UMSL Business is Global
UMSL Students Abroad

The study abroad programs at the University of Missouri–St. Louis provide IB students the opportunity to experience unique cultures and businesses of other countries. This learning experience is essential to enhancing the students’ abilities to appreciate and flourish in a climate of international business.

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Top, left: UMSL students and faculty in Bremen, Germany
Top, right: IMBA students enjoying Miami
Bottom, right: IMBA student Jing Cai in Taiwan
Bottom, left: Professor Michael Costello and students in Dubai
Center, left: UMSL alumnus Dan Reddan (with certificate) in Guinea.
UMSL Business is Global!

Strasbourg, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Kaohsiung, Senegal, Guinea, Nairobi, Puerto Rico, Tokyo, Aschaffenburg, Madagascar: these are just a few of the places UMSL Business faculty and students have been over the last year. As all business becomes increasingly global, so has UMSL Business.

It has been a remarkable year! Not only did the UMSL IB program rank in US News and World report’s top 20 for the 14th consecutive year, but our students, faculty and staff continued to excel in their scholarship, teaching and service.

Some of the global highlights you will find in this edition of the IBI News:

- UMSL IB alumni succeed in their entrepreneurship ventures: Kenny Truong’s Rice House and Van Liu’s Snow Factory.
- UMSL Business faculty led study abroad courses in Dubai, Germany, Finland, Japan and China.
- IMBA students visit HJ Enterprises and World Wide Technology as part of their year-long program.
- IB Research Associate Maurice Dawson and alumnus Dan Redden led projects in Senegal, Guinea, Nairobi and Puerto Rico.
- IB students and faculty held the 9th annual UMSL International Business Career Conference and the 5th annual International Business Case Competition.
- Global Leadership and Management Advisory Board members continue to share their talent and treasure in our classrooms, the boardroom and at our Career Conference and Case Competition.
- UMSL Business faculty continue to publish impactful research in the world’s top journals.
- UMSL signed new agreements with universities in Taiwan, Germany, Finland and Japan.

As this issue of the IBI News shows: UMSL Business is Global! Enjoy!
Studying abroad in France was an opportunity I had always dreamed of and it definitely surpassed my expectations.

IMBA in Strasbourg, France - exploring Europe one city at a time  

By Hayley Alexander, IMBA student

Studying abroad in France was an opportunity I had always dreamed of and it definitely surpassed my expectations. I spent five months in the capital city of the Grand Est region in northeastern France that borders Switzerland and Germany. With only a 30-minute train ride into another country, it was easy to travel throughout Europe. I studied at EM Strasbourg School of Business. Each class challenged me on an international level. My favorite part about studying abroad was the people. Working in groups with students from all over the world allowed me to learn how each culture operates in the business world.

As classes at the university were irregular, it allowed international students studying abroad to travel. After making friends with students from Spain, Argentina, Hungary, China, Hong Kong, and more, we visited Paris, Frankfurt, London, Budapest, and Basel. Each city was beautiful in its own way; the Eiffel tower in Paris, the Main River in Frankfurt, Buckingham Palace in London, the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest, and the beautiful mountains in Basel. What I loved most about Europe was the architecture. Unlike the United States, the Europeans have kept the rich architecture that dates back hundreds of years.

Experiencing cultural diversity is an essential part of International Business. I can’t write this article without mentioning the amazing food. Although I could hardly pronounce anything on each menu, my French friends made me try every “French Dish” available. I now miss my fresh baguettes and cappuccinos every morning.

I am extremely thankful for this opportunity that has taught me so much about international business and myself. The UMSL IMBA program allows you to connect and network with peers from around the world. I am confident that this experience will help my future career. If you have the opportunity to travel abroad, DO IT! Don’t wait! It’s a rare opportunity and will change your life forever.
Study Abroad-Abu Dhabi and Dubai

By Blake Bergan, MBA 2018

The Study Abroad trip to Abu Dhabi and Dubai was an eye-opening experience for all of the UMSL students involved. There were students of various academic backgrounds, but everyone gained valuable knowledge from their experiences within the United Arab Emirates.

During our first day in Abu Dhabi, we visited the Embassy of the United States. This was a beneficial visit as we learned about the region from experienced diplomatic and consular personnel who shared a similar frame of reference. We discussed the goal of transitioning the area from a hydrocarbon (oil) based economy, to one that is centered on technology. This visit gave us some insight into the background of the region before we headed out to meet with foreign businesses.

We visited a wide range of businesses to get a general feel for the business culture, which is unique. Only 15% of the Dubai population is made up of local Emiratis, while the other 85% is composed of expatriates. This exposed the students to a wide variety of cultures. We saw how there were sections of the city that retained traditional values, while others embraced the globalization that coincides with the adoption of new technology.

The majority of visits consisted of informational presentations followed by open discussions, lectures, quizzes and the requisite papers for course credit. We visited Dr. Fauzia Jabeen, a professor at Abu Dhabi University, to gain a better understanding of their educational system and its goals. It was interesting to walk into a university and notice the similarities and differences. One major difference was the fact that the classes are segregated by gender. While this may seem unusual, it is actually not very different from private schools in St. Louis that are exclusively male or female. While there were differences between our cultures, we identified many parallel situations that exist in America.

Dubai has its businesses arranged in strategic areas, one of them being Internet City. This area is a cluster of technology companies, including MasterCard and Accenture. MasterCard spoke about their efforts to transition the Emirates away from a primarily cash based business. For example, driver’s licenses, health insurance, retirement funds are renewed electronically rather than visiting a government office. Accenture’s Digital Acceleration Center provided us with insight into the future of data analysis and automation; we were shown demonstrations of mines remotely monitored, interactive displays that track eye movement to display information about the equipment operator’s vital signs for weariness and potential accidents and drones providing up-to-the-minute data on agricultural crops.

There seemed to be a wide variety of businesses in the area, so we visited the Dubai Chamber of Commerce to hear their goals and strategies for the economy. Every business visit introduced us to intelligent leaders who were very hospitable and eager to answer our numerous questions. We also visited, among others:

- Aramex, a shipping company that has transformed the traditional shipping company business model and delivered exponential growth.
- Boeing, which has a strong presence in the Middle East. We were introduced to the business dynamics and challenges they face working in the region.
- Shell, which included safety training and upstream and downstream industry trends. We learned that their business is more focused on gas than oil.

While much of the trip was business oriented, we were still able to find plenty of time to relax. We visited the beach, beautiful areas such as the Burj Khalifa (the world’s tallest building), and the Emirates Palace Hotel (the most expensive hotel in the world). We also went to exquisite malls and a traditional Bedouin settlement in the middle of the desert. We wrapped up our trip with a nighttime boat ride viewing the illuminated city skyline.

Overall, this trip truly opened our eyes to the world beyond St. Louis.

With thanks to our hosts: Abu Dhabi University, Accenture, Aramex, Boeing, Dubai Chamber of Commerce, Emirates Palace Hotel, Emirates Global Aluminum (supplier to Metal Exchange), Equate/MEGlobal, MasterCard, RGA, Shell, UAE Apparel (customer of Caleres), the US Embassy, John Wilson, Contracting Engineer, and UMSL graduate – Mustafa Musleh, living in Dubai and working with THC, a British Consulting group.
By Alexandra Loehr, MBA

On a cold and windy morning in January 2017, 18 IMBA students and IB Institute Faculty went out on a four-hour mission to explore yet another interesting company in the St. Louis region, seeking out new industry insights and professional connections. Their destination was World Wide Technology (WWT), a privately held company that has grown to $9 billion annual revenue since its foundation in 1990.

After a warm welcome by Shay Gillespie, Central Region Diversity Business Development Manager, and Ben Beinfeld, Business Development Manager State/Local Government and Education Sector, the group received a private tour through World Wide Technology’s headquarters in Maryland Heights, MO. Gillespie and Beinfeld explained WWT’s business model and highlighted that the successful growth of the company is due to their focus of adding value to the customer and the fact that they can react to market trends quickly as the company is privately held.

In a modern showroom, they explained the different services WWT offers with real-life examples ranging from improving the bottom line of a mining company through intelligent use of the Internet of Things (IoT) to improving customer experience at Panera Bread through the introduction of self-service stations. WWT offers services in different areas including cloud computing, software, and storage. They work together with well-known industry partners like Cisco, Intel, Microsoft, and HP. In addition, the company serves as a DELL partner, helping them prepare laptops for delivery.

Ms. Gillespie stressed the importance of security and customer focus in every business decision and encouraged students to keep learning. The tour concluded with a peek into WWT’s server room where different solutions of vendor partners were exhibited. The students enjoyed this insight into a fast-moving industry and appreciated the wonderful farewell-gifts they received.

The International Masters of Business Administration (IMBA) program at the University of Missouri–St. Louis is a distinctive program for uniquely qualified individuals. It seeks students who have already acquired functional fluency in another commercial language beyond English, and are passionate about leading and transforming organizations in the global economy.

During this two-year rigorous business program, students will study abroad for one year at one of our partner universities, gain practical experience through an international internship, and earn two degrees.
International Business at work

The growth of the Rice House chain

By Alexandra Loehr, MBA

“You’re not learning for the next exam, you’re learning for life!” According to Kenny Truong, founder and owner of The Rice House. Truong graduated from the University of Missouri–St. Louis with his BSBA in 2007. In 2011, he opened his first Asian fusion cuisine restaurant, The Rice House. Since then, two more restaurants have followed. As of the end of 2016, their annual revenue was $3 million. The growing chain is now employing nearly 80 people.

Truong feels that UMSL prepared him well for the work place. The only wish he has looking back was that he had learned more about networking before finishing college. He encourages current students to join clubs like the IB Club, which is the first step to get around this. Getting involved not only increases the networking skills but also offers opportunities for work experience. Additionally, he encourages students to use internship opportunities to get exposure to businesses, practical knowledge, and get to know possible future business connections.

Truong tells students to develop networking skills before starting their own business. Getting in contact with business people as well as local politicians and bankers can smoothen the long way to finally owning your own shop or restaurant. Joining chambers and getting to know the local customs and the market you are planning to start in can be used to gather information for a strong business plan. Looking back at his experience, Truong remembers that all the skills he learned during his BSBA flowed into developing the business plans for his restaurants, pointing out short and long-term goals and figuring out how to fund his dream. He is constantly falling back on what he learned and looking out for new ways to align his knowledge with his strategy and vision.

Truong is planning to open at least one new restaurant every two years and to expand beyond the St. Louis area. His long-term goal is to convert The Rice House brand into a franchise. Using his knowledge he gained at UMSL, he is currently working on standardizing processes to make them easily transferrable to new staff members. For this purpose, he is visiting franchising conferences to talk to successful franchisers and to stay informed on what is happening in the industry.

Mr. Truong plans to move the business ahead by trying out new ways of marketing and data analysis. Tools like Google Analytics and TV ads are just some of them. The future is bright for The Rice House and UMSL is proud that yet another alumnus is using his skills to create jobs in the St. Louis region and to make our lives a little more delicious.

Kenny Truong and friends
Travel has a tendency to develop intangible skills in our character that would have not existed otherwise. Travel, by way of studying abroad, has created a new mindset to house these compiled adventures. From my personal experience, I believe that these skills of time management, independence, and problem solving improve significantly while abroad.

During my undergraduate years at UMSL, I participated in study abroad programs each summer. I went to study at Nanjing University in China, East China Normal University, and Hochschule Bremen University of Applied Sciences in Germany. After graduating from UMSL, I made another life changing decision to join the IMBA dual-degree program between UMSL and National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology in Taiwan (NKFUST). I decided to study one year at NKFUST and one year back at UMSL to obtain dual MBA degrees because it was the perfect chance for me to learn a new language, see a new place, and expand the connections necessary to launch my international career.

As a Chinese local, the island of Taiwan has always been an interesting place to me. Traditional forms of writing, architecture, music, culture, and art are part of everyday life. In Taiwan, the traditional and modern, ancient and new, are seamlessly woven together, creating a fascinating, dynamic society like no other place in the world.

As an outsider, I had the privilege of learning the complete traditional Chinese characters, and travel to neighboring Asian countries during the holidays. My favorite part of the experience was having countless choices of food. This especially went well with my motto in life, which is to always go for the second plate.

Not only is the IMBA program truly valuable, the NKFUST campus is great, too. It is very large and beautiful. It is located in Kaohsiung City, the largest municipality in Taiwan. In our IMBA department at NKFUST, students were truly diverse. We had students from Spain, Austria, Germany, Vietnam, China, and Taiwan. Campus life had all kinds of student organizations, clubs and activities on campus every day, and all students were welcome to join. I could not forget the first time that I saw a beer competition on campus. I was amazed!

NKFUST faculty and students are very friendly and willing to help. Each foreign student got assigned with a “study buddy.” My study buddy picked me up from the airport, and answered all my questions. Taiwanese are possibly the most hospitable people on the planet. One thing that amazed me was that the IMBA department even offers free language classes for foreign students.

I follow the same ideology in life as I do with food: always going for the second plate, always going for that next adventure. Taiwan was such a diverse place culturally, environmentally, economically and ethnically. One year at NKFUST not only helped me gain an understanding of the Asian business environment, but it allowed me to widen my opportunities. I have returned with a greater respect for diversity and culture. The IMBA program at UMSL is no doubt the best preparation for a career in the global business world.
Every year, students from around the world take advantage of UMSL’s College of Business International Master of Business Administration (IMBA). This rigorous and transformational program redefines the idea of a dual degree. Students spend one year at their home school and one year abroad, including a hands-on startups before graduation. The recipes for success are mixed into the program through networking activities and professional development workshops to build connections and learn the global business fundamentals from the region’s organizations.

This year’s IMBA students were given an opportunity to learn about the daily operations in an international manufacturing facility at H-J International, Inc. H-J Family of Companies is a worldwide manufacturer and supplier in the transformer, switchgear, and breaker industry. Headquartered in St. Louis, the company boasts offices in Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, India, Mexico, and Spain.

H-J is the leading manufacturer of distribution transformer bushings and connectors in the United States and is one of the leading manufacturers and suppliers of transformer and switchgear components for the world market.

Lloyd “Henry” Evitts, VP of Manufacturing, and Andrew “Andy” Bubulka, Plant Manager, led the tours during the company visit of their facilities located in High Ridge, MO. The pair gave an overview of the company’s history, domestic clients, and international growth. The students observed the process of how H-J manufactures insulators, terminals, and more products from start to finish. David Stockton, VP of Global Marketing and Sales, met with the group over lunch and shared H-J’s philosophy of providing excellent customer services and the importance of meeting the consumer’s request.

When asked to describe his experience with UMSL’s IMBA program and why he chose UMSL, Jing Cai enthusiastically shared, “UMSL takes good care of the IMBA students. Besides studying, there are tons of activities offered; Friday Informational sessions, etiquette luncheons, company tours, and various social events.” Jing went on to say, “The IMBA program is perfect for those who crave a different flavor of study and work experience. I chose the IMBA program because I think this program is perfect for me, especially as an international student. It helped me to build the knowledge, skills, and connections required to succeed in the U.S. I like to study on this campus, and people in St. Louis are nice and kind. Being here for five years has made St. Louis my second home.”

H-J Enterprise is a strong supporter of the College of Business IMBA program, serving on the Global Management and Leadership Advisory Board since 2010.
Spreading UMSL’s Information System Expertise around the world: four projects

By Maurice Dawson Jr., DSc, PhD

USAID Project in Senegal
The University of Missouri–St. Louis Information Systems Department has entered into a partnership with Winrock International to provide Information Communications Technology (ICT) volunteer support on the John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmers-to-Farmers (F2F) projects for USAID. Through this program, faculty and students have the opportunity to travel to Bangladesh, Burma, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, and Senegal. The travel costs are completely covered by a USAID grant. This includes lodging, translator, driver to work sites, and a daily per diem while in the country.

During January 2017, approximately $4000.00 was awarded for Assignment SEN187: Training-of-Trainers in Management Accounting Tools for the Horticulture Initiation Center of Saint Louis, Senegal. This assignment was to train the agriculture center in an open source Accounting Information Systems and program management concepts so they can manage a significant gift from South Korea to expand their training facility.

In July 2016, approximately $4000.00 was awarded for Assignment SEN121: Assistance to the Office of Vocational Agriculture Education for the Establishment of a Functional Website for the Ministre de l’Agriculture et de l’Équipement in rural Dakar, Senegal.

UMSL Student Volunteer ICT Assignments
From November - December 2016, a former UMSL cyber security graduate student, Dan Redden, was awarded approximately $4000.00 for Assignment: AEMIP063-AET, Agriculture Programs Software Training for the Institut Supérieur Agronomic et Vétérinaire de Faranah (ISAV/F) and Students in Faranah, Guinea.

Redden provided technical assistance to Guinea’s largest agricultural university by training professors to use an online open source database system. This system was to allow the university to transition to a paperless environment. The systems that Redden implemented provided two different options to the university to be able to store their documents. Redden also provided hardware and software needed for the assignment that was not available at the university to allow for an easier integration of the new applications.

Tech Hub of East Africa
During the week of 28 March 2016, Redden visited iHub in Nairobi, Kenya. The iHub serves as a catalyst for the growth of the Kenyan tech community by connecting people, supporting startups, and surfacing information. An additional visit was made to the CADLab at the University of Nairobi which is ranked as one of Africa’s top ten universities. A lecture was given to East Africa’s premier technical computer security group Africahackon. This presentation was on hyper-connectivity, and the Internet of Things (IoT) as it relates to the growing in presence of international tech companies in East Africa.

Cyber Security in the Caribbean
On UMSL’s successful journey to become a National Security Agency (NSA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Security Education, a partnership was created with the Center of Information Assurance for Research and Education in Puerto Rico (CIARE) at Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico (PUPR) to study the cyber security in the region. This partnership with PUPR allows for faculty exchange and partnering on grant proposals as both institutions are NSA CAEs. Jointly with researchers from UMSL, PUPR, Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM), the team has begun evaluating cyber security in various Latin American and Caribbean nations.
Just desserts: Ambitious business student opens ice cream parlor

By Ron Austin

“I grew up in Xiamen, China, right across from Taiwan,” said the University of Missouri–St. Louis business administration major. “It’s hot as the southern bay of California there. So that’s why there are a lot of ice cream parlors and places to get drinks and bubble teas.”

Van Liu moved with his family to Fairview Heights, Illinois, seven years ago, but he never forgot the tastes from growing up in China and the pleasure of a cool treat on a hot day.

While studying finance and international business at UMSL, he noticed a childhood friend had opened a Thai-style dessert parlor in New York City. His friend posted videos on Facebook of customers waiting in line up two hours and marveling at the shop’s unique “pan-fried” ice-cream making technique.

“Pan-fried” is made on a steel grill that is chilled to -35 °C. Ice cream base is poured onto the cold grill and mixed with fruit and other flavor mixtures crystallizing.

“There’s nothing like it in the Midwest,” said Liu. “That’s why I traveled to New York and convinced him to sell me the recipes and techniques for $35,000. I stayed in New York for 20 days to learn all of it, and when I came back to St. Louis, I practiced the cooking method in my house. Now I can tell you that all of our ingredients are organic, but I can’t tell you exactly what’s in it. We’re going to keep that a little bit secret, so that we’ll be unique.”

Liu figured the Delmar Loop would be a prime location for Snow Factory due to its walking traffic and proximity to UMSL, Saint Louis University and Washington University in St. Louis. He waited three years for a viable space to open — and once it did, he seized his opportunity, immediately borrowing money from his parents to start his business idea.

“The first time I asked my parents for capital, they didn’t agree,” Liu said. “They thought I was playing at a game, so I took them to my friends ice cream shop and showed the lines and excited customers. They were like ‘Wow! This is great!’ and decided I could pursue this venture.”

To balance being both a new entrepreneur facing 10-hour days at his business and his last year of studies, Liu is taking all online courses. Once he graduates, he may decide to attend graduate school or continue developing his business. He credits UMSL for allowing him flexibility while completing his degree and the knowledge from his marketing courses that he is now putting to use.

“One idea from my marketing course that influenced me very much was the need to stay innovative,” said Liu. “If you’re not innovative, you’re just copying what others do, and it won’t be as successful or it will be a failure. If you try new things out and see what the trends are going to be from year to year, you’ll be successful.”

And on the note of success, Liu offers other new entrepreneurs advice learned from his parents, who are also restaurateurs, owning a few Shogun restaurants.

“My parents were generous enough to share the keys to success with me,” Liu said. “They said [to] know the background of what you’re doing to start a business. You have to know the technique, the customers and the trends first before you invest money. And once you start, keep updating the business and keep customers surprised. Always think about what you could do next.”
The International Business Honor Society at the University of Missouri–St. Louis is an organization catering to juniors and seniors who are majoring in International Business. IBHS members uphold high academic standards with a minimum GPA of 3.2. The goal of the organization is to prepare students to meet and network with professional businesses, attend useful workshops that help benefit their specific field, and give back to the International Business community. This is all done while having fun, meeting new people, and learning new skills.

IBHS sponsors the annual International Business Career Conference as well as the International Business Case Competition. The Career Conference is a networking opportunity designed for students to meet executives from the St. Louis area who have international experience. The IB Case Competition is hosted by UMSL in collaboration with the Consortium of Undergraduate International Business Education (CUIBE). Teams from twelve universities compete to solve a real-world business problem for an actual company. The competition takes place April 7 and 8, 2017.

The officers in charge of this year’s IBHS operations are also taking the IBCC Career Conference yearlong seminar class. This has given IBHS the opportunity to be more involved in the planning of the conference than it has in the past. This has also been beneficial for the planning of this year’s IBHS events. With the idea of the conference in mind, the officers of IBHS were able to plan workshops and networking events for the students that would be directly helping them for the conference. The two major events of the year were the IBHS Happy Hour and the Business Card Workshops.

The IBHS Happy Hour provided a comfortable atmosphere for students to network with fellow classmates, mentors, and recruiters. The local gastropub, Basso, housed the event where members in attendance networked with faculty and company representatives.

The IBHS has a long, proud history at UMSL and it looks forward to continuing to prepare international business majors for the future.
Going For The Gold – The 9th Annual International Business Career Conference

8:00 am on March 3, 2017. As a special marketing tool this year’s event featured a Twitter wall, which allowed for real-time participation and a streamlined way for groups to share their pictures, questions, and thoughts. The program started by introducing Dr. Joseph Rottman, the Director of the International Business Institute and Department Chair of Global Leadership and Management. He welcomed the numerous participants from 21 different schools across the country and introduced the keynote speaker Robert Gambardella, Chief at the Singapore Sports Institute. Mr. Gambardella discussed his experience transitioning from a volleyball coach at the United States Military Academy to being the Chief at Singapore Sports Institute. His story of individual and institutional success was well received by the students. Following Gambardella was the executive panel. The panel included moderator Tim Nowak, Executive Director from World Trade Center St. Louis; Laura Last, Global Director of Learning and Performance from Amgen; Priya Marsonia, Vice President, Delivery from ATG- Advanced Technology Group; John Clark, President and CEO from Masterclock; and Juan Carlos Buitrago-Suarez, Marketing Executive for Americas and Europe at Monsanto. The panel discussed their personal encounters in the international field and what students need to know to create their success. After the discussion, students were encouraged to ask questions.

After this meaningful session, the audience split up for several interesting workshops. Each workshop was divided into two sessions so students would have the chance to listen to two of the five speakers. The workshops covered different topics of International Business, such as how to attract entrepreneurs from around the world, considerations regarding global training, ways to develop oneself, how to plan success steps, and featured an UMSL alumni panel. In addition to the workshops that ran parallel, the conference offered a Lunch-and-Learn session discussing, “Successful business via innovation, ethics, and sustainability.” The lunch portion of the conference provided great and informal networking environment, allowing students an opportunity to engage with more than 30 companies of various industries.

The 9th Annual IBCC Planning and Execution Team

The International Business Career Conference (IBCC) is a unique opportunity for curious students who want to test the waters of their potential career paths. What could you do with a degree in international business? The IBCC answers this question every year by giving a platform for interaction between students and business professionals from different regions and business backgrounds. This year’s 9th annual International Business Career Conference, “Going for the Gold,” was a great experience for all participants. IBCC is organized by students for students, overseen by Professor Emily Lane, with the help of Professor Elizabeth Vining and the International Business Institute. Professor Vining has been leading the student committee since the beginning of the IBCC in 2009, and Professor Lane will be taking the reins moving forward in future conferences. The conference opened the doors for attendees at
Whirlwind trip to Japan builds friendships, cross-cultural connections for 23 students

Nine days goes pretty fast – just ask the University of Missouri–St. Louis students who flew to Japan for a jam-packed week there earlier this year. But a relatively short period of time can also make a lasting impression, as it did in this case.

It was a return trip for a few of the students, including senior Japanese major Kristy Gammill, whose initial experience in Japan occurred before she began studying the language. For Kristin Wyninegar, a now-graduated communication major, it was her first opportunity to travel internationally – and her second trip ever on an airplane.

For both of them, selected alongside 21 fellow UMSL students to participate in the Japan Foundation’s Kakehashi Project this past March, the experience is still underway, in a sense. And that’s exactly the sort of outcome the Kakehashi Project, which aims to deepen mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S., seeks for students of both countries.

“I realized that Japan-U.S. relations are so important and that the countries really complement one another in good ways,” Gammill says of her lessons from the Kakehashi trip. “And it makes me want to really reach out and have a more active role in those relations.”

Together with several other Japanese majors as well as UMSL students in fields ranging from graphic design to criminology, Gammill first explored Tokyo, the nation’s capital. Under the guidance of UMSL faculty member Beth Huebner and Associate Dean Beth Eckelkamp, the group visited shrines, traversed the electronics district and saw many sights. They also traveled to Fukuoka, a city located on Japan’s southernmost major island, to interact with Japanese university students, stay with families, experience Noh theater and further explore the culture.

“We got to meet the only female Kyogen performer, and she taught us special moves,” Wyninegar recalls. Wyninegar was also impressed by the country’s food, the cleanliness and, quite specifically, the toilets – many of which have heated seats.

“It’s just a button you push,” she adds. “It doesn’t have to be heated.”

At a Japanese university, the UMSL crew attended lectures on the history of U.S.-Japan relations and spent time with Japanese peers.

“We showed them the UMSL YMCA song, and they loved it,” Wyninegar says. “And that was one of my favorite parts, meeting the students there. They were happy to see us, and we were happy to see them.”

Students received individual tours of a campus one day, and Gammill was delighted to be paired with a peer tour guide who did not speak English. She further sharpened her language skills during a two-day homestay, where she served as an informal translator between the family and the other UMSL student they were hosting.

“I felt like we had so much in common,” Gammill says of the time with Japanese people during the trip. “It was especially touching for me to hear them describe – whether they were government officials or host families or professors – how they felt about America. I mean, of course there are people who harbor hostilities towards the U.S. and Japan. But the dominant opinion was that, wow, we have a really good relationship with this country. And they want to continue attracting Americans and teach people English, teach them about American culture. So that was really cool.”

“I’m so glad that UMSL got to participate,” Gammill says. “It was really nice to see us not only being on the same trip as prestigious schools like the University of Denver but also being just as involved and performing just as well.”

This fall, as she wraps up her bachelor’s degree at UMSL, Gammill intends to apply to the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, a competitive employment opportunity that places U.S. citizens in schools and local government roles somewhere in Japan. She’d originally been thinking she’d teach English in an elementary school, but while in Japan this spring she met a current JET participant who is working in community relations.

Another UMSL student is applying her experience on the trip at a local grocery store, Wyninegar notes.

“We were challenged to bring the experience back, and she works at Schnucks, so she’ll be taking some different Japanese flavors and foods to Schnucks corporate, and we’re just going to try and keep reaching out to the community,” Wyninegar says. “I’ve been to different leadership conferences and such, and you get all of this excitement, and then you come back but nothing really happens. So I think it’s really great that we’re still working on it.”

Both Gammill and Wyninegar came away from the trip amazed at the hospitality they experienced in Japan as foreigners and tourists. Looking back on two separate incidents in restaurants, where they and other UMSL students were struggling to place accurate orders and pay, the two of them share a laugh. One might understandably grow frustrated with the failures of communication, Gammill adds, but the Japanese servers were only patient and kind.

The interactions with fellow UMSL community members were also wonderful, she says, pointing out that because of all their different majors and the sheer size of the university, there were unfamiliar faces at the start of the trip back in March.

“I would have never really interacted with them, but now we’re ‘tomodachis,’” Gammill says with a smile. “We’re friends.”
Alexandra Loehr has taken advantage of every opportunity to combine her sense of adventure with learning and travel. Hailing from Seligenstadt, Germany, a city known for its basilica and historic fachwerk buildings, Loehr journeyed some 4,000 miles to the University of Missouri–St. Louis to pursue a graduate degree in business after completing an apprenticeship at Levi Strauss.

Once situated at UMSL, Loehr packed her bags yet again and took another opportunity to travel and study abroad in China. After returning to St. Louis she dug her heels into a paid eight-week summer internship at the KPMG accounting firm. As she continued work toward completing both her MBA and certificate in cybersecurity, Loehr came to the conclusion that the world is tightly connected in big and small ways. This outlook has helped her synthesize coursework and professional experience into a career path.

"We’re more interconnected than ever because of technology," Loehr said. "Most everyone owns a phone or a computer or a fitbit and consumes services on those devices that are part of huge global companies."

"Unfortunately, there are bad guys who also take advantage of the latest trend, and they want to steal your information," Loehr said. "So the question is: How do you secure yourself? How do you secure a company? Answering those questions isn’t easy, and the thought of cyber threats is scary, but it’s also a good challenge for a job field. I want to be one more step ahead of the bad guys who are one step ahead."

Witnessing Loehr’s enthusiasm and commitment to excellence firsthand, KPMG decided to hire her on full-time as an IT advisory associate once she graduates – and the accounting firm is not alone in recognizing her talents.

In the last few semesters, Loehr has made such an impact on the UMSL business community that Charlie Hoffman, dean of the College of Business Administration, and Joseph Rottman, director of the International Business Institute, gave her the opportunity to serve as a student speaker for an Auguste Chateau Society event held on Sept. 27.

Hoffman noted that Loehr possesses many qualities that help build a successful career in business. "Alexandra is not only a hard-working, highly accomplished student enrolled in a difficult course of study, but her work in our International Business Institute is well known for thoroughness and attention to detail," said Hoffman.

Loehr’s speech for the event focused on opportunities available at UMSL and the benefits of the support systems maintained by students, staff, faculty and alumni.

"Always know that people are more than happy to help you," she said. "Be proactive and try your approach, then ask informed questions if you get stuck. Be involved. When people can put a face to the name, they’ll open more and more doors for you. Use the resources you have in front of you, and stay on top of what you do. Remember, moving ahead is about balancing give and take."
Last summer Michael Acid suited up in scuba gear and dove down to a depth of 100 feet in San Diego’s Mission Bay. The recently graduated international business major described the experience as “very dark, very cold and very exhilarating.” While Acid found himself surrounded by seahorses, octopuses and other intriguing sights, his excursion was not for sheer leisure. Rather, it was the first step in continuing the conservation work he started at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

“Getting hands-on with environmental work started for me when I went on an UMSL trip to Guyana with Dr. Godfrey Borne and a group of entomologists,” said Acid. “I learned a lot there. And particularly, it was very dark, very cold and very exhilarating.”

With that sentiment in mind, Acid plans on traveling to Nosy Be, Madagascar, where he will participate in coral reef conservation efforts with Frontier, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving biodiversity and protecting vulnerable ecosystems.

Beginning in January, he will volunteer two months of his time by charting extensive coastal areas and surveying marine life in efforts to better understand how pollution has affected the reefs.

“With increases in pollution, climate change and rising CO2 levels, we have depleted 50 percent of the reefs over the last 30 years. Once they calcify, that’s it. They’re dead,” said Acid. “Those beautiful reefs are more than decoration. They’re a living environment for living creatures, and we need to start using more methods to preserve them. New York City is even dumping old subway cars into the ocean, so that marine life can use them as shelter. That’s a cool and creative way of making a difference.”

Acid first heeded the call to environmentalism while studying fashion in Los Angeles at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. At first, Acid’s only goal was to push aesthetics and create the most avant-garde clothing possible, but that quickly changed after he watched “The True Cost,” a documentary exploring how destructive the fashion industry can be to sensitive ecosystems.

Acid decided to start his own line of sustainable clothing as a solution to the problem of fashion industry pollution. He came to UMSL in 2014 because the international business program has consistently ranked in the top 20 of IB programs in the nation, and he knew he could build the skill set to become a responsible chief executive officer.

“I want to have as much well-rounded experience and knowledge as I can and work up to that sustainable clothing line,” Acid said. “I know how to make clothes from sketches on paper, draping it, sewing it. Complete garment construction. There’s still a lot about sustainability I need to know.”

After studying at French universities on a Benjamin A. Gilman scholarship and pursuing fashion design in Los Angeles, Michael Acid came to UMSL to earn a degree in international business. (Photo by August Jennewein)
UMSL Expands Global Partnerships

UMSL expands its unique three-way partnership with the Universities of Applied Sciences in Aschaffenburg, Germany and Seinajoki, Finland.

The unique IMBAi (International MBA intensive) program allows students to experience a rigorous 10-15 day graduate course with a significant international flair. The course rotates between St. Louis, Seinajoki, Finland and Aschaffenburg, Germany. Each semester, a cohort of 30 graduate students explores an international business case and, with the help of faculty from the three partners, develops a solution for a global firm.

The new agreement expands the partnership for an additional four years.

Shown in the picture are President Tapio Varmola, University of Applied Sciences in Seinajoki, Finland (center), Vice-President Eva Marie Beck Menth, University of Applied Sciences in Aschaffenburg, Germany (left) and Joseph Rottman, Department Chair Global Leadership and Management, UMSL.

UMSL signs Memorandum of Understanding with Waseda University Tokyo.

The University of Missouri–St. Louis and Waseda University in Tokyo Japan recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This new agreement covers student exchange, faculty exchange and development, graduate and undergraduate business courses and summer programs. Waseda University is a private, independent research university in central Tokyo. The Waseda University Business School was ranked the number one business school in Japan by Eduniverse.

Shown in the picture are (from left) Dr. Atsushi Osanai, Waseda University, Dr. Nori Furuya, GLAM Advisory Board, Dr. Thomas Eyssell, Associate Dean and Director of Graduate Studies and Dean Charles Hoffman, UMSL.

UMSL expands its partnership with the National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology.

Building on the strong partnership between UMSL and National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology (First Tech), the two universities recently signed expanded agreements of cooperation. Currently, 13 First Tech students are part of the International MBA program. They will have 9 months of course work and then a 3-month internship. The new agreements expand the partnership to include expanded graduate and undergraduate offerings, certificate programs, student exchange and visiting student options.

Shown in the picture are President of First Tech, Dr. Roger Chen (Center) and Dr. Thomas Eyssell (center left) Associate Dean of Graduate Programs, Dr. Joseph Rottman (center right), Chair of Global Leadership and Management, and members of the First Tech team.

2016-17 IB scholarship recipients

Through the generosity of the International Business Institute Advisory Board, UMSL faculty and friends of the university, we were able to award $26,500 in scholarships this year to assist students. Such financial support ensures that capable and motivated students will have an opportunity to earn international business degrees by subsidizing the cost associated with the required overseas travel and study.

International Business Fellows
Scholarship
Must have a minimum GPA of 3.2
Must be an International Business Major
Must use scholarship for study abroad to meet International Experience requirement

International Business Scholarship
Must be a full time student
Must be an International Business Major
Must demonstrate need as determined by the FAFSA

Messrs. Pang Yulam and Pang Kiyam Memorial Scholarship
Must have a minimum GPA of 3.5
Must be an International Business Major
Must be Junior or Senior

Maria Maddalena Chi Chun Chan Memorial Scholarships
Must have a minimum GPA of 3.5
Must be an International Business Major
Must be Junior or Senior

Robert B. Vining, Jr. Memorial Scholarship
Must have a minimum GPA of 2.5
Must be an International Business Major or Minor
Must use scholarship for an International Experience (i.e. study abroad, international internship, study tour, etc.)
Must be an active member of the International Business Club or International Business Honor Society

David P. Gustafson Memorial Scholarship for Overseas Study
Must be an International Business Major
Must use scholarship for study abroad to meet International Experience requirement

International Business Advisory Board Scholarship
Must have a minimum GPA of 3.0
Must be an International Business Major or International MBA student
Must use scholarship for study abroad to meet International Experience requirement
MICHAEL J. COSTELLO  
Associate Teaching Professor  
Department of Finance and Legal Studies  
Coordinates and drives inter-college faculty student-focused initiatives.  
Serves on the Rotary International Ethics Panel held each semester.  
The Rotary Ethics Panel format has been adopted as a model by three other universities and Rotary chapters. 
Organized and led second international business study tour to Abu Dhabi and Dubai.  
Selected by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for a grant to update knowledge of the transparency and independence of the Chinese dispute resolution systems, 2014.

HUNG-GAY FUNG  
Dr. Y.S. Tsang Professor in Chinese Studies  
Curators’ Professor of Finance  
Department of Finance and Legal Studies  

GERALD GAO  
Professor  
Department of Marketing  

EKN PELLERGREN  
Associate Professor  
Department of Global Leadership and Management  

L. DOUGLAS SMITH  
Professor and Director  
Center for Business and Industrial Studies  
Refereed publications  
Sponsored research  
Optimizing Airside Performance at Nanjing Lukou International Airport (with Long Ping, visiting scholar), Nanjing MasterTech Ltd., (2016-17), $55,600.  
Simulation Modeling for Airport Asset Management (in collaboration with UMSL Center for Transportation Studies, 2016-17) $12,500.  
Conference presentations  
ELIZABETH W. VINING  
Teaching Professor  
Department of Marketing  
Received a $3,000 grant to participate in the Faculty Development International Business program in Brussels, Belgium. This prestigious program coordinates the efforts of faculty in international business programs worldwide to improve instruction.
BINDU ARYA
Associate Professor
Department of Global Leadership and Management

Referred Publications

Awards
2016 Recipient of the Anheuser Busch Teaching Award, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Recent Conference participation


JAMES CAMPBELL
Professor & Chair
Supply Chain & Analytics Department

Named Associate Editor of Transportation Research Part E: Methodological.

“Economic and Environmental Considerations in A Stochastic Inventory Control Model with Order Splitting under Different Delivery Schedules Among Suppliers” with Kanu, D., Monfared, S., Omega: The International Journal of Management Science, dx. doi.org/10.1016/j.omega.2016.08.013, 2016.


MAURICE E. DAWSON, JR.
Assistant Professor
Department of Information Systems

Earned second doctoral degree on February 10th, a Ph.D. in Cyber Security from London Metropolitan University. The dissertation was titled “Hyper-connectivity: Intricacies of national and international cyber securities.”

Earned Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE).


Received approximately $80,000.00 for two Volunteer ICT Assignments in Dakar and Saint-Louis Senegal through the USAID Farmers to Farmers Program.

Published a refereed paper titled “Twitter in higher education: Digital natives, knowledge creation, social engineering, and intelligent analysis of educational tweets” in the E-Learning and Digital Media journal published by Sage.

THOMAS EYSSELL
Associate Dean and Director of Graduate Studies
Professor
Department of Finance and Legal Studies

“Credit Usage, Payment Behavior and Credit Files of U.S. Consumers: Keeping Records Straight at the Major Credit Bureaus.” with Smith, L.D., Staten, Michael, Karig, Maureen, Feinstein, Jeffrey, and Cathleen Johnston, under review (April 2015).

FRANK Q. FU
Associate Professor
Department of Marketing


BRANDON OFEM
Assistant Professor
Department of Global Leadership and Management


SEEMANTINI PATHAK
Assistant Professor
Department of Global Leadership and Management

Publications


2016 Conference Presentations
Holmes, K.M., Pathak, S., & Pellegrini, E. 2016. Developing global leadership and collaboration skills online. Presented at the Focus on Technology and Teaching Conference, St. Louis, Missouri.

CHIKAKO USUI
Associate Professor of Sociology


Chair and moderator, Panel 23 China and the Investment in Education. 64th Annual Meeting of the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs, (October 2015). Washington University in St. Louis.

Grants
“Japan Update: Japan’s Visions in Asia,” $20,000 (PI). Sasakawa Peace Foundation (coordinated by the National Association of Japan America Societies).

G. D’ANNE WEISE
Associate Professor of Finance


“Inverse VIX Futures ETNs: Caveat Emptor,” with Hancock, G.D. (Fall 2013). Journal of Index Investing.

“Hedging with VIX Futures: What is the Optimal Hedge Ratio?” with Hancock, G.D. (Fall 2013). Review of Futures Markets.

GIAYN ZHANG
Department Chair & Professor
Department of Finance


Ranked in top-10-list by downloads at the Social Science Research Network (SSRN), Stock Market Risk, Econometric Modeling, Capital Markets


U.S. News & World Report’s 2017 “America’s Best Colleges” guidebook names the University of Missouri–St. Louis International Business program in top 20.