

hillviews

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Hollywood comes to San Marcos p8 Bobcat pitcher scouts for Phillies p48

TEXAS
STATE
UNIVERSITY

The rising STAR of Texas

EXPANDING HORIZONS

**STUDY ABROAD
HELPS STUDENTS
TAKE STEPS
INTO THE WORLD
MARKETPLACE**

By Ashley Festa

Luis Moreira thought he was just checking a box on his résumé when he signed up for the M.B.A. program at Texas State. Boy, was he in for a surprise, especially considering his concentration in international business.

“I walked in thinking that because I’d been working for 17 years, what else was I going to learn?” Moreira says. “I soon realized there were lots of concepts I didn’t understand. That was a humbling experience.”

Growing up in Guatemala, Moreira helped his father in the family’s two small businesses, but as a teenager, he didn’t understand the cultural aspects of conducting business. He learned the American way of doing business after moving to the United States and rising in a career as a program manager at Dell’s Enterprise Solutions Group. Only after he signed up to study abroad in Santiago, Chile, in the summer of 2013 did he begin to see things differently.

In today’s business world, university graduates are increasingly challenged to compete in a complex and dynamic global environment. Established in 2012, the Institute for Global Business helps prepare McCoy College of Business Administration graduates to compete in the global economy by supporting international business programs, expanding research opportunities for faculty and students, coordinating activities with international partners, and serving as a liaison to the business community.



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LUIS MOREIRA, M.B.A. '13



Real around-the-world experience

Thanks in part to the Institute for Global Business, which oversees academic study-abroad programs in the McCoy College, Moreira had a glimpse into the way companies operate outside the U.S. “In Santiago, we were immersed, talking to people who have been doing business for a while, many with experience in America, too,” Moreira says. “We talked to local people and to people who had been in both worlds. We were able to learn about their experiences and contrast the different cultures and ways of doing business.”

The most memorable and valuable lesson Moreira learned on the trip was from an American. The businessman had worked for Citibank while in the United States but decided to move to South America and establish his own company. As chief executive officer, he helped American businesses launch in Chile, assisting in local vendor selections, for example. He told Moreira’s group about the experience he had with Home Depot, his largest customer, which came to Chile in 1998. “They said, ‘We’re Home Depot, we’re big, and everyone has to comply with the way we do things,’” Moreira says. “But the local vendors said, ‘You’re new in Chile, so you’re not big here. Even if you’re big in America, you’re going to do things our way.’”

That’s the kind of knowledge and experience that the academic programs developed through the Institute for Global Business instill in their students, no matter where they plan to establish their career. “I hope that study abroad and other programs will encourage students to look beyond what is in the immediate vicinity,” says Dr. Jack Mogab, professor of economics and the director of the Institute for Global Business.

Students enrolled in the faculty-led study-abroad programs take classes, visit local companies, and learn about the culture. In addition to the graduate program in Chile, McCoy College offers an undergraduate program in Barcelona, Spain. A second undergraduate program in Prague, Czech Republic, was added last year where visits to the Prague Stock Exchange, the Central Bank, and money management companies exposed students to theories and practicalities of investing in Central Europe. During the trip, students were also able to observe a company making an initial public offering, or IPO. Students met with the owners of the company and learned about the process of going public.

Piggybacking on the experience, students completed a research project that involved analyzing an IPO and applying theoretical tools learned in the classroom to establish an appropriate price for the stock.

“In theory I can tell you how to value a company, but in the real world, you don’t always have perfect information,” Mogab says. “The students had the experience in Prague to work with real, yet imprecise knowledge.”

For example, the students learned from the owners of the company that it had a large amount of outstanding debt. To get investors to buy stock, the owners had to either explain the debt or pay off the loans. They talked to students about how the debt would affect the price they could get for the IPO. Students learned directly from the owners why they chose to pay off the debt before making the IPO rather than taking a different route. “Now, when they go into a career and look at an IPO, they have experience evaluating other IPOs,” Mogab says.

Connecting with the business community

The institute benefits from annual meetings with an advisory council composed of business professionals from Texas and around the country. Members include individuals from the financial and energy sectors — customs, brokerage, and logistics to name a few. The council makes recommendations to ensure that the college curriculum will yield the skill sets graduates need to compete in the global market. It also provides feedback on international trends and offers input on ways to assist local businesses through workshops and other services.

In 2014 the institute partnered with the Greater San Marcos Partnership and the Texas Camino Real District Export Council (DEC) to offer workshops for small businesses on exporting. The institute also partners with the DEC and the U.S. Department of Commerce to offer the Export Fellows Program, a noncredit program leading students through the process of developing an export plan. Students must develop a strategy to export a real product to a foreign market. They present their plans to members of the Texas Export Council, who provide feedback. The students receive a certificate of completion from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

“Whether you’re doing business in the local community or have a career where you work abroad, or you work in a Fortune 500 corporation that has a global presence, everyone in the business world needs to be aware of the larger economic environment,” Mogab says. “My hope is that students will be better prepared to meet the challenges and take advantage of opportunities they find out there.” 🌍