

UNF forms international MBA partnership

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As the economy becomes more and more globalized, so do graduate students at the University of North Florida.

Graduate students at UNF have the opportunity to apply for the GlobalMBA program, where students spend a semester each at four different universities around the world, including UNF.

The four participating universities are: UNF, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics in China, the Cologne University of Applied Sciences in Germany and the University of Warsaw in Poland. North Florida became involved though exchange relationships developed over the years with about 20 universities.

“This is a great opportunity for students. I would have done anything for an opportunity like this,” said Dr. Oliver Schnusenberg, associate professor of finance at UNF and the director of International Affairs for the GlobalMBA program. “They have the opportunity to learn about business in four different universities in four different countries.



This year's group of GlobalMBA students at orientation this fall in Cologne, Germany.

The orientation in Cologne, Germany included a tour of the city where the students spent their fall semester. From left to right: Hatton Hillin from UNF, Agata Cielniak from Poland and the University of Warsaw, Sebastian Mildner from Germany and the University of Warsaw, and their tour guide, whose name was unavailable.



“It’s a fantastic program.”

The program takes 14-15 months and this is the sixth group to go through the program. Currently, about 20 students are at Cologne University. In February, they will go to the University of Warsaw and from there to Dongbei University in the summer before wrapping up the program at UNF during the fall 2008 semester.

Once all of the course work is complete, the students will receive a UNF MBA and a European Master’s Degree, which represents both the University of Warsaw and Cologne University. They will also receive a certificate from Dongbei University. This current class will be the first to receive the European Master’s Degree.

“The program allows the students to create a global network with each other,” said Schnusenberg. “It is nice to see them and hear them talk about the experiences (at the alumni event).”

The alumni event was held during the GLOBUS Research Conference this past year.

In order to be admitted into the program, students must have earned an undergraduate degree and be enrolled in one of the four universities as a graduate student. Students must score at least a 480 on the GMAT. Students must also be proficient in English because all course materials, lectures and discussions are in English. There are also a variety of courses that must be taken before admittance to the program.

Schnusenberg said each student pays tuition and fees based on the rates of their home university.

He added that the universities trust each other in that they provide students who are qualified. Students only need to apply to one of the universities, not all four.

Although many universities have exchange programs, Schnusenberg said there is nothing like what they have at UNF with the GlobalMBA program.

“We are hoping this really distinguishes ourselves, not only in Florida, but in the country,” he said. “The more and more people hear about this program, the more competitive it is going to be to get in.”

Each school can only choose 10 students. However, not everyone who applies qualifies. Currently, there are five UNF students in the program.

“We are really hoping UNF becomes an international business school,” he said.

The GlobalMBA program is a part of the International Business Flagship in UNF’s Coggin College of Business. Jeff Steagall is the international business director, Andres

Gallo is the research director, Anne Sheridan is the study abroad director and Kate Mattingly is the study abroad advisor.

UNF has many other exchange programs, some that are 10-15 day programs during which a student can choose to go to a country such as Italy, China, England, Scotland, and Argentina — among others.

Schnusenberg is currently working on new partnerships with South America, China and India. He added that the four universities involved in the GlobalMBA program will always be options for students. However, he's working on adding schools in other parts of the world.

“It takes a lot of time, but we are already in the process of finding new partners,” he said. “We are trying to target all of the areas that are economically developing.”

Schnusenberg said learning and experiencing other cultures and the way they do business is incredibly important.

“I can't imagine students not having an international experience,” he said. “The development of universities in China and India is happening fast and the United States is not the only country with universities now.

“This alliance with other universities makes sense.”