

The Role Of Cal Poly College Of Business International Business Education In Inland Empire

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INTRODUCTION

Between 1980 and 1990 most universities worked to internationalize their curriculum. During this period California State Polytechnic University, Pomona also internationalized its curriculum, especially in the College of Business. During the fall of 1985 an International Task Force (IBTF) was established and continued its work through 1992. One of the tasks of this committee was to internationalize the College of Business curriculum. The IBTF established a major and minor in International Business. Dr. Sakamoto, a member of the IBTF and professor of MHR used a survey and a paper to prove that there was a need for an International Business major (IB). In his paper, “Employer Needs for Graduates Trained In International Business” Dr. Sakamoto wrote as follows:

Forecasters predict that California will be the fourth largest economic entity in the world by year 2000 (Pacific Rim Commission, 1987). The single fastest growing area within California and the second fastest growing in the USA is the region including and lying east of Cal Poly Pomona called the Inland Empire (KMG Main Hurdman, 1986). Eleven thousand firms are reported to be engaged in international business in Southern California. A major reason for the rapid growth of California ports is with Pacific Rim Countries. Exports to these nations totaled 67 billion dollars in 1984 and accounted for more than 1.5 million jobs. The Inland Empire growth rate has been projected to have a growth rate of 2.5 percent, which is more than the Los Angeles basin as a whole. This growth is expected to continue through the year 2000 and is predicted to account for 1,877,000 new jobs (KMG Main Hurdman, 1986).

Dr. Sakamoto then wrote, “The opportunities for graduates in International Business thus appear to be very substantial.”

California ranks highest in the US in the exportation of goods and services. Exports from California rose 17.5 percent in the first quarter 2001. Southern California, especially the Inland Empire, was the most important region helping in this growth.

The reason for businesses start up and growth in the last several years could be explained as follows:

- 1) The entrepreneurial spirit of the region is higher.
- 2) The cost of labor is lower.
- 3) The creation of new jobs.
- 4) The area appeals to manufacturers.
- 5) The existence of several universities especially Cal Poly Pomona.

The Inland Empire is an incubator for economic growth as the region is advantageous to business. An advantage to having a business in the Inland Empire is the proximity to the world’s major ports and the expansion of the Ontario Airport. The ports of LA and Long Beach create the third busiest port in the world after Hong Kong and Singapore.

The US Department of Commerce predicts that the Inland Empire will outpace any area in the US. By the year 2005, the Inland Empire will have the same population as the 24th largest state, Kentucky, and an income

equivalent to Alabama of \$78 billion. In the past three years, four hundred companies have expanded to the area. International trade is an important factor to the growth of California, especially the Inland Empire. Over 1.15 million jobs in California depend on exports, and trade could triple within two decades.

Growth of the LA and Long Beach ports implies more freight trains will pass through LA, San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange Counties, which indicates Inland Empire regional business growth. The expansion of the Ontario Airport and the recent successful UPS creation of a route to its China facilities have produced a lot of publicity. The airport serves as a bridge to a new global market and brings international businesses into the region.

PURPOSES

The purposes of this study are as follows:

- 1) To establish the accuracy and reality of the above projection indications to graduates of Cal Poly Pomona.
- 2) To obtain first hand information from Alumni from 1995-2000 regarding demographics and jobs.
To gather information about Alumni of the MHR and IB majors to determine if Cal Poly's College of Business has been effective in curriculum internationalization.
- 3) To discover the role of Cal Poly's IB education in the Inland Empire.
To collect information about Alumni of MHR and IB majors to ascertain if Cal Poly's College of Business has been effective in curriculum internationalization.
- 4) To determine the need of alumni and collect opinions to improve the curriculum for future Cal Poly Pomona students.

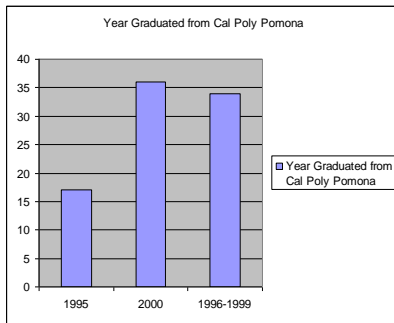
METHODOLOGY

A twenty question, two part questionnaire was developed to collect alumni information. A total of 1032 questionnaires with self-addressed envelopes were sent to all Cal Poly College of Business alumni from 1995 to 2000. Of these questionnaires a total of 106 completed questionnaires were returned, or 11.21 percent. Four questionnaires were discarded due to time limitations.

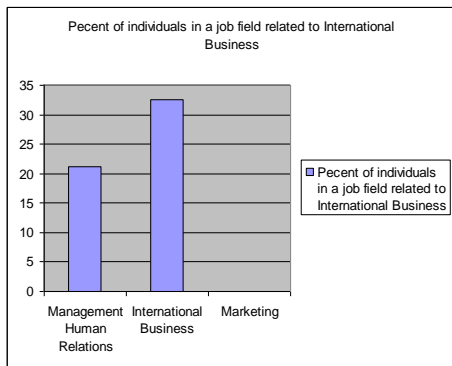
The first section was developed to collect information regarding alumni opinion toward the usefulness of courses they took at Cal Poly and the importance of the major they chose in acquiring a job, especially in the IB field. Cal Poly first awarded a degree in IB in 1995, but the most current records begin in 2000. Questions collected information regarding the alumni's major and year of graduation, ascertained if the alumni had a job in IB and if they were hired after graduation, then alumni were asked about their perception of Cal Poly Pomona's education in getting an IB job. The next questions were designed to collect alumni feedback towards the effectiveness of IB courses in relation job performance. The questionnaire also asked the alumni to list other topics that needed to be studied for IB and any comments or suggestions that could help Cal Poly's College of Business to improve internationalization of its curriculum. The second part was developed to collect demographic information from the alumni to determine average age, sex, and national origin. Other questions were asked to ascertain the number of years the students were at Cal Poly, average GPA, identify students' ability, potential, the number of times they had changed majors, and who paid for tuition.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

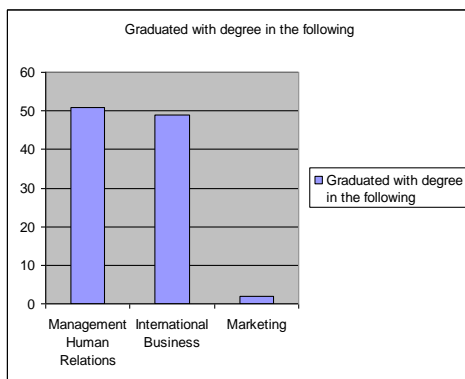
The questionnaires showed that 24 alumni graduated in 1995, six of which had majored in IB. Only one confirmed a job in IB and believed that a formal preparation in IB was helpful in getting an IB job and performing better because of it. However, 11 of 15 of the respondents who graduated in 2000 majored in IB, four of whom had a job in IB. If we believe that the respondents portray the student body it indicates an improvement of 19 percent from the first year of the IB program. This is calculated as follows: Year 1995 is $1/5 = 20$ percent and year 2000 is $4/11 = 36$ percent.



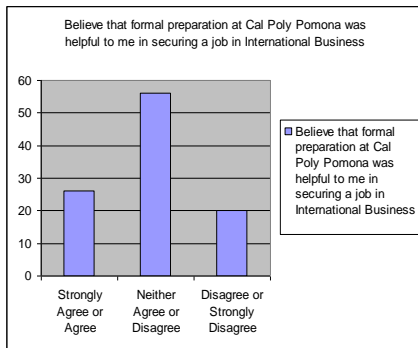
Thirty-two respondents graduating between 1996-1999 reported IB majors; eleven had a job in this field. Of the total IB majors who responded (49), 16 got a job in the IB field. With a simple calculation we can conclude that almost 1/3 or 32.6 percent of the IB graduates got a job in their field. An increment increase by year of the data indicates that there is a trend towards getting more IB related jobs than when the program started.



The questionnaires generated 51 respondents with MHR majors. Eleven of these alumni currently have a job in IB, but only four were hired after they graduation. Twenty-two percent of the MHR alumni have a job in an IB related job. This indicates that the MHR curriculum has been effectively internationalized. There were two marketing major respondents, and neither had an IB job.



The alumni were asked to present their belief towards the effectiveness Cal Poly’s IB program in getting a job. Only eight respondents strongly agreed that Cal Poly’s IB program helped them, while 18 agreed to this statement. Fifty-six responded with “neither agree nor disagree.” The number who disagreed (12) was less than the number of those who agreed. Twenty-five percent agreed or strongly agreed that curriculum internationalization had been successful, while 19 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.



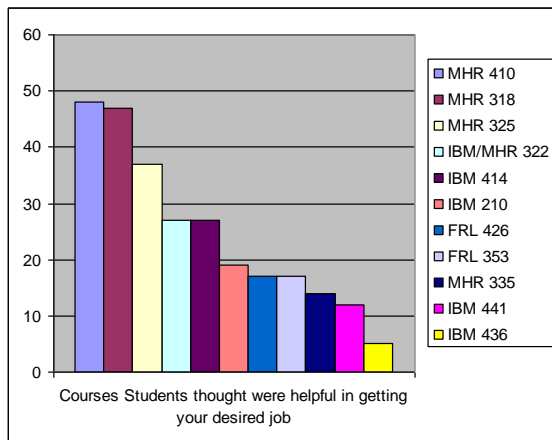
The alumni were asked which courses helped the alumni get a job. Strategic management, which is not an IB course, was selected the most. The alumni believed that MHR 410 helped to get a job with 48 selections. The next highest selected course was multicultural organizational behavior with 47 selections. The third highest ranking was MHR 325 with 37 selections. The next two courses had 27 selections, and both were business courses, MHR 322 and IBM 414. The remaining courses were ranked as follows:

Courses

- Global Business Perspective (IBM 210)
- International Financial Marketing (FRL 353)
- Legal Aspect of International Business (FRL 426)
- Assessing International Business Environments (MHR 335)
- Internship in International Business (IBM 441)
- International Business Agreements (IBM 436)

Selections

- 19
- 17
- 17
- 14
- 12
- 5



A category in this questionnaire allowed students to write down courses they felt helped to get a job. The results as listed in the survey were as follows:

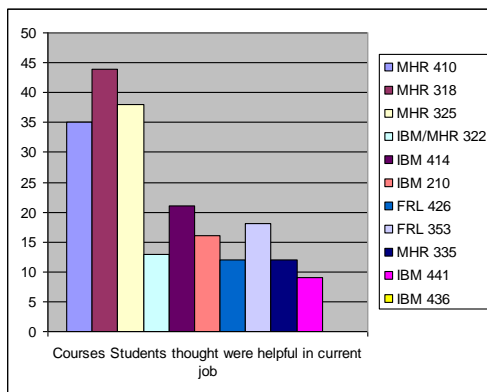
Gender Roles	CIS 101	IBM 453	MHR 406
Front Line Management	MHR 306	General Marketing and Sales	MHR 438
Profit Selling	IBM 306	CIS courses	MHR 405
Foreign Languages	IBM 307	MHR 301	MHR 324

The alumni were then asked their opinion the helpfulness the list courses were in getting jobs. The following are a few of their responses: “They helped me understand other cultures and different communication styles,” “they

helped me understand the field of Management and HR,” “It was not very helpful,” “all HR classes helped me provide the body of knowledge necessary to perform my job,” and “any type of education is helpful. It instills discipline and helps us to communicate better.”

Question seven was designed to ascertain which courses were helpful in the alumni’s current position. Forty-four the respondents selected Multicultural Organization Behavior (MHR 318) to be useful in their current positions and were selected most frequently. The next course was Advanced Communication for Management (MHR 325) with 38 selections; followed by Strategic Management (MHR 410) with 35 selections. The remainder was ranked as follows:

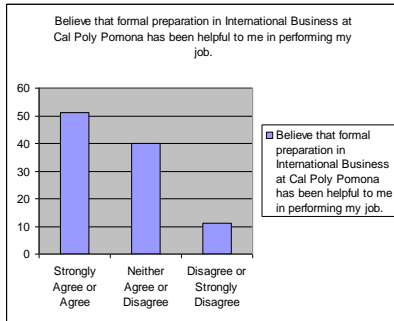
<u>Courses</u>	<u>Selections</u>
International Marketing (IBM 414)	21
International Financial Marketing (FRL 353)	18
Global Business perspective (IBM 210)	16
Introduction to International Business (MHR 322/IBM 322)	13
Assessing International Business Environment (MHR 335)	12
Legal Aspect of International Business (FRL 426)	12
Internship in International Business (IBM 441)	9
International Business Agreement (IBM 436)	5



The top three courses that helped alumni were MHR courses. The Internship in International Business course was expected to be most helpful in the alumni’s current positions, but was the second to the last course as ranked by the alumni.

A category was included for alumni to list the courses they felt were useful in current jobs. They were listed as follows: Profit Selling, CIS courses, export courses, strategy, all MHR courses and the compensation and benefit course. In the same question the alumni were asked how helpful the list of courses is in their current positions. The following are some of their responses to this question: “The communication-based courses helped in business relationships,” “the subjects were relevant and I could relate,” “they helped me understand how to do my job as a professional,” “I reference my college books for my current job,” “most of them were not related at all,” and “I use these courses in my job everyday.”

The alumni were asked about the helpfulness of a formal preparation in IB at Cal Poly Pomona in performing their jobs. Seven respondents strongly agreed that formal preparation in IB at Cal Poly Pomona has been helpful in their job performance. Another 44 alumni agreed, while 40 neither agreed nor disagreed to this statement and seven respondents disagreed and four strongly disagreed to this statement. In this question we had more respondents who strongly agreed than strongly disagreed (7:4), and there were more agree than disagree (44:7). It is also true that 40 respondents were neutral. However, we can conclude that a majority of alumni who responded to the survey either agreed or strongly agreed that the IB curriculum is helpful in the performance of their job.



The alumni were asked to list the other topics they believe would be helpful if taught in international business. Most of the topics mentioned are available in Cal Poly’s College of Business curriculum. There were a few statements that could be considered to develop new courses for future students. The following are some results to this question:

Self-leadership	Accounting	Investing	International Banking
Management	International Relations	Foreign Language	Job Market
Negotiation process	Laws and Taxes	Ethics	History
Com 100	Case Studies	Strategic Management	Contemporary Issues

Alumni were asked to write down additional comments or suggestions that could improve the curriculum internationalization. The following are some of the results of this question: “Teach students to be owners,” “investors or positions of power and not only marketable employees,” “bring in more guest speakers,” “internships,” “invite foreign business people to talk to students in class,” “hire new and younger instructors,” and “offer courses with more specific issues by region or country.”

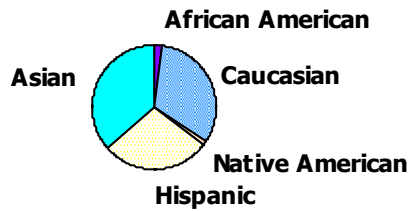
The last question requested alumni to attach a business card to the survey to contact them and possibly interview their supervisor in regard to the alumni’s performance. However, only 34 surveys were returned with a business card. This was exactly 1/3 of all of the respondents. This part of the survey will be conducted and reported later.

In order to identify the alumni’s demographics, nine more questions were asked of them. The following are the results of these questions: Fourteen alumni were in the age group of 21-25; this is almost fourteen percent. The second age group of 26-30 had the highest number with 58 alumni in this age category, and representing 57 percent of the alumni who responded. The next age category of 31-35 had seventeen respondents or sixteen percent of the total respondents. There were also thirteen alumni who checked the age category of 36 and above or 13 percent of the respondents. Assuming the respondents represent the alumni, a majority between 26-30.

There were 55 male and 47 female respondents. This also represents a similar percentage of the alumni. A 54 percent male verses 46 percent female.

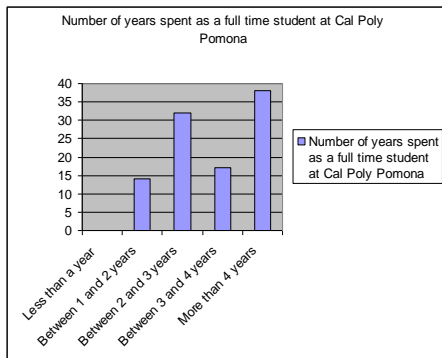
Another question inquired about racial or ethnic groups. The results indicate that there were two African American, and one Native American respondents. The rest was divided almost equally between Caucasian (33), Hispanic (29), and Asian (37).

Ethnic Origin

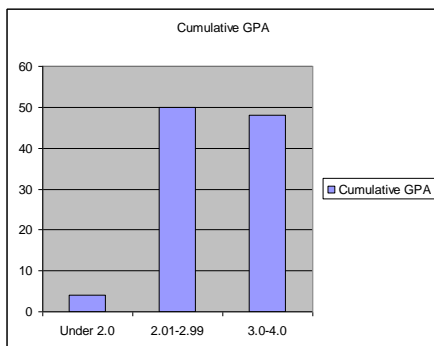


The alumni were asked their admission status in order to identify whether they were in state, out of state or international students when they initially attended Cal Poly Pomona. Only one international student and two out of state students responded. Many alumni who graduated during this period were international, but either did not respond or receive the survey.

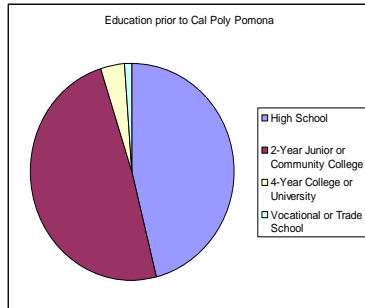
Another question pertained to the number of years the student spent at Cal Poly. A majority of the alumni had been at Cal Poly for four or more years. It took four or more years for 38 percent of the alumni to graduate from Call Poly. Those who had transferred from other colleges attended Cal Poly for at least 2-3 years. Transfer students amassed 32 of the alumni or 31 percent of the total respondents. Only 14 of the respondents reported being at Cal Poly for 1-2 years, and 17 of them reported having attended for 3-4 years.



A majority of the respondents (50) reported having a GPA of 2.01-2.99, and 48 reported having a GPA of 3.0-4.0. Only four students that reported a GPA of less than 2.0. It is strange to find out that there are students who are graduating with a 2.0 GPA. Respondents with a GPA of better than 3.0 measured 47 percent. The high rate of respondents with a higher GPA could be characterized as people who want their opinion to count, or they could be responsible people by nature.

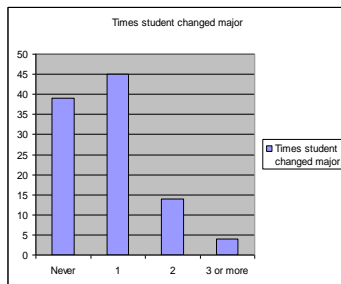


This category also asked which schools the alumni attend prior to Cal Poly Pomona. The majority of respondents had transferred from a two-year college. The number of transfer students was 50, which was only three more than those who came to Cal Poly from a high school. Only four respondents transferred from a 4-year university and only one from a vocational school. Therefore, we can conclude that 95 percent of our students come directly from high school or a two-year college.



Another question pertained to how tuition was paid. Half of the respondents (51) indicated paying for their own tuition, some of these also received help from family or student loans. Tuition for 44 of the respondents was paid for by family. Twenty-one alumni received student loans, and eleven were supported by employers. Therefore we can conclude that family usually supports students or they work to pay tuition themselves.

The last demographic question pertained how often the alumni transferred majors. At least one major change was reported by 45 alumni, 14 transferred twice, and four had transferred three or more times. However, 39 alumni reported never changing their major while at Cal Poly Pomona. The results indicate that a majority of students transfer majors.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

One of the reasons for businesses start up and growth in the last several years in Inland Empire is the existence of several universities especially Cal Poly Pomona. Between 1980 and 1990 most universities worked to internationalize the curriculum including Cal Poly Pomona University, especially in the College of Business. In order to collect the needed information for this study a 20 question survey was developed and sent to the alumni of 1995 to 2000 with International Business and MHR majors. Of the 1032 questionnaires distributed, 106 were returned for the study. The study indicated that only twenty-two percent of MHR majors currently hold a position in an IB related field.

This study concluded that the internationalization of Cal Poly’s curriculum has been successful, but still needs improvement. This study also indicated that Cal Poly’s IB has an important role in Southern California, especially in the Inland Empire region