

*Thoughts on Developing Leaders for Global Impact*

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Lehigh's College of Business and Economics has a long tradition of developing leaders. We attract bright, motivated students who come to our hill with clear purpose – to leave prepared to make their marks in business as problem solvers, doers, and achievers. The success of our alumni over many decades has demonstrated the value of our Lehigh education and created a network that has helped transition generations of Lehigh students to promising careers.

Globalization has changed the landscape of business and what students around the world need to do to prepare for future contribution. Globalization is changing how and where work is done and who competes for positions. Students come to Lehigh to prepare to succeed in this context, and our faculty do engage them to think about global business issues and influences across the curriculum. Students enter Lehigh, however, with varying backgrounds and experiences. Differences in exposure to people and places beyond their home towns and regions can have a profound impact on how each student interprets and uses his or her business education. And if these differences persist, they can impact the future these students see for themselves in the world, the preparation and networks they pursue before and after Lehigh, and their future potential.

Our challenge at Lehigh is to connect *every* student to the experiences he or she needs to develop as a leader with global impact. The challenge for every student is to figure out what path, what development options *are best for him or her* in every semester, every year as a Lehigh undergrad.

Lehigh has many international experience options, and strong advising is critical for students from the start. If a student has not yet been abroad, guidance about the transformative nature of this experience is especially important. If you're a business student or business professional who's been abroad, you know why. You use words like "life changing" and "transformative," but you know even these powerful words cannot convey the full impact of your experiences.

When you were abroad, you saw that it's possible to see issues and live life in ways you never expected. You saw that the basics of how to behave appropriately in social situations and what food to eat – things you took for granted as ways of life at home or at Lehigh – were different abroad. You felt unsettled. You needed to adapt what you ate, how you acted, and how you related to others to get along. The terrain, the vegetation, the angle of the sun – all were just different enough to feel a little surreal. It took your body some time to adjust to the difference in the time zone. You felt like you were in a different world at first, but in time, the world felt a little smaller than it did before. There were times that you saw a brand you knew from home, and it felt familiar and weird at the same time in this foreign place. In the end, you developed a stronger understanding of how you related to the world, your scope of opportunities, and what you needed to do and learn next to reach your next aspiration.

The insight you developed from your experience abroad also helped you become a better business practitioner. You learned that practices, processes, products, and services can vary substantially and sometimes unexpectedly across cultures and borders. You learned that your way, your view, was not always

the best path in all places. You learned to ask more questions to understand situations and others' perspectives better. You worked harder to make decisions so that they made sense from multiple vantage points. You also came to understand that, to be an effective leader, you needed to understand whom and what you were working with and the contexts you were working within to have influence and make a positive difference.

Admittedly, even students who could benefit greatly from study abroad may not consider it to be the best choice for their development during their time as undergraduates. Experiences like doing a summer internship in New York City, participating in sports, earning a double major, or serving in a leadership role in a greek house during the academic year may also seem richly rewarding. The CBE, therefore, offers a wide array of study abroad options. While they may vary in terms of duration, timing, focus, and cost, every option takes students out of their comfort zone to develop the insight only firsthand experience can bring. For example:

- Faculty-led programs offered during winter break – like our Management 372: Singapore Lab – give small groups of CBE students a short, intensive experience abroad that is highly integrated with required business course work taken during fall or spring.
- Faculty-led summer programs conducted abroad – in places like Belgium, Prague, or Shanghai – give larger groups of Lehigh students the opportunity to take required course work together abroad and immerse in internships, without disrupting academic and social plans during the regular school year.
- Students can also apply for Iacocca International Internships for independent summer work experiences abroad or craft their own unique international internship experiences with support from our competitive Tauck Scholars Program.
- Students seeking international experiences including research or service learning can apply to small group experiences administered through our Martindale Institute in their Martindale Student Associates Program and Microfinance Programs, respectively. Other interdisciplinary learning experiences are available through programs like Engineers Without Borders and Lehigh's Global Citizenship Program.

Of course, many semester-long options are also available through Lehigh's Study Abroad Office, and professional academic advising staff in our CBE Undergraduate Center can help students begin planning for these or other international experiences from their first year. Clearly, advising is essential to help each student navigate academics *and* connect to the experiences that will grow perspective and reveal the next level of opportunity – be it a club, a major, an internship, an experience abroad, a job, or ultimately, an invitation back to campus to share lessons learned as an alum with the next generation of students.

Students come to Lehigh for what's on our hill, but alumni know that our hill is also a vista – a place to see beyond what's here and now, to question what's assumed, and to connect to possibilities revealed through initiative and experience. We are proud of Lehigh's legacy of developing leaders for global impact and we look forward to seeing their contributions to the world in the years to come.