3
IBS 5350	Special Topics	3
IBS 5000	Independent Study	3
MKT 5100	Internship	3

The Minor in a Functional Area

A minor in a functional area is required. The International Business major and Finance and Marketing are complements for several professional areas such as commodity analysis, import/export trading, diamond merchandising, etc. For many large organizations, students must be able to demonstrate an understanding of a functional area to be seriously considered for employment. International business is often a specialization in one of these areas. For other positions, such as consulting, a functional area still helps, but these companies are mainly looking for well-rounded individuals with broad experience, including a foreign language. Each minor consists of 9 credits. Students can choose between a minor in Marketing or Finance. Below are suggested courses.

Marketing

MKT 3605	Consumer Behavior
MKT 4420	International Marketing
MKT 4700	Business Marketing Management

The marketing minor is designed to give students exposure to both consumer and business marketing. We feel covering the often overlooked business marketing area is essential to provide students a balanced approach to marketing. In addition, the International Marketing course provides further breadth to the major.

Finance

FIN 3610	Corporate Finance
FIN 3710	Investments
ECO 3250	International Economics

The finance minor is designed to provide students a broad background in international corporate finance. Our major focus as a school and in this minor is to place students with positions in multinational corporations and not in policy areas associated with a more economics-focused finance/international business concentration. In addition, the International Economics course provides further breadth to the major.

Tier III Minor

A Tier III minor is most likely in a foreign language. Examples of Tier III language minors include: Chinese, French, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. However, students who demonstrated proficiency in a second language via a test could take another Tier III minor. Possible choices include: Asian and Asian American Studies; Latin American and Caribbean Studies; Information Technology and Social Responsibility; Religion and Culture; and Political Science.

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Marketing an IB Major in the Digital Age

The main question for this section is: How does the IB major information get conveyed to the student population so that they can make an informed choice of their major? The answer seemed, rather simply, to partner with the people closest to the target market and leverage their new media skills to create an exciting rollout plan. I will share with you many of the novel insights gained from students in my Internet Marketing classes over the past year when they attempted to answer this question.

One of the biggest challenges we, as academics, face in our respective disciplines is how to teach students theory and remain relevant to their day-to-day world. This is particularly true in pedagogical areas that are rapidly changing and borrow liberally from the established functional areas like international business and the newly emerging field of digital marketing. To help marry relevance with theory in my Internet Marketing class (Wind, 2008), I used a mixture of projects and real world problems on the exam, two of which are particularly relevant to this article: (1) For a group project students could either create a web site for the International Business major or create an on-line advertising video to be posted on the Internet for Baruch's new International Business Program. The remainder of this analysis will share what our students collectively created. (2) On the final I asked them: What (internet and traditional) marketing levers would you use and what specific actions would you undertake (pre-launch) to increase awareness, exploration, and commitment to a new academic program, e.g., an International Business or Digital Marketing major? This approach permitted students to apply marketing planning theory and constructs to a very relevant problem—the marketing of a new major.

First, when given the choice, many of the students, particularly in groups, preferred to experiment in the video medium. Most have posted pictures on Facebook and an increasing number have done so on youtube.com. One particularly well-done video commercial for the International Business major from my class a year ago can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgoafWNzz80>. It is only one minute in length, but it covers the key highlights of the IB program well and uses video of the Baruch campus and international scenes quite effectively. (I provided them background material on the major, but they were completely responsible for script and production.)

Second, almost everyone in their answer to the question on the final stated that there was a need for a website that lists the courses and requirements of the program as well as a linked site for an FAQ section that explains the details of the program. The latter is displayed at <http://zicklin.baruch.cuny.edu/ibmajor>, while the former is reported

at <http://zicklin.baruch.cuny.edu/faculty/marketing/programs/bba-in-international-business>. Also, virtually everyone indicated the need for off-line advertising, particularly flyers posted around campus and articles in our school newspaper, *The Ticker*. Direct mailing, particularly via e-mail notification of the new major, tracking of potential student visits to the web site, and testing of on-line promotion material via A/B splits were frequently mentioned, too.

Some unusual suggestions and insights were gained from asking the question to the target audience, namely students. Several students stated the specific need for testimonials from people who would have liked to become International Business majors if the program had been available when then were making a decision. (See one such example: <http://zicklin.baruch.cuny.edu/faculty/marketing/programs/bba-in-international-business/testimonials/kimi-kang/>.) One particularly insightful comment was that we should use individually addressed letters via U.S. Mail to students in our target GPA range. The rationale was that when the university sends something via regular mail, it must be important, and so students always open it. The urgency and importance factor was not present when the same information came via e-mail, no matter from whom it came.

Overall, student teams through experiential learning were able to create a web site and to use other innovative aspects of the new Internet

“ How does the IB major information get conveyed to the student population so that they can make an informed choice of their major? ”

medium to help solve a relevant marketing problem. Our International Business program rollout has, and will, significantly benefit from their suggestions and digital content.

What We Learned

Our journey is almost complete; the new International Business major is scheduled to begin in Fall 2010. Our rollout plan announcing the major began in earnest in February and March; we have already created a web site and frequently asked questions and listed the new major in our department's web site. Organically, over the last several months over 80 students have come to the website and have filled out questionnaires and pre-registered their interest in the program. This phased announcement allowed us to beta test our procedures and has proved quite effective. We have also used our Internet Marketing classes to create promotional materials and suggested rollout plans for the major, many of which we will use.

Let us circle back to the beginning and share some additional insights regarding the creation of the major. First, we found, and I believe this to be true at many other institutions, that international business scholars are spread throughout the university. Well before we started planning for the major, we used a central project, a CIBER grant proposal, to bring international scholars from around the university together. We did not win the grant, but the relationships formed during the process proved quite helpful when we started planning for the major. Second, the support of senior administration officials is necessary and this is aided by having international business mentioned in the college or university's vision/mission statement. We only required direct, high-level support on one occasion, but this intervention saved us a year, i.e., missing one school deadline leads to missing a university date, which causes a year slippage due to approval cycles. Third, relationships developed by working on projects together can and do smooth interdepartmental disagreements before they can become major problems. Fourth, momentum develops for the program, and you get a sense of wellbeing. Fifth, six months before the start-up all the myriad implementations details become apparent, and controlled panic sets in. Sixth, I will let you know next year if we have successfully navigated through this tumultuous period.

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Creating an Undergraduate International Business Major: Reflections from Fifteen Years Later

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SUPPOSE YOU SET OUT TO CREATE an undergraduate business major from scratch. Suppose you had only three constraints. First, it had to be recognized and accepted as an undergraduate business major. Second, it had to be highly differentiated. It needed to be different from any other business major in the state. Third, it had to be integrated with the undergraduate College of Arts & Sciences (rather than being a part of the Business School).

This was the challenge we faced at Rollins College in 1995.

This paper reflects on the creation of an undergraduate business major focused entirely on International Business from fifteen years later. In this case study we describe the Rollins academic environment, the rationale for a context-focused major, the curriculum that was created, and what were then the distinctive characteristics of the Rollins curriculum.

History

Rollins is a high quality, private, comprehensive, liberal arts institution located in Orlando, Florida. Enrollment is 3,600 students in three units: the College of Arts & Sciences, the Roy Crummer Graduate School of Business, and the Hamilton Holt School for Continuing & Professional Education. We are committed to the concept of Pragmatic Liberal Education with a teaching philosophy that education should be Collaborative, Active, Practical, and Supportive (CAPS). Rollins consistently receives high ranks for its programs (#1 among Masters Level institutions in the South by *U.S. News and World Reports*, from 2005–2010).

The Rollins mission is to educate students for global citizenship and responsible leadership, empowering graduates to pursue meaningful lives and productive careers.

In the 1980s, Rollins decided to replace its traditional undergraduate business major with a curriculum better connected to the liberal arts ethos. At first this meant obvious inclusions like economics, statistics, information technology, organizational behavior, and communication.

By 1990 the Rollins administration and Board of Trustees were pushing for something more pragmatic and innovative than the traditional four functions program (Accounting, Finance, Marketing, and Management). This push developed into a five-year process led by Professor Thomas Lairson (a political scientist specializing in political economy) and myself (a business professor specializing in Human Resource Management).

We reviewed the international business programs at more than 250 American and European colleges and universities, large and small, graduate and undergraduate, public and private. We found a number of programs we liked and a number we didn't. We talked with the HR people at fifteen large multinational firms with Orlando operations. We spoke with our contacts at the Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce, the International Chamber of Commerce, the Mid-Florida Economic Development Agency, Enterprise Florida, and the World Trade Center Orlando.

Choices

A number of curricular models were considered, including Accounting Based Information Systems, Leadership Studies, E-Commerce, Entrepreneurship, Brand Management, Supply Chain Management, New Product Development, and Arts Management. In retrospect we are glad we didn't go the E-Commerce route. At the time many of our colleagues thought it was the wave of the future.

We finally decided that a program focused entirely on International Business was the best fit for the undergraduate college. This decision was based on (1) the strengths of Rollins, (2) the available faculty resources, (3) the nature of our student body, and (4) the needs of the business community.

Thus, we made a commitment to a curriculum based on the context of business rather than to any specific process or function. This was actually a pretty tough decision. Many of the academic consultants and local executives we interviewed felt we should provide students

the opportunity to specialize in a business function and a geographic region. Ultimately we decided the program should produce IB generalists with a strong global perspective. If students wanted a functional or geographic specialization, they could use their electives to create one. Fifteen years later (circa 2010), students can create functional concentrations in Finance, Human Resources, Marketing, and Sustainable Development. They can create geographic concentrations in Asian, European, Latin American and Caribbean studies.

From 1995–1997, more than 40 versions of the International Business proposal were written, circulated, discussed, and revised. This allowed each individual member of the Rollins faculty to express opinions. Finally, in November 1997, the International Business major was overwhelmingly approved by the faculty senate 57 to 5. We began accepting students in January 1998, recruited our first class for Fall 1998, and had our first graduates in spring of 2000.

Ten years later we are very happy with most of the decisions we made (the one we didn't like, we altered). Very early on we decided we needed to develop a niche program. Rollins is a small player in a market dominated by very, very big, successful universities. We chose to follow one of the classic principles of business strategy: "If your competition is stronger than you, don't compete where they're strong, don't even compete where they're weak, compete where they aren't."

There are many stand alone IB programs at the graduate level. But we were the first freestanding, undergraduate International Business degree program in the United States. We found a niche where there was no competition. That became the cornerstone of our program. We chose to offer students a high quality, comprehensive, competency based, interdisciplinary, undergraduate business education with a strong international focus.

We took our cue from the Harvard Business School statement, "In most Business Administration programs the emphasis is on *business*, at Harvard the emphasis is on *administration*." In most international business programs the emphasis is on *business* and preparing for business careers. At Rollins the emphasis is on the *international* context of business. We recognize that the international context dramatically broadens the way businesses do business. We educate our students for *international* citizenship, *international* leadership, *international* organizations, *international* lives, and *international* business careers.

Curriculum

American business schools traditionally treat international business as a special case of the functional courses. We believe that every stu-

dent needs to understand the functional areas in the context of international business. We believe that IB doesn't build on the functional business areas; it provides the context for accounting, finance, HR, marketing, operations, and strategy.

Thus, we created a new set of core courses for the International Business major that combined the standard functional course with the standard international course. For example, a student taking International Management (4 credits) learns the essential contents of both a Management course and an International Management course. The same is true for Finance and Marketing. In each case, our core courses merge material from what would traditionally be considered two independent courses. This was accomplished by removing repetitive and non-critical subjects.

“ We believe that every student needs to understand the functional areas in the context of international business. ”

Our professors were able to develop these consolidated courses because they come from the traditional disciplines of accounting, economics, finance, marketing and management, but they are trained and experienced in international dimensions of their disciplines. They bring that international perspective into the classroom. Furthermore, our professors travel regularly to other countries to improve their understanding of the current issues relevant to their disciplines. As a direct result, our students are learning international business from internationalized faculty.

We believe that it is more valuable to our students (and more challenging) to teach business, management, marketing, and finance from the international perspective rather than the domestic; hence our foundation courses are:

- INB 300 International Business Environments
- INB 337 International Marketing
- INB 345 International Management
- INB 372 International Finance
- INB 450 Global Business Strategy

Holm, Vaughn, and White (1996) observed that most of the early work on internationalizing business focused on courses taught within the business program without integrating non-business areas of importance (such as language and cultural studies). We did not want to repeat that error.

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According to the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) Report (2000: 2), “a primary contribution of liberal arts institutions to the field of International Business is the philosophy that students should be educated in a context broader than business alone. Students need to learn to ask Why and not just How.”

At the time of the CIC study of 450 schools, fewer than 30% of American business programs had adopted more than two of their recommendations for internationalizing business studies:

- Recruiting international students
- Encouraging cross-cultural dialogue
- Requiring foreign language courses
- Requiring cultural sensitizing courses
- Requiring international experience
- Requiring internship experience
- Hiring faculty with international teaching, research, or work experience
- Hiring faculty with degrees from international institutions.

We chose to adopt all of the CIC recommendations and incorporate them into our strategy. We were the first undergraduate business program in the United States to do so. Ten years later, all of these features seem commonplace. The IB program is grounded in the Rollins commitment to educate students for global citizenship and responsible leadership, empowering graduates to pursue meaningful lives and productive careers. The department offers a major and minor in International Business, a minor in Sustainable Development (in cooperation with Environmental Studies), and preparation for the 3-2 MBA program (in cooperation with the Crummer Graduate School of Business). An extended description of the academic program appears in Rogers et al. (2009).

We are especially pleased that adopting the CIC recommendations allowed us more latitude in developing the competencies that Stark and Lowther (1988) discovered were common both to undergraduate professional education and undergraduate liberal education:

- Communication Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Adaptability Skills
- Continuous Learning Skills
- Social/Contextual Understanding
- Aesthetic Sensibility
- Professional Identity
- Professional Ethics

- Professional Responsibility (giving back)
- Advancing the Profession (adding to).

Later, when the American Association of Colleges & Universities, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business introduced initiatives for the Assurance of Learning (AOL), we already had experience documenting and assessing achievement of learning outcomes.

Distinctive Features

Requirements for the International Business major are: 18 courses, including 10 core courses, 4 foreign language courses, 4 electives, an internship in international business, and a direct international experience. INB 230 and ECO 221 are five semester hour courses. The rest of the INB Core Courses are four semester hours. The core includes:

INB 230 Financial & Managerial Accounting

INB 300 International Business Environments

INB 337 International Marketing

INB 345 International Management

INB 372 International Financial Management

INB 397 International Business Internship

INB 450 Global Business Strategy

ECO 202 Economics in Historical Perspective

ECO 203 Micro- and Macroeconomics

ECO 221 Principles of Statistics

The curriculum has several other distinctive features. One is the required internship. INB majors are required to complete an internship in international business (INB 397). INB majors may satisfy this requirement by participating in (a) a Rollins International Internship program (London, Spain, or Australia), (b) a summer internship abroad, or (c) a local internship in some aspect of international business.

Another is a required international experience. This requirement may be satisfied by: (a) participating in a Rollins semester abroad program, (b) participating in a Rollins study abroad course, (c) experience as an international student studying in the U.S., or (d) extensive experience living or working abroad.

A third distinctive feature is required foreign language competency. Proficiency in English and at least one modern foreign language is essential to a successful career in international business. The experience

of studying a foreign language is also essential to developing the cultural sensitivity required for living and working outside one's native environment. Rollins students are required to take two courses (one year) of foreign language study at an introductory level. In addition, all INB majors are required to take four courses or the equivalent in a modern foreign language at the intermediate or advanced level. This four-course foreign language requirement is an essential component of the International Business major.

A fourth distinctive feature is the required electives in area or regional studies. This requirement may be satisfied in two ways. First, students may satisfy the requirement by taking at least two courses from a list of approved electives (the current list appears in Figure 4). These electives are drawn from the College of Arts & Sciences departments of Anthropology, Australian Studies, Communication, Economics, Environmental Studies, European Studies, French, German, History, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Political Science, Religion, and Spanish. Second, students may satisfy this requirement by completing a minor in Asian Studies, Australian Studies, European Studies, Latin American Studies, French, German, Russian, or Spanish.

Final Thoughts

This paper is a reflection on the creation of an undergraduate International Business major from fifteen years later. The Rollins IB program is a success story. Our story should give comfort to anyone thinking of doing anything different. It can be done (although it didn't always feel that way). It can be successful (although success, even survival, wasn't always guaranteed). It can be a source of personal and professional pride.

The net effect is that Rollins International Business majors are participating in a distinctive program, developing valuable skills, learning distinctive perspectives, and acquiring basic and specialized busi-

ness knowledge, allowing graduates to realize the Rollins mission of educating students for global citizenship and responsible leadership and empowering them to pursue meaningful lives and productive careers. There is no question in our minds. If asked, "Would you do it again?" we would say "Yes!"

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Anatomy of an Undergraduate Business Study Tour

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ACCESS TO EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAMS, including study tours, is increasingly becoming an expectation of business students. Based on the authors' experiences of developing and implementing an inaugural study tour to China and Japan for undergraduate business students at Grant MacEwan University in Alberta, Canada, this paper proposes a framework for study tours comprising academic, business and cultural components, examines selected existing best practices, and offers additional insights based on our experiences. Although primarily focused on the pedagogical and assessment aspects of business study tours, general recommendations are also provided. Our research and experiences indicate that generic best practices for study tours may not apply to all students; specific best practices may need to be developed for business students.

Study Tour Participants

Business students have distinct expectations of study tours. In comparing business and non-business students' perceptions and preferences for study abroad, Toncar, Reid, and Anderson (2005) found that business students are more concerned with the impact that study abroad has on their future career prospects, and whether participating in study abroad will delay their graduation dates. Business students are also more concerned with receiving course credit and financial aid for study abroad.

Many institutions use interviews to select students for study tours. However, a "first-come, first-served system"—for those who meet requirements—is more equitable than interviews for two reasons. First, interviews are subjective, and selection decisions based on interviews may be challenged by students or their parents. Screening criteria such as Grade Point Average (GPA), number of credits, or specific courses are less subjective measures and are therefore harder to challenge. Second, in retrospect, the students who concerned us

most before going abroad were the ones who demonstrated the most learning and growth. Had interviews been used as a selection method, we would have likely denied this opportunity to the students who benefited from it the most.

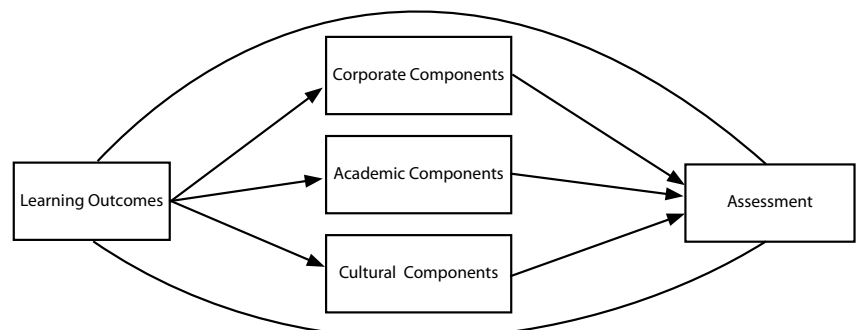
Andrews and Cousins (n.d.) state that the ideal leaders for study tours are those with international experience, interests, and contacts. However, faculty members involved in study tours should be prepared to play a variety of roles in addition to instructor, including parent, tour guide, counselor, and interpreter. O'Neal (as cited in Brockington, Hoffa, & Martin, 2005) emphasizes that faculty members' problem-solving ability is crucial, especially as they are unlikely to have training in these additional roles.

Study Tour Curriculum: An Academic, Corporate and Cultural Framework

Henthorne, Miller, and Hudson (2001) maintain that study abroad programs help students gain self-confidence, hone cross-cultural adaptation skills, demonstrate flexibility and initiative to employers, and become better learners. Currie, Matulich and Gilbert (2004) state that two higher-level learning components in international business—understanding and competence—are dependent on students having an experience abroad.

Our overall goal was to help students learn about doing business in Asia in ways that could not be simulated in a traditional classroom setting in three areas: academic, corporate, and cultural. There are many ways to design study tour curricula, but beginning with learning outcomes and developing the study tour around them is a logical starting point. Link each component of the curriculum to at least one learning outcome. Figure 1 outlines the high-level approach we took to curriculum design.

Figure 1: Study Tour Curriculum Approach



Since students benefit the most from experiences that make classroom learning real, design the study tour so students can make strong connections between in-class learning and out-of-class experiencing. Ideally, students should spend their time abroad engaged in activities they could not access at home. Although learning takes place on many levels on a study tour, two major areas of learning include making theoretical concepts concrete and reinforcing the need for intercultural competence, flexibility, and sensitivity.

Academic

Prior to going abroad, our students completed three assignments in groups: a case study of a Canadian company interested in expanding to the Asian market, a cultural research assignment, and a business research project that compared and contrasted approaches to protocols such as business etiquette and negotiation techniques in Canada with either China or Japan. In addition to these assignments, students were assessed on academic (reflective) journals and their contribution and professionalism on the study tour. Students were provided with a detailed grading rubric for each assessed component.

Provide students with as much information as possible on the host country before going abroad through pre-departure readings or sessions and lectures. At a minimum, ensure students have a basic understanding of business practices in the host country, although ideally an overview of any pertinent information (e.g., political, economic, geographic, cultural) should be included before going abroad. Teaching students a few essential phrases in the local language is also helpful.

Lectures by host-country academics give students a different perspective on both the subject topic and how business is taught in the host-country. Ensure students are well-briefed in terms of expectations during the lecture; for example, whether active or passive learning is the norm. This component of study tours provides an excellent opportunity to leverage existing partnerships with host-country institutions. If no partnerships currently exist in the host-country, seek recommendations from trusted sources. In planning sessions and communications with host contacts, be clear about the goals of the study tour, the level and background of the students, and the expectations of the lecturers.

Students benefit from meeting with business students in the host country. Our original plan was to have home- and host-country students collaborate on case studies and attend lectures together at a post-secondary institution in Beijing. We had also planned for some of our students to present their business research project results on the difference in business protocols between Canada and China (completed during the pre-departure orientation), and then facilitate a discussion on how accurately they had portrayed the topic from the Chinese students' point of view. (Unfortunately, we were unable

to do this, as international visitors were prohibited on their campus due to the Olympic torch protests. In the end, we compromised by attending a lecture from a Chinese scholar and meeting her students off-campus for a cultural activity.) If you can incorporate this component in your study tour, confirm beforehand that the host-country students speak English sufficiently well to communicate.

Study tours have historically been criticized as being tourist- rather than academic-centered. Academic components can be incorporated both before and during students' time abroad. Currie, Matulich, and Gilbert (2004) advocate for using work-directed team projects while abroad where groups of students work on a project for a foreign company.

Corporate

Connect students' learning and experiences in meaningful ways when choosing businesses to visit. Our students visited Nisshin Ollio, a Japanese company that makes vegetable oil products from Albertan raw material exports. Students met with business executives from the company, toured the plant where raw materials are processed into end products, and visited the dock where canola and flax arrive in Tokyo from Alberta (via Prince Rupert, British Columbia).

If possible, visit some corporations that students will be familiar with or have studied in cases. Our students met with Honda executives in Tokyo and had the opportunity to ask questions after their presentation. If your business school has specific specializations, choose business visits accordingly. MacEwan School of Business has a supply chain program; the students from this program found the tour and presentation at Subaru particularly worthwhile.

Hosting and meeting with Canadian expatriates was one of the most successful aspects of the study tour. We did not find any recommendations in the literature on this, but we think it should be mandatory for all business study tours. Hearing how a native functions in the host country business environment is useful; hearing how an expatriate (from one's own country) functions can be even more useful. Many business students participating in study tours are interested in working abroad, and want to know the answers to questions such as: *How did you find a job?, How did you overcome the language barrier? and How did you make friends?*

Cultural

One of the advantages of a study tour is that students tend to learn as much from extra-curricular activities as curricular ones, particular in terms of culture. Cultural experiences need not be limited to specific sites or activities. Accommodation and meals are a great way for students to experience the host-country's culture. In Kyoto, our stu-

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students stayed at a ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn. Students slept on futons, received tea, dressed in the clothing provided, and had the opportunity to experience a traditional Japanese bath.

Prior to going abroad, students were required to research a culturally relevant Chinese or Japanese tradition or site and write a short paper on the history or historical significance of their topic, the function or impact it has in society, and the cultural values it reflects. Ideally, the research should focus on a cultural aspect that students will experience abroad. One group of students researched sumo wrestling and a week later attended a sumo wrestling match. After the sumo match the students had chunko nabe, the traditional stew of sumo wrestlers.

When planning student activities abroad, avoid creating a bubble-effect where students only interact with each other and have limited exposure to anything different from what they would experience or have at home. When planning accommodations, meal locations and other activities, look for opportunities to maximize exposure to the host culture.

“...avoid creating a bubble-effect where students only interact with each other and have limited exposure to anything different from what they would experience or have at home.”

Assessing Study Tour Learning through Journals

A great deal of research supports requiring students to keep academic journals during education abroad activities. Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, and Lassegard (2002) highlight the benefits of journaling such as recording experiences, referencing cultural and learning development, and coping during cultural adjustment. While this may be true, journals were one of the more challenging aspects of student evaluation. Although students were provided with detailed criteria regarding the expectations of academic journals, as well as a session on academic journal writing in the pre-departure orientation, the majority of journals were a diary of daily events rather than a reflection and analysis of experience and learning. This could have been a function of a number of factors, including the limited amount of time that students had to write in their journals, disinclination towards journal writing, and a lack of experience with reflective journal writing. The success of academic journals detailed in the literature may possibly be attributed to the fact that historically, education abroad experiences have been the domain of liberal arts and humanities programs whose students may have a greater proclivity toward journal writing than business students.

Designing a reflective assignment which employs technology business students are comfortable with and enjoy using such as Facebook or blogging may be a successful alternative to traditional academic journals. One option is providing the grading rubric for academic journals, and allowing students to propose a reflective component that would be meaningful to them, acceptable to the faculty members leading the course and also fulfill the learning objectives of academic journals. Regardless of format, reflective assignments are challenging to mark objectively, even with a detailed grading rubric.

Additional Considerations for Developing and Implementing Study Tours

Clearly defining the scope and learning objectives of the study tour is essential. Designing a study tour from the ground up is extremely labor intensive, but it allows significant influence over the curriculum, destinations, and activities abroad. Donnelly-Smith (2009) found that short-term study abroad programs organized by faculty members are more academically sound than those organized by external providers, which typically tend to be skewed more towards tourism. If possible, prior to taking students abroad, visit the hotels or residences where students will be staying; meet corporate representatives and tour their businesses; meet any academics who will lecture the students and visit their institutions; and visit all cultural sites. If this is not possible, ask for recommendations from trusted contacts.

Because we were able to leverage existing School of Business contacts in Asia, our study tour took only nine months to design and implement, although typically 12 to 18 months is recommended (Chieffo, Tuma, Lund, Pauly, & Uhrskov, 2007). If funds permit, consider having a faculty member with interest, but little or no experience, in international business participate in the study tour as a professional development activity.

Relationships and communication are key when developing and implementing a study tour. Although faculty members spend the greatest amount of time organizing a new study tour, departmental and institutional involvement may also include the Registrar's Office, International Office, Finance Office, and curriculum approval committees. Good relationships and communication with colleagues in these areas result in a smoother process. Students appreciate clarity, so provide as much detailed information as possible about what students should expect and what is expected of them. Communicate frequently and

reiterate important information often. Regular communication with your contacts abroad is equally important, keeping in mind cultural influences when interpreting your contacts' responses.

Limit study tours to a maximum of 20 students; larger groups are difficult to move efficiently and cannot always be accommodated by businesses, cultural sites, and restaurants. Ideally, both male and female faculty members should lead the group, and the ratio of faculty members to students should be a maximum of 1:10.

Donnelly-Smith's (2009) research shows that preparation is key to the success of a short-term study abroad program for both faculty members and students. Although planning pays, adaptability and flexibility especially while abroad is paramount. Finalize as many details as possible before departure, but create contingency plans should things go awry.

Conclusion

Business study tours continue to gain popularity with undergraduate students and provide an opportunity for an international experience for those students who may not have the time or means for an extended education abroad experience. Most of the existing research—and resulting best practices—has historically focused on liberal arts and humanities students; given that business students have very different needs, requirements, learning styles, and interests, there is an opportunity for more research on best practices for business study tours and education abroad.

For all the time and effort that designing and implementing a first-time study tour requires, the reward is observing the huge leaps in student growth and knowledge. Feedback such as "I did more, saw more, and learned more in a shorter period of time than I ever thought possible," and "I honestly learned more in this study tour than I could ever hope for from another course" reinforces the connections students make during an education abroad experience that are difficult—if not impossible—to simulate in the classroom.

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