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MBA students get a taste of new culture with class trip to England

Traveling to Europe and meeting with Harley Davidson executives in England was an eye-opening experience for Oakland University Masters of Business Administration students who traveled this summer as part of the MGT 681 Globalization Impact-Case Study Europe class.

The class prepared for the two-week trip by reading books about European culture and gaining insight from numerous guest speakers who shared their international business travel experiences.

"There is an extreme difference between reading about a topic and actually experiencing it. None of the other classes afforded us the opportunity to travel abroad and meet with business executives, which definitely prepares you for the real world in a much different way than a classroom does," said MBA student Dollie Stoianov.

As an assignment before the trip, students researched Harley Davidson and created a marketing plan for its new European motorcycle. Once in England, students had the unique opportunity to compare their ideas to the company's actual marketing plan.

Stoianov said the meeting was humbling. "Our research could have never prepared us for that meeting. The most important thing I took away was the difference between doing research and actually immersing yourself in the environment and culture," she said.

"We realized our ideas were not on par with theirs, as we failed to consider the difference in culture," said Kacey Dittmer, MBA student.

The course "Globalization Impact-Case Study Europe," was created in 1999 by Frank Cardimen, adjunct professor, when he recognized the importance and impact of the emerging globalization in the business world.

"In the late 1980s and early 1990s, I saw blank stares from graduate students when I talked about globalization. Most of students hadn't traveled, didn't understand cultural differences or the differences in management styles," Cardimen said. "I wanted to give them a picture of how other countries do business in order to succeed as an American company doing business in Europe."

That knowledge is even more relevant today, as the global marketplace is making an impact on every business, in every industry.

Derek Weyand, a post-master's certificate student, has been promoted to the market development manager of Mexico at Attica Hydraulics since taking the trip to Europe. "It was great being dropped in a different culture and getting exposed to different industries," he said.

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SUMMARY

Class trip to England offers a real cultural experience and the chance to explore the impact of emerging globalization in the business world for MBA students.

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