Unique Global experiences deliver diversity and experiential learning with impact

USA-Croatia Exchange

Leveraging campuses in Dubrovnik and Zagreb, RIT Croatia delivers unique global experiences, while offering every class in English. Cohorts of RIT Rochester and RIT Croatia students embark in semester-long exchange programs. Students spend six weeks at RIT Croatia and then six more at RIT in Rochester. Within each country, the students complete two accelerated courses and embark on several fieldtrips and excursions.

Furthermore, the students split into three multi-national groups, to work on projects with real businesses. This past year, each group worked with a Chinese firm studying the robot market, a startup seeking overseas sales, and Rochester Optical. Each culminated with the students presenting at Imagine RIT, an annual innovation and creativity festival at Rochester Institute of Technology’s main campus. Enrolled students automatically qualify for an International Business minor.

International business professor, Dr. Zhi Tang, noted how effective the students were for the product Egghat (swimming headwear). “She approached us, having only designed an English-USA website, but with only about half of her sales overseas,” Tang said. “The students assisted with marketing the product internationally. They even discovered a new industry and use for the product, for skiers.” Each group’s work entailed analyzing a foreign market and taking into account real considerations of a business seeking to expand abroad.

Students grow experiencing differences in international viewpoints

Students in the program learned firsthand the differences in interpersonal dynamics between both cultures. Dr. Tang pointed to American students experiencing how candid Croatian students can be when providing feedback. Tang emphasized how critical that is for aspiring International Business professionals. “You cannot teach those things, you have to experience that.”

International Consulting in Johannesburg, South Africa

Each year, Saunders Executive MBA students participate in an eight to ten day international seminar overseas. Each cohort travels to a new destination to explore the international business climate.

Students experience culture and tour various companies - typically businesses who epitomize the business climate or conditions of that specific country.

Before departure, students analyze different company’s challenges and opportunities, and conduct research on the industry. “Throughout the trip students learn the challenges of doing business in that country and the specific implications for their consulting firm,” said Jeff Davis, Associate Director, EMBA programs.

“Students combine their learning from International Business, primary and secondary research, and their experiences within the country. Back home, at the end of the semester, they present their solutions in a paper and presentation to their assigned company’s leadership.”

Jeff W. Davis
Associate Director, EMBA Programs

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Interchangeable business exchange programs with BJTU in Weihai, China

The first joint program established between Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) and RIT was the 2+2 degree program. “For Chinese students ‘2+2’ means studying two years in their home country and then coming over here,” said Dr. John Tu, Saunders’ Senior Associate Dean and liaison between the schools. “RIT students can go to BJTU as well.” If two years sounds too long, students can choose to pursue a semester-long student exchange program instead.

There is also the BS in Management Information Systems (MIS) offered at BJTU’s satellite in Weihai and an MS in Entrepreneurship and Innovative Ventures at their Beijing campus. Now recognized as RIT China, these programs feature Saunders business curricula where “students in the MIS program get two MIS degrees,” said Tu, “from BJTU and from RIT.” In fall 2018, the program will see its 4th incoming class, rounding out the four-year program’s enrollment at about 450 students.

A unique global opportunity for Saunders students

By studying at RIT China through any of Saunders’ programs, you get all the extra benefits of a whole new experience at a lower cost than a semester at RIT. “The classes are the same on each campus, so there’s really no reason not to go,” Tu expressed. “Some students have the fear ‘oh I’ve never been abroad, Europe may be easier.’ However, once you go there you just love it, and can’t get enough of it.”

Studying abroad at RIT China really goes a long way to teaching students how to become a global citizen. Tu emphasizes how most companies now compete at a global scale. Therefore, it is increasingly critical to prepare oneself by seeing other cultures, as well as experiencing how students abroad are learning and working.

“All MIS courses at RIT China in Weihai, are taught in English by faculty we send there. You experience studying abroad while you’re taking the same classes you would at RIT.”

Saunders College student served as Student Ambassador at BJTU

Over the course of the spring 2017 semester, Megan Cornelius, Accounting and MIS double major, worked with students in RIT China’s Management Information Systems (MIS) program. While at the Weihai campus she helped set up a student government, plus a protocol for establishing clubs on their campus.

Megan also assisted students in understanding cultural differences and in practicing their English language skills. “I would help the English Debate Club improve their debate speaking skills,” Cornelius said. MIS courses at BJTU are available in English for Saunders students studying there, but Cornelius found herself working across languages because of her additional initiatives. Cornelius found it incredibly rewarding. “It has been very interesting,” she said. “I find it very intriguing, especially when I am the bridge across two languages; like between Russian and Chinese students.”

Tu recalled talking with Cornelius about her semester abroad and how important it is for such experiences to remind students of today’s interconnected global marketplace. “It’s not just US students competing for jobs,” he said. “They’re competing with many other students that are also hardworking and smart.”