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Class is greener this side of Atlantic

Spanish MBA students study American ways of sustainability

ENNIFER WILLIS

The Portland Tribune, Mar 6, 2007

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Students visiting from Spain and pursuing master's degrees in business administration are getting a close look at American sustainability practices, through a two-week program offered by the University of Portland.



DENISE FARWELL / PORTLAND TRIBUNE

Hot Lips Pizza owner David Yetkins (right) discusses his company's sustainability practices with visiting students from Spain at the local pizza chain's Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard location.

The International Seminar on Sustainability and Economic Development is a joint offering from UP's [Pamplin School of Business Administration](#) and the foreign language department.

Now in its second year, the seminar gives MBA students from the [Escuela de Organización Industrial](#) (School of Industrial Management) an inside view into how Pacific Northwest businesses and agencies are addressing practical sustainability.

Fourteen students are participating in the seminar, which began Feb. 26 and wraps up Friday.

"It helps give them a different worldview," says Lisa Reed, assistant dean of the Pamplin School.

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Students say they came to Portland to study sustainability in business from the American point of view, and to learn more about cross-cultural business management.

EAST COUNTY NEWS

“I am learning about the American teaching system, the way they do business and how they adapt the production and processes with the environment,” says participating student Tamara Del Hoyo Mate, who is visiting the United States for the first time.

Estacada NEWS

NEWS-TIMES

She says the two-week seminar is giving her a better sense of how to manage increasingly scarce resources, and new ideas on how to improve a company’s processes in relation to the environment.

GRESHAM OUTLOOK

Tours of local firms included

Lake Oswego Review

The Seminar on Sustainability and Economic Development grew out of a trip UP students took several years ago with Spanish-language professor Kate Regan.

Lifestyles

The American students were part of UP’s E-Scholars Entrepreneurship Program, and Regan’s contact at the Escuela de Organización Industrial gave them a presentation on business during their visit.

Oregon City News

Regal Courier

“It was at that point I thought there could be some very interesting possibilities here,” Regan says.

SANDY POST

Reed and Regan have arranged for the foreign students to meet with Portland-area business owners and representatives of government agencies who are involved with developing and implementing sustainable business practices.

THE BEE since 1906

Last week, the students toured the facilities of Nike Inc., Adidas and Hot Lips Pizza to find out more about how these businesses are taking environmental impact into account. Other participating organizations include Metro, Boeing, Spectre Entertainment and Oregon Health & Science University.

Sherwood Gazette

THE SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Students Fernando Visa and Sergio Núñez, who are specializing in international business, say they particularly enjoyed meeting with Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder, who explained how Portland is applying sustainable practices to transportation.

The Times TIGARD | TUALATIN | SHERWOOD

West Linn Tidings

“We have learned how to understand sustainability as an opportunity for business, not as a problem for companies,” the students wrote in an e-mail.

Visa and Núñez also are soaking up American culture during their two-week visit. “We have just bought some tickets for the basketball game.”

Portlanders may get to Spain

The Escuela de Organización Industrial program, with campuses in Madrid and Seville, requires its MBA students to spend two weeks studying abroad. While students have studied in Great Britain, Germany and France, Reed says the University of Portland is the only school in the United States currently participating.

The two-week international exchange also benefits UP students, who are getting better acquainted with Spanish people and business practices.

“This is a great opportunity for my students,” says Regan, who teaches Spanish for business to UP undergrads. Her students established e-mail contact with the Spaniards before they arrived to help prepare them for their visit to Portland.

The American and Spanish students are attending some classes and going on a few site visits together.

Escuela de Organización Industrial professor Jose Luis Barbero, in Portland with his students, is presenting and lecturing to UP students on topics ranging from European Union taxes to international law.

As the cross-cultural business program continues to grow and develop, Reed and Regan say they hope to send UP business students to Spain to study.

“We haven’t had really an institutionalized international experience possible for our MBA students. This is one step to further that,” Reed says, adding that UP business students could be headed to Spain as early as this spring.

“Study abroad is life-changing,” Regan says. “By bringing these students together, and having them talk, it immediately challenges them to open up and share perspectives.”

Businesses can do better

Students and professors agree that sharing perspectives on global sustainability is sorely needed right now.

“We are spending all the Earth’s resources, and now we have to learn a model of sustainable growth,” write Visa and Núñez, adding that in a truly international economy, companies have more power than governments to effect real change in environmental practices.

Del Hoyo Mate believes the future depends on businesses taking the environment into account every step of the way.

“It could be done by renewable energy, or zero product waste,” she says. “To invest money in sustainability is not a cost. It’s an investment and a future income – a win for society, and a win for business.”

Regan is excited about the international bridges being built, particularly for the sake of sustainability on a global scale.

“These are going to be our future leaders,” she says. “They’re meeting each other. They’re talking about these issues.”

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