

***Going Glocal***

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**Glocal:** relating to the connections or relationships between global and local businesses, problems, etc. *Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English*

**Glocalization:** A portmanteau word of *globalization* and *localization*. By definition, the term “glocal” refers to the individual, group, division, unit, organization, and community which is willing and able to “think globally and act locally.” *Wikipedia*

While perhaps a new and unfamiliar word, the term “glocal” perfectly captures the ability and perspective that we are trying to develop in our students at Lehigh. The notion of “thinking globally and acting locally” necessitates a number of skills and experiences which are key to a successful career in a world in which the competition for jobs, and scope of organizations, is not restricted by national borders. Our graduates are entering such a world, and as communications technology continues to become ever more sophisticated, such challenges will only increase over the course of their careers. Consequently, developing a glocal mindset in our students is central to the College’s mission of “Developing Leaders for Global Impact.” The key abilities necessary for our students to be able to “go glocal” are:

1. *The ability to “zoom” back and forth between global events and trends and their local manifestations to see how they influence each other.*

Even though students, like the rest of us, can have the tendency to become insular, captivated by our own day-to-day, local environment, it is key for students not only to be aware of what is going on in the wider world, but also to be able to understand how these global events and macro-trends have an impact on their local communities and vice-versa, how local actions have an impact on the global community. Events such as the “Arab Spring,” the uprisings that have recently swept across the Arab world; riots in Greece and England over economic pain felt by the populous; the sovereign debt crises that threaten to bring down the Euro; the earthquake and nuclear meltdown in Japan are just some of the recent events that have profound implications at the local level and affect the lives and businesses of people across the world, not just in the regions at the center of these events. Getting our students to understand how these events affect everything from the price they pay for that gold earring to the launch date of the next iPad, to the cost of filling up their car for the next trip home is key to be able to link global and local events.

On the other side of the coin, connecting local actions to global trends is also necessary. Indeed, students are often already very well informed of these affects, such as how environmentally conscious action at the local level has an impact on the global issues of climate change, and this consciousness has certainly resulted in increasingly positive sustainable initiatives on campus. However, as the Arab Spring demonstrated, individual social networks, facilitated by social media such as Facebook and Twitter can have startling effects on creating global events. Similarly, the social connectivity in today’s world also has profound implications for individual and collective purchasing behaviors which translate local purchases into global economic trends.

This understanding of how their “world” and individual and collective actions matters in a global context, and how global events affects their local community helps our students gain a true global perspective and turns them into global citizens who are engaged with the world.

### *2. The ability to see how cycles evolve and correct themselves.*

A thorough understanding of the fundamental disciplines of business, and in particular macro-economics, is an absolutely crucial foundation to be able to think globally. An understanding of how macro-economic cycles interconnect and influence exchange rates, inflation rates, deficits, labor and capital rates and determine competitive and comparative advantage between nations is critical in enabling a student to understand how these macro-economic forces play out over time and the impacts they have on a local level on everything from unemployment rates, consumer demand and even which industries and companies they should be targeting to land that job after graduation. This perspective on macro-cycles also enables students, even with little personal experience, to appreciate a long-term view and stay above the turbulence caused by short-term economic shocks.

This necessary knowledge is why the CBE is first focused on providing a solid foundation in the fundamental disciplines of business. While I have highlighted the discipline of economics and its role in providing a global worldview in our students, the same can be said of the other disciplines of Accounting, Finance, Management and Marketing, all of which have international dimensions which are central to the core curriculum in both our undergraduate and graduate programs.

### *3. The ability to move from the cognitive to the affective dimension of glocal awareness.*

While as a college of business and economics our first focus is necessarily on the fundamental foundational discipline knowledge that is essential for a thorough understanding of business and globalization, this classroom-based knowledge primarily provides a cognitive understanding of glocal issues. Through lectures, case discussions and exercises, students can certainly come to appreciate the intellectual issues surrounding global issues, their interconnectedness, and their impacts at the local level across all the disciplines. However, while this cognitive “head knowledge” is extraordinarily valuable as our students move from the academy to their chosen profession and move towards becoming global citizens, it is really only through international experience that students can fully appreciate what it means to be a global citizen. It is by experiencing different cultures and their approaches to business and to life that students move from a purely cognitive understanding of glocal issues to embrace an affective understanding of glocal issues. It is in these international experiences, especially the intensive experiences offered here at Lehigh which not only take them into an international setting, but which also delve beyond the surface to go into businesses and experience the challenges of doing business in these cultures that students experience the emotional aspects of globalization. Around the world people have very different ways of conducting business, of building relationships and establishing trust. It is only when students experience these things first-hand that they can truly appreciate the cultural differences which can have a profound impact on the way business is conducted, and their likely success in operating in a global context. Even though they may experience the warmth of other peoples, they also need to understand these emotional and cultural nuances to be able to productively cooperate and negotiate in these global environments, and it is really only through direct international exposure that these nuances are truly understood.

This is why at the CBE we have been investing in developing a series of pilot programs that provide intensive experiences in different parts of the world to provide both our undergraduate and graduate students this vital international exposure. Having been involved in leading two of these programs - to

Singapore with undergraduate students and to England with MBA students, it is easy to see the clear and direct effects these trips have on the mindset of students and the appreciation they develop for the nuances of international business even during these short, intensive trips. These trips also have had immediate and significant effects on the careers of these students, with, for example, one of our undergraduate seniors from this year's Singapore trip starting their career at a major Singaporean bank having made the initial contact sitting next to the Chairman of the bank at a luncheon that they hosted for us during the trip. Several of the graduate students have also received promotions involving international responsibilities with their respective companies having sought these new opportunities after their experience in England. Indeed, so successful have these pilot programs been that not only are they continuing beyond the pilot stage, but we are also adding further pilot programs, for instance next summer to China. These programs have clearly demonstrated the immediate and lasting impact that these experiences have in bringing home the value of global exposure.

So often, we have a parochial view that we conduct business on a local level, and think that we have an understanding of the local markets in which we operate. However, we can never really truly understand the dynamics of even local markets without an appreciation of how global forces affect our local markets. This applies to us as a University as much as it does to any other enterprise. The ability to "go global" and be able to think globally while acting on a local level is central to what we do and what we strive to impart to our students here at Lehigh.