Globalizing the MBA

November 20, 2008

When Ian Furman started to research MBA programs, he targeted schools with strong international programs, especially in Latin America. In the end, he chose Freeman over larger schools, and his main reason was the Global MBA program.

"I didn't see any other school that offered the same breadth and experience," says Furman, who after graduation hopes to work for a multinational company doing business in Latin America. "The Global MBA is one of the major reasons I decided to apply to Tulane."

Since its launch last year, the Freeman School's Global MBA has quickly become one of the Freeman School's most exciting new initiatives. The program, a joint venture of Tulane and three prestigious Latin American universities, was established to enable MBA and Executive MBA students interested in working in the Americas to expand their international experience. The curriculum features six courses delivered in six different countries with a class of students drawn from the four institutions. Each of the courses emphasizes global business strategy, international team building and leadership, and each incorporates content specific to the country in which it is taught, including executive speakers, site visits and cases based on local companies.

"What we're doing is leveraging all the international activity we've had over the years and trying to pull it into one program," says John Trapani. "The idea is to globalize the MBA."

While the current Global MBA classes will visit Mexico City, Bogota, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, Paris and New Orleans as part of the program, Trapani says he's been working to develop relationships with new institutions in other business regions of the world. Recent agreements struck with two Indian business schools, Globsyn Business School and XLRI, will enable Freeman to deliver future Global MBA courses in India as well as in Singapore and Dubai, locations where XLRI operates satellite campuses.

"We're trying to establish a network of partner institutions which give us access to the world marketplace for the purpose of educating our students," Trapani says.

The Global MBA is also becoming the new model for delivering other international programs at the Freeman School. Trapani says the Asia Executive MBA program, one of the Freeman School's longest running international programs, has been reorganized as a Global MBA program. Instead of taking their classes in Taiwan or Shanghai, Asian executives will now travel to locations around the world for their classes, jointing other Global MBA cohorts whenever possible.

When the Global MBA cohort travels to Madrid next summer, for example, the Asia Executive MBA class will join them for a class on international management.

"Combining the Global MBA with the Asia EMBA is a perfect strategy because all three groups of students-Americans, Latin Americans and Asians-are interested in a broader international experience," says Trapani. "For our students, the quality of the program is really going to expand dramatically."

Trapani adds that Executive MBA programs offered in partnership with Catholic University of Peru in Lima and ITAM in Mexico City will also intersect with the Global MBA and the Asian Executive MBA programs.

"We're trying to get as much overlap as we can," Trapani says. "You've got students being brought together who otherwise might never have any contact with each other. That is where the real value comes in, and that is what the Global MBA concept is all about."