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Huntsman Post

More Than 100 Students Travel to Six Countries on Global Learning Experiences in Spring 2013



By Vijay R. Kannan, executive director of International Programs

What do the Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer, Nike, the Reserve Bank of India (India's 'Fed'), and Toyota have in common?

They are all organizations visited by Huntsman School students over spring break 2013. Last month, an unprecedented one hundred and two Huntsman School students participated in a record seven faculty-led Global Learning Experiences (GLEs) in six countries on three continents. Six of the GLEs were components of graduate programs in business administration and human resource management, while the seventh was created to provide an opportunity for those who simply wanted to gain meaningful professional and cultural experience.

Each program included between eight and ten professional engagements at both private sector organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs.) The visits and discussions gave students the opportunity to learn about the unique characteristics of different national environments, and how these shape business, economic, and social activity. For example, students in China learned about the impact that increasing labor and real estate rates and a shortage of senior management talent are having on the Chinese economy, as well as on China's attractiveness as a manufacturing location. In South Africa, students saw first-hand how organizations and their leadership continue to be impacted by the legacy of the apartheid era. In India, students discovered that despite the country's recent economic rise, the government and the power of democracy are viewed by some as an obstacle to continued economic growth.

In each program the students' experiences were integrated into a broader academic framework. Today, the Huntsman School packages all of its GLEs with coursework that is designed to provide students with the contextual knowledge needed to process in-country learning. In addition, students complete assignments that tie the various components of their global learning together, so that its impact lasts well beyond their return home.

Five years ago, a Huntsman School student's spring break academic experience might have meant doing homework in Logan, Price, or Ephraim. Today it can mean immersion in the realities of business in London, Tokyo, Shanghai, or Sao Paolo.