

# Empowering Students To Create The Study Abroad Experience

Bryan A. Booth, (E-mail: baboot@ship.edu), Shippensburg University  
Stephen J. Holoviak, (E-mail: sjholo@ship.edu), Shippensburg University

## Abstract

*The literature is filled with numerous findings demonstrating the benefits of a study abroad experience for a student. These benefits include the broad-based student growth that goes well beyond the topics studied abroad. There is also significant substantiation in the literature to suggest empowerment learning enriches and facilitates the total academic experience for students. This paper describes a class whereby preparing students for study abroad and marketing study abroad are integrated with empowerment techniques to create a more meaningful study abroad program. This class, the Global Business Exploration Program (GBEP) is student-managed and guided by the desire to promote the importance and benefits of global exploration. Consensus decision-making and other processes within Total Quality Management (TQM) are employed by the students to manage the GBEP class interactions. Ethnographic data collected over a four semester period (two years) were analyzed to illustrate the benefits as well as the difficulties of utilizing empowerment techniques to create the GBEP class and improve the study abroad program in the college of business.*

## Introduction

 xperiential learning is the learning process and accomplishment that takes place beyond the traditional classroom and that enhances the personal and intellectual growth of the student. Such education can occur in a wide variety of settings, but it usually takes on a “learn-by-doing” aspect that engages the student directly in the subject, work, or service involved. (Northeastern University, 1997:1).

Over the past three decades, experiential learning has become one of the most significant trends in higher education. Experiential learning programs such as study abroad programs, are intended to bring concrete experiences into the classroom to augment the traditional learning process (Katula and Threnhauser 1999). Study abroad experiences help students to develop tolerance, respect, and open-mindedness and sensitize them to the differences that exist in other cultures. Study abroad experiences assist students to better understand different cultures, races, customs, and business practices (Praetzel and Curcio 1996). Business students are graduating into the global market place and the more robust their international knowledge and experiences are, the more likely they are to succeed.

Empowerment has its history in business organizations with the advent of participative decision-making (Crane 1976) and in self-managed work teams (Hackman and Oldman 1980). Research on self-managed work teams in higher education centers on the professors (Kasten, Short, Jarmin 1989) and not on the students themselves. Empowering students uses educational techniques such as collaborative learning, active learning, and student-centered learning to allow the students to manage how information is presented and subsequently learned. A major aspect of empowering students is eliminating the teacher-centered model of the classroom. It emphasizes what the student will learn and not what the professor will teach, and empowers the students to “take-charge” of the learning instead of the professor being the driving force in the classroom (Berling 1998). Empowerment is simply giving students autonomy, choice, responsibility, and participation in making decisions in the classroom (Lightfoot 1986).

*Readers with comments or questions are encouraged to contact the authors via email.*

Trust on the part of the professor to allow the students to make their own decisions, is vital to the success of empowering students (Short 1994). Trust among the students to manage their own learning is equally important. Without trust students fall back on the traditional professor-student power dynamic in which decisions are largely made for them.

Total Quality Management techniques assist in empowerment of students in the classroom. Use of TQM in higher education is relatively new and the techniques have been used more often outside the classroom in administrative settings rather than with students (Birnbaum and Deshotels 1999; Macy, Neal and Waner 1998). Recently TQM techniques have been used more frequently and with more success with students (Scrabec 2000; Schmidt 1998).

### **Data**

Ethnographic data were collected from students in the form of an open-ended written narrative. This narrative allowed each student to assess GBEP's successes, failures, the role of the students and faculty observer and make future suggestions for the betterment of the class. These data were collected each semester during the second and third years of the class. The content of each student's narrative was analyzed to determine the emergent themes. All student narratives were then compared to develop themes that were most prevalent among the students. These data provided the basis for understanding the process of how the students became empowered and how it affected their performance in developing a strong and vibrant study abroad program for the College of Business.

### **Global Business Exploration Program**

Within the past decade there has been increasing acceptance by deans, faculty, and accreditation bodies to "internationalize" business curricula and graduate students who have "global skills" to better serve the organizations who have to survive in a global market. However, sufficient internationalization of curriculum has not occurred for business students (Praetzel and Curcio 1996). Accreditation organizations such as the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB added "international" in the mid-1990s) have incorporated international knowledge as a prerequisite for any university wishing to be accredited or to remain accredited. AACSB International's mission is to "provide global leadership in advancing management education through accreditation and by fostering international interchanges, key business linkages, sharing of best practices, professional development, and other member services" ([www.aacsb.edu/Mission.html](http://www.aacsb.edu/Mission.html)). With external pressures from hiring organizations and accreditation groups, the College of Business<sup>1</sup> in an attempt to remain viable and provide a legitimate business degree adopted a student empowerment structure to promote study abroad for business students.

The Global Business Exploration Program<sup>2</sup> (GBEP) class was formed in the fall of 1998 with hopes of increasing the number of students who study abroad. Prior to the inception of the GBEP class, only 3-4 students of over 1200 students in the CoB were studying abroad. This was an abysmal number no matter how you analyzed it. The CoB (and the university) was known as an outstanding regional school and had a student population that was primarily populated by parochial, hard working students from the surrounding region. These students' international experiences and interests were typical of most students at similar universities in the United States. The students came of age in the 1990's during a time of unprecedented economic growth. Comments and questions often heard from CoB students during the most of the 1990s included: "American business skills are the best so why study anything (or anywhere) else? Study abroad, what for? Study abroad is expensive and what will it get me? I don't plan on working outside of the US so why bother?"

The faculty and administration in the CoB knew globalization was important. The curriculum already included various international classes in economics, management, marketing, and finance. There was even an international management concentration. What was missing was the experiential aspect, one that allowed the students to learn international skills outside of the traditional classroom setting. Although there was a university-

---

<sup>1</sup> John L. Grove College of Business Shippensburg University, Shippensburg PA.

<sup>2</sup> The faculty and dean of the John L. Grove College of Business developed the Global Business Exploration Program.

wide study abroad program for decades, encouraging students to “go talk to the study abroad office” did nothing to increase the number of students studying abroad. If anything it discouraged them due to the lack of business oriented study abroad opportunities available through the university’s study abroad program. However, since there never was much of a demand by business students the study abroad office had no incentive to provide a large selection of business programs abroad. Thus faculty and administration in the CoB decided to try a novel approach by developing the GBEP class. This would encourage the students to take ownership of the main problem; too few students studying abroad and graduating with the necessary skills to compete in the global business environment. This new class would also allow students to encourage other students to study abroad and start a peer marketing approach to gain the necessary global skills.

GBEP class was patterned after the Investment Management Program (IMP); a student managed class with the goal of providing real-dollar investment experience for students. The students in the IMP class were funded and then allowed to make their own decisions to invest money and manage the portfolio. Students’ making their own decisions in the IMP class was a huge success. With the exception of the IMP class, empowering students to manage their own learning was generally new in the CoB. It was one thing to give students money to invest and manage a portfolio in the IMP class, but it quite another to “empower” students to learn about study abroad. What would this actually entail? Some students in the university knew study abroad since there was a study abroad program in the Arts and Sciences College for decades. Nevertheless, study abroad was generally the domain of those in the College of Arts and Sciences at the university and business students did not readily take advantage of the program. Besides, how does one entrust internationally naïve students with the responsibility of researching study abroad programs and marketing these programs to other business students and then ultimately improving their own international skills?

### **The Process of Empowering the Students in GBEP Year One**

During the first year of the GBEP class, students and faculty were developing, defining, and refining their roles in this new class environment. At the same time, they were attempting to develop a viable study abroad program in the CoB. The faculty member responsible for the class acted as an observer to the process, specifically on how the students interacted. This faculty member (sometimes joined by other faculty members) watched how the students made decisions and interacted with each other. Only if the students in the class made a decision that was not in the best interest of the CoB (vaguely defined) did the faculty member intercede with the students’ interactions. As a result of this laissez-faire behavior on the part of the faculty member, students in the first year of the program spent much of the classroom time learning how to work as a group and accomplish tasks within a group decision-making model.

The CoB administration structured the GBEP class as a 2-credit course in the fall and a 1-credit course in the spring. Some students started in the spring semester and completed their three credits in the fall semester. This overlap of some of the students between spring and fall became an integral part of maintaining GBEP’s norms of interactions. At the end of the first year of GBEP, the class made significant progress in developing a general mission, researching various business school programs abroad, and writing a manual for the class. This manual helped define the goals, objectives, and roles of the class members. Students expressed both satisfaction and frustration with their productivity during this first year. The students enjoyed the opportunity to make their own decisions and felt empowered (at times) to be “in charge”. Unfortunately, they felt they were given too little guidance and instruction in the traditional “professor lectures and students listen” model they had experienced in their other classes.

### **Second Year (“Improvements”)**

The second year started with a change in the faculty observer for GBEP. The faculty observer from the first year continued involvement in the class for the first month and this greatly assisted in the transition for the new students and the new faculty observer<sup>3</sup>. As would be expected, the students reviewed their progress or lack of

---

<sup>3</sup> The first author became the observer for the GBEP class.

progress (in their minds) of the first year. They expressed frustration with the lack of “guidance” from the faculty observer and asked for more structure and leadership of the class. Some of the students in the class complained of doing too much work while others were not contributing enough. “GBEP needs a way to monitor the progress of the members because not everyone is self-motivated” (Suzanne)<sup>4</sup>. To maintain organizational structure in the classroom, some of the basic techniques in Total Quality Management were utilized such as rotating roles of facilitation and record keeping (secretary), and consensus decision-making. This use of a facilitator and secretary provided some guidance and seemed to assuage the issues of equitable balance of the work. “The system of revolving facilitators and secretaries helped to spread the workload and power of individual members” (Justin).

The students’ also felt decision-making was too time-consuming when the whole group had to reach an agreement. Consequently, the students decided to break tasks into functional sub-groups instead of the larger group (11 students) responsible for all the decisions. One of the main sub-groups became the marketing group, which became responsible for promoting study abroad for the students in the CoB. This included developing a general presentation about the reasons to study abroad, and promoting the GBEP class and study abroad. It also included promoting study abroad at the university’s open houses for potential incoming freshman and having country specific presentations to encourage CoB students to study abroad at specific universities. The research sub-group furthered the initiatives from the first year in developing official relationships with several new universities abroad which had AACSB accredited business programs. Their efforts increased the study abroad programs available to CoB students.

Student accountability to the class and the tasks to complete became an issue. Concerns of efficiency became intertwined with the performance of the large group as compared to the sub-groups. “I believe that the groups/committees should focus on meetings outside of class and use class time to report progress and communicate with the other class members [in the larger group]” (Justin). Students believed there needed to be some form of evaluation of the students that encouraged and motivated them to participate. “To better this program [GBEP] and the work of the students, an evaluation system should be implemented. This will give us students more feedback on how our work is seen by other students” (Charles). To assist the students, the faculty observer gave the students a model of a peer evaluation system used in a TQM class and suggested the students’ modify it to their needs. The students modified the evaluation system and used it at the end of the fall semester during the second year. By evaluating the students at the end of the semester the peer evaluation did not serve the purpose it was intended to do which was to improve the participation of the students *during* the semester. “In my opinion those evaluations should be done more often...at least three or four times per semester” (Robert).

Students enjoyed the freedom and responsibility of being in charge of their own class. “I liked the idea that we were in charge of what we wanted to accomplish and how we wanted to go about accomplishing our goals” (Gus). “Being in a class that is student run, is a huge learning experience. Our whole lives [so] far as students, have been generally exposed to instructor/instruct relationships in the classroom setting. Not here, though. It was an open market for anyone to take charge, and it changed all the time” (Linda). The constant changes, the lack of structure and ambiguity of the class, and the use of group decision-making, though frustrating at times to the students, was very beneficial to their empowerment. “The class itself, although confusing at first, provided an excellent setting with which to operate in groups without direct professor leadership” (Jack). “Participating in a student-managed class also provided an atmosphere that was conducive for the emergence of student leaders. At first, the returning members of the class and the instructor provided most of the leadership and direction. However, as the semester progressed, other students in the class presented their ideas and opinions more freely” (Justin). Harold aptly stated in his narrative paper, “the objective of the class is student empowerment”

Students generated their own tasks to complete each semester and creating unique and very worthwhile benefits in promoting study abroad opportunities within the CoB. Two of their ideas developed into events that have become ongoing in the class and one that made a very positive impact outside of the CoB. The first was an international teleconference with a university in Ireland. The students developed the idea from the beginning, made all the necessary technical arrangements with the CoB’s media director, developed the topic of the teleconference (studying abroad in Ireland and the benefits) and handled all the publicity for the teleconference event. The

---

<sup>4</sup> Pseudonyms are used for the students.

international teleconference was so successful that it has become a standard event in the spring semester. The second major task that has maintained some momentum has been a pre-departure training session for students studying abroad. The students in GBEP who had studied abroad (usually around 30-35% of the class), voiced concerns that they were not fully prepared for the cultural differences in studying abroad before they left the CoB. The university study abroad office had a "dos and don'ts" orientation session prior to studying abroad. Though the university's orientation session was helpful in the areas of currency exchange, medical care, visas, passports and other more "administrative" issues, it woefully lacked any cultural component. Returning studying abroad students said cross-cultural understanding was the one area in which they needed more preparation. Therefore, the GBEP class organized, publicized, and arranged to have a cross-cultural trainer provide a pre-departure training session for students planning to study abroad. This session is now held near the end of every semester for students who are studying abroad in the next semester. A third task occurred that created a great deal of positive exposure for the class outside of the student population. The students were asked to present a program to the College of Business Advisory Board. The topic was the GBEP class and future goals, the benefits of studying abroad for business students and the need to provide more financial opportunities for students in the CoB to study abroad. The positive feedback from this event created some feedback to address one problem many students have concerning studying abroad; the cost.

### **Second Year ("Challenges")**

The freedom to manage their own class and the egalitarianism of their roles still had to compete with the ingrained culture of American higher education; specifically a professor grades each student on her/his individual performance. To combat this, grading on individual performance was eliminated as a component of this class. The CoB faculty decided that all students in the GBEP class would receive an "A" automatically (if they attended regularly). The students were informed of this at the beginning of each semester. It was hoped that taking away the pressure of individually earning a grade would make each student more amenable to working toward group goals. This policy also took power away from the faculty observer and attempted to further breakdown the instructor/student paradigm. This policy worked well in part but, not unexpectedly some of the students emerged as leaders and performed more productively while some sat back and watched. "Social loafing was an obvious component of participating in a student-managed class. Students will have to become more dependable and accountable for assigned tasks as the workload increases and deadlines become increasingly important. This may require that the class change its grading formula" (Justin).

The process of empowerment does not exist in a vacuum. The students in GBEP in managing their own tasks (as described above) did experience some problems specifically outside the College of Business. Some in the university's administration had difficulty accepting a student-managed class particularly when the students were acting as official representatives for the GBEP class and the CoB. The hierarchy within the university was at times uncomfortable with having to meet with students and interact with them as decision-makers. For example, two student liaison roles were developed to interface with the university-wide study abroad director. The dean and the faculty of the CoB gave the students the responsibility and authority to speak for the GBEP class. These two liaisons met some resistance with administrators in the university. American higher education culture, at times still makes it difficult for the students to be totally empowered to act in their own interests and to be seen as capable in guiding their own education. As the GBEP class becomes more institutionalized into the university as a whole, it is expected the university administration will accept them in their empowered roles. In fact, there have been encouraging signs of this acceptance from some of the most oppositional administrators.

### **Third Year ("Success builds Success, but...")**

At the end of the spring semester (in the second year), one student suggested a future change in how the facilitation and the secretary roles were managed. "[Pre-establishing] the order of facilitating will empower the class with the ability to be more organized" (Casandra). It was the organized scheduling of the facilitator role and the implementation of this schedule by the students that allowed for the class and the individual students to become more comfortable with their empowered role. "I think the turning point for me to become totally comfortable with this class was when I became the facilitator" (Leslie). A student, who had started in the spring semester and

completed his involvement in the class during the fall semester in the third year, noticed a big difference between the two semesters. “[The fall] semester in review was much different [than the spring]. The facilitator was clearly the head of the class and kept us strictly to our agenda” (James). It was noticeable that Casandra’s use of the words “empower the class” in the quote above indicates a change in focus away from the individual student and toward the larger group. This focus toward the group greatly helped the students in their move toward developing roles that were more coherent (to them). It also assisted in developing more equitable group norms of interaction. The role of facilitator had become institutionalized in the class and this helped the students in managing the various tasks. The students were slowly becoming comfortable with the change of “who” was in charge of their learning; **they were!**

The successes during the second year, particularly the international teleconference, the pre-departure training, study abroad “social” (informational session) and the presentation to the CoB advisory board, started the third year on a very positive note. Due to the students’ efforts, the GBEP class had a much higher profile and status in the College of Business. Because of these successes, the students were embracing the whole culture of a student-managed class and the group approach to decision-making. They were becoming almost intoxicated with the excitement of setting their own goals, completing major tasks and making their decisions. One of the major goals the students developed and completed during this third year was the development of their own website ([www.ship.edu/~gbep](http://www.ship.edu/~gbep)). This was a huge undertaking, not just in the technical aspects but more so in the content that was necessary to make the website a viable and useful one for all CoB students. The website included the mission statement and objectives for GBEP. Developing a mission statement and clarifying the objectives of GBEP allowed the students in the class to focus their energy toward the needs of other students who may want to study abroad and not just how they interacted in the class. The website expanded their influence within the CoB, both with the students and also assisted in improving the collaborating efforts with the university-wide study abroad office, since a link to that office was placed on the GBEP web site. The web site became the repository for how CoB students accessed study abroad information, communicated with the GBEP class, and served as a marketing tool for study abroad in general.

During the fall semester in the third year an event occurred which facilitated GBEP’s empowerment. The Associate Dean of the College of Business asked the GBEP students to “take-charge” of the College of Business’ University Day to be held in following April. The theme for University Day was “Globalization” and it seemed fitting that the GBEP students would be the group to develop the entire day’s program. The students were excited and also confused regarding what the entire process of managing the development and implementation of such a large-scale event that would be attended by hundreds of students. The GBEP students had a model of past university day programs but the theme of globalization was new and thus the content would be very different from past years. “When I was first told that we would be running [sic] University Day I did not think it would be too much of a task. I knew it would take a little time (possibly a month) but not the entire semester” (Kelsey). Over the first three months of the spring semester the students, who were officially scheduled to meet for only 50 minutes per week ended up meeting on their own time two or three times extra per week in preparation for University Day. The result of months of planning for the University Day culminated in the following events. The morning sessions included a teleconference with a multinational manufacturing company (Scotland division), three separate workshops with the topics: investing internationally, international job search, and study abroad/internship opportunities. After an international food extravaganza for lunch, the afternoon session started with a panel on “the impact of globalization”. The four panel members included a high level representative from the World Bank, the director of marketing from an international training and consulting company, the director of the international supply chain division of a food company, and the director of a non-profit regional international network organization. Following the panel discussion there were breakout sessions for each individual panel members. Then the film “Globalization and Human Rights” was shown with a discussion period afterwards. The afternoon ended with an enjoyable game show format that quizzed teams of students and faculty on globalization issues and content questions from the day’s events.

University Day was a worthwhile experience for the student and faculty participants but especially for the GBEP students who developed the program of events. Their feeling of success was evident in their narratives. “I am glad we got assigned [University Day] because it was our job to have everything together for the entire College of Business. I feel that this really emulated a “real time” work environment” (Kelsey). “By heading up [sic]

University Day we have proved that we can work independently and accomplish a great deal. All of the activities were run very professionally and we received recognition because of it" (Nathaniel). "In the long run, we made international contacts [for] our class, impressed the administration and student body, and set up to be on the forefront of the scholars program<sup>5</sup>. University Day was a complete success in my mind" (James).

### **Inherent Difficulties: Peer Evaluations, Emergent Leadership, Role of Faculty Observer**

The positive outcomes of the GBEP class were not without difficulties. An area of concern to many students was trying to manage the equitable distribution of work. As mentioned above, the students used a peer-evaluation form to provide feedback to the faculty observer regarding each sub-group and the larger class performance. The students were instrumental in revising a generic TQM style peer-evaluation form and they even expressed the long-term benefit it afforded them. "I think [the peer evaluations] forces us to realize that in the future we will be evaluated by a group of our peers" (Leslie). "The evaluation form is a good tool to evaluate the whole class" (Stephen). However, the students had problems completing their evaluations on time (monthly). The faculty observer had to "encourage" the students to be more regular in their evaluations. It became evident in analyzing the ethnographic data that the students were not comfortable with evaluating each other. Even though the students developed a five-point evaluation scale (1-F, 2-C, 3-B, 4-B+, 5-A), it became the norm to evaluate everyone very leniently. With few exceptions most students gave everyone, including themselves a "5". Some students disregarded the instructions to keep the forms anonymous, specifically handing them in to the faculty observer in such a way as to allow other students to see their ratings. One incident occurred in which a student saw his peer's evaluation of him. "As I passed [the peer evaluation form] along the table, he stopped, stared at it, and despite my intentions, became extremely upset. [Later he said] that I should not 'screw things up' [in reference to my role in the class]. I attribute his remarks to the "4" rating on the evaluation" (Veronica).

Student empowerment that includes a peer-evaluation system is contrary to the socialized culture of higher education to which students have become accustomed. It is the professor who evaluates students and not other students. Changing this cultural norm will invariably take time, and training on peer evaluation by an outside expert may assist the students in the GBEP class. The use of an outside expert is very important to the continued empowerment of the students. Yet, having the faculty observer do the training would put the power back into the faculty observer's hands and only reinforce the traditional professor/student role dynamic.

A second area of concern was (and continues to be) how the students managed emergent leadership. As with any small group situation in which all participants are initially of equal status, leaders emerge out of the group to take control (Booth 1993). The process of leaders emerging creates a benefit to the functioning of the group by providing guidance but the process does not always encourage an atmosphere to empower all students equally. "[The emergent leaders] strong-willed nature and desire to lead forced others into a silent stupor...if these people were not left to run the show, they felt an emptiness inside and moped around dreading the ever infamous 'B' " (Veronica). "Cynthia was just a bull by taking on most of the work herself, when anyone of us in the class could have performed some tasks just as easily" (Ted). "More than once, tasks got passed around like a hot potato because no one thought it was their job. Eventually, someone would accept the obligation, and we'd move on. Or in a lot of cases, the same dominant people would feel compelled to add it to their 'to do' list" (Cynthia). The transitions from semester to semester were made easier by returning students but not without some difficulties in the group interactions as a result of these emergent leaders.

"The veterans of the class took off right where they had left off from last semester and the new people just sat there not saying much. I think we might have scared them at first but we veterans were excited and ready to go. Soon we realized we were moving ahead too fast and leaving the others behind. We needed to bring them up to speed with what was going on, how the class was run, and to feel comfortable enough to break away from the norms of a typical college class of teacher and students. Once these barriers were knocked down we began to fly ahead again but this time with the entire class" (Calvin).

---

<sup>5</sup> The GBEP class is one of four scholars program classes within the College of Business.

Some of the students (especially those who took on leadership roles) understood the benefits of encouraging others to perform more work and at a higher level. "Working in teams is a difficult project. However, GBEP helped to show me that if I didn't allow others the chance to lead then inevitably I am hindering their performance and creativity" (Suzanne-a student who was a positive emergent leader). "The role of the facilitator gave a new equity throughout the class. There was no definite hierarchy and everyone was able to express any ideas or insight, but there were individuals who lead the class and were not always open to anyone else's ideas" (Celeste). Balancing the need for leaders to encourage the class in productive and stimulating directions, with the negative outcomes of overly dominant leaders squelching the less-assertive students will be an ongoing issue for the class to manage.

A third area of concern for some of the students was the desire to have the faculty observer play the role of a traditional professor in a classroom environment. "It might have helped to have [the faculty advisor] step in and give some guidance to encourage more involvement from the new members" (Nathaniel). "There are a few things that I felt could make the class a bit better. The first is [the faculty observer] getting a little bit more involved during the class periods. The class is made to be student ran [sic], but I believe if [the faculty observer] interjects a bit more I think we can get some stronger and more specific ideas for different events" (Ted). Some students wrote in their narratives that the non-traditional role of the faculty observer created a positive learning atmosphere in the GBEP class. "The role of the [faculty observer was] new to me and I found that it very effective [sic] for our class. Having the [faculty observer] not play the starring role in the class gave a [sic] whole new learning atmosphere" (Celeste). Most students became comfortable with the faculty observer in this non-traditional role. Although it is expected that the non-traditional faculty observer role will continue to cause some concern for students, the observational data so far from this present semester indicates this role is becoming an integral part of the GBEP class.

### **The GBEP Effect on Students**

The influence of the GBEP class on the students, as expressed in their own words, seems long lasting. "All in all I am extremely satisfied with what I have learned throughout the semester from GBEP. This program gave me the opportunity to apply things I have learned in previous courses" (Matthew). "This class is the best way to truly learn what was taught to us in Organizational Behavior. We learned to run meetings, keep on task, deal with multiple personalities, and deal with multiple projects at once" (Calvin).

Students who participated were very willing to recommend it to friends as one of the best experiences they could have in their four years in college. "I feel this class was a great learning experience for me and if anyone can fit this into his or her schedule it is a must" (Calvin). "The Global Business Exploration Program has meant more to me than any other class in the College of Business. The 'process' style of learning has been the most beneficial and time-worthy work [sic] that I have done yet in my college career" (Linda).

### **Internationalization of the College of Business: GBEP's Role**

The continued internationalization of the CoB includes encouraging more students to participate in an international internship as opposed to a study abroad in which the student takes only academic courses. International internships are becoming a viable option for students who want the experience of living abroad and want to increase their work skills in their field. International internships have become a small but growing component of providing international experiences to students. GBEP has taken on the role of assisting students in finding good internships abroad. GBEP has arranged four international internships to date (none existed two years ago). Presently, through the efforts of GBEP and the dean of the CoB, there is a deal pending with a global company to secure international internships that would almost **double** the total number of students abroad. This potential deal came as the result of the presentation to the CoB Advisory Board by GBEP students. If this deal happens, and the students take advantage of the internships abroad, the impact on the internationalization of the CoB will be great.

By the end of the third year, the impact of GBEP on the CoB has been positive in both how many students participated in GBEP sponsored events and how that influenced students becoming involved in the future classes and going abroad. In reference to one such event a student who joined GBEP the next semester wrote in her

narrative, "I felt that [the study abroad informational session] was done very well...if this meeting did not take place I probably would not have gone abroad" (Alicia). One strong measure of success is the dramatic increase in students who are now participating in a study abroad experience. As mentioned earlier, prior to the inception of GBEP only 3-4 students of 1200 were studying abroad. This next academic year, 24 students are scheduled to study abroad. This number is only likely to increase as more students finalize their plans for next spring and summer semesters. This seven-fold (or higher) increase is still well below the goal of having at least 50 students a year studying abroad within 4 years of the inception of GBEP, but it is very encouraging. The visibility of GBEP also created the first study abroad scholarship fund specifically for CoB students. This assists in minimizing one of the major problems for students in the CoB: the lack of adequate funds to study abroad. The scholarship fund also encourages future donations earmarked for study abroad and validates to the students the importance of a study abroad experience. Many of the GBEP students believe in their hearts that a study abroad experience is very valuable. "I hope that everyone gets the opportunity, and more importantly takes the opportunity to study abroad. The benefits of doing so will pay off for the rest of your life and will inspire you to want to understand more about yourself and others around you" (James).

The mission statement and the objectives of the GBEP, their dissemination through the GBEP web site, are a result of students' efforts and have furthered the efforts of the College of Business to promote study abroad. Empowering students to create their own program has created a thriving study abroad program. The mission and objectives of GBEP are now intertwined into the mission for the College of Business. 📖

## References

1. Berling, J.A. 1998. Getting out of the way: A strategy of engaging students in collaborative learning. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, 1(1): 31-35.
2. Birnbaum, R., and Deshotels, J. 1999. Has the academy adopted TQM? *Planning for Higher Education*, 28(1): 29-37.
3. Booth, B.A. 1993. The effects of gender and IQ on emergent leadership. *Unpublished manuscript*.
4. Crane, D.P. 1976. The case for participative management. *Business Horizon*, 19(2): 15-21.
5. Hackham, J.P. and Oldham, G.R. 1980. *Work redesign*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
6. Kasten, K.L., Short, P.M., and Jarmin, H. 1989. Self-managing work groups and the professional lives of teachers: A case study. *The Urban Review*, 21(2): 63-80.
7. Katula, R.A. and Threnhauser, E. 1999. Experiential education in the undergraduate curriculum. *Communication Education*, 48(3): 238-255.
8. Lightfoot, S.L. 1986. On goodness in schools: Themes of empowerment. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 63(3): 9-28.
9. Macy, G., Neal, J.C., and Waner, K.K. 1998. Harder than I thought: A qualitative study of the implementation of a total quality management approach to business education. *Innovative Higher Education*, 23(1): 27-46.
10. Northeastern University 1997. Experiential education in the college of arts and sciences.
11. Praetzel, G.D., and Curcio, J. 1996. Making study abroad a reality for all students. *International Advances in Economic Research*, 2(2): 174-182.
12. Schmidt, K. 1998. Applying the four principles of total quality management to the classroom. *Tech Directions*, 58(1): 16-18.
13. Scrabec, Q. 2000. A quality education is not customer driven. *Journal of Education for Business*, 75(5): 298-300.
14. Short, P.M. 1994. Empowering students: Variables impacting the effort. *Education*, 114(4): 503-518.

Notes