Sustainable Global Enterprise Immersion Practicum

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What makes this an internationalized curriculum? Please describe the experience abroad and how you internationalized the curriculum at home.

In this class, multidisciplinary teams of MBAs and graduate students from other programs around Cornell work with project sponsors on business issues related to social and environmental challenges. Each year the projects vary in topic and region of the world. For example, this semester, a bit more than half the teams in the class are working on projects with organizations focused on business issues in Korea, Namibia, Zambia, Philippines, India, Asia, and Latin America.

Each project experience is unique. Some projects require students to be in contact with internationally based experts and organizations that provide data and information. For other projects, student teams travel to do field work during spring break. Considerable preparation is done prior to those in-country visits to explore the core business problem facing the sponsoring organization. Sponsoring organizations work closely with student teams to plan field visits so students are able to collect the appropriate primary data needed for further analysis. In many cases, in-country visits include time with host organizations, observations in the field, and interactions with local communities.

How has the international experience been integrated into the curriculum?

Data and information collected from international sources – whether done remotely or in-field – is used to analyze issues and gain insight into root causes and opportunities. Ultimately, what students learn from abroad influence their final recommendations to project sponsors. Throughout the semester the students receive continual feedback on their project through class discussion, issue-selling feedback sessions, presentations, and other creative exercises.

What are the intended student learning outcomes of the internationalized curriculum related to knowledge generation, changed attitudes, and developed skills, and how do you assess them?

The Sustainable Global Enterprise Immersion practicum is a unique experience that provides a business lens to social and environmental challenges. It helps students develop the critical thinking skills necessary to understand the complexity of sustainability issues in a global context. Students must provide a final written report for the sponsoring organization and present their recommendations to sponsors, peers, faculty and staff in final one-hour presentations. The international elements of the course experience directly influence how students perceive and
understand problems, causes, options, solutions and recommendations. The issues that students address in the class are real and have consequences for companies, customers, communities and other stakeholders. Students must understand issues related to their projects from a global perspective to ensure their recommendations are appropriate for a global marketplace.

As a result of this class it is expected that these students will be better prepared to make thoughtful, informed business decisions that incorporate the complexity of global decision making, look at issues that extend beyond the bottom line, and develop the leadership skills necessary to effectively lead international businesses.