



International Informant

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Informing you about Oklahoma State's international trade and development efforts

Calendar of Events

- Fall 2011: Wes Watkins Distinguished Lectureship

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Oklahoma State University:
Center for International
Trade and Development

A Message from Dr. Mike Dicks

August proved to be another month of economic stagnation as demonstrated by the Conference Board's Index of Leading Indicators (LEI). The Index rose by .3 percent and followed increases of .3 percent in June and .6 percent in July. The LEI is the indicators used to predict the advance of a recession and these increases would tend to indicate that expansion still continues without sign of a recession in the near future. But a deeper look at the (LEI) tells a different story. The LEI is composed of 10 components and only four of these components showed positive gains in August, by far the worst showing over the last two years. The most critical of the components, manufacturers' new orders, average weekly initial claims for unemployment, and consumer expectations were all down, indicating a weak demand for goods and services.

Washington continues to stall in talks aimed at balancing a budget that is roughly \$1.5 trillion in the red. Whether they agree to tax hikes, spending reductions or both, the net impact in the short term is a reduction in demand for

goods and services and thus a further contraction of the economy.

During the last three months the US has also posted a \$150 billion trade deficit with total imports of nearly \$700 billion. This would indicate that the US economy is losing roughly \$2.8 trillion per year in potential economic activity, nearly double the size of the budget deficit.

One solution to the budget crises is to generate increased economic activity (and thus federal revenues) through increased exports and/or increased the domestic production of goods and services to substitute for imported goods. The Center for International Trade and Development is working on two different approaches to reduce the US trade deficit. First, we are involved with a large variety of study and



A Message from Dr. Dicks Con't.

service abroad and internship opportunities. These opportunities are important to create a cadre of young professionals literate in cultural diversity and awareness of world markets. Students involved in study abroad courses become aware of US products missing in foreign markets as well as foreign products both missing and available in US markets. This awareness is the first step in identifying existing market potential. Students involved in service abroad courses are challenged to use local materials to produce technologies that provide services similar to those they use to in the US (e.g. water storage, filtering, and transport, sewage treatment systems, refrig-

eration and food production and preservation). Many of these innovations have the potential for commercial application.

Second, we are training Certified Global Business Professionals (CGBP) by providing the tools necessary to conduct business in international business and the practical experience to have the confidence to assist US expand their markets overseas. Many of the students involved in the CGBP program are international students who already have an understanding of cultural practices in other regions of the world. As the CGBP program expands and the graduates of the program gain experience they will not only be able to assist in

expanding exports of US products and services, but also to help US business develop new products and services that may meet the needs of other countries.

Both of the trade and development efforts will require a long term commitment to have a measurable impact on the US trade and budget imbalances. If you share these goals or have skills to offer we would love to hear from you. Greater gains be achieved through cooperation than by concentrating on market share.

Meet Natalia, the Newest Member of the Center

My name is Natalia Kovtun and I am originally from Ukraine. With my passion, motivation and desire for self-improvement, I earned an academic and athletic scholarship to the U.S. My expe-

rience as a part of the nationally-ranked Oklahoma State University track and cross country team taught me a lot about how to communicate well with others, how to value hard work and to enjoy being part of a winning team.

Recently, I graduated from the OSU International Studies Master's program. My areas of study included International Business as well as International Trade and Development. My great passions are languages, traveling, running, meeting new people and discovering new cultures. I am fluent in Russian, English, Ukrainian and intermediate Spanish and I have

visited several countries throughout Europe, Asia and Latin and Central America.

My desire to work on the international level comes from my passion for being able to make positive differences in people's social, economic and political lives. Subjects such as international business, trade and development intrigue me because of the idea of helping trade to flow as freely as possible for economic development and well-being. It also coincides with my aspiration for promoting everyone as a citizen of the global community.

Natalia Kovtun



OSU's International Experience Options

In an effort to increase student's meaningful exposure to the world outside the United States, faculty and staff at Oklahoma State University have developed or identified many programs to get students to travel abroad. Most brochures promoting OSU, campus bulletin boards, and lectures in introductory courses all promote international experiences and the value they add to ones overall education, cultural awareness, and potential employability.

The variety of international opportunities available is actually tremendous. And, given that most of us do not have unlimited resources (money), choosing what to do, where to go and for how long should be given some careful thought. An overseas "vacation" with my boy/girlfriend sounds like fun but is that the best use of my time, does it help in my personal development, and does it take advantage of skills I have and what I might offer to others?

There are three basic varieties of organized or formal overseas experiences that students pursue. These are short-term study abroad, semester or academic year abroad, and service abroad. I will briefly describe these below with the qualification that there are many variations on these basics and your imagination with the guidance of a knowledgeable faculty advisor can open your mind to all the opportunities.

Short-term study abroad most often refers to formal three-credit courses that involve travel to a foreign country with a group of students under the leadership of a faculty member. These courses may be offered at any time of the year but are most often planned for semester breaks or just following spring semester or just before fall semester. The length of travel varies but most are from 10 to 20 days. Some are very intense and require con-

siderable study on campus prior to and following the travel. In others, the work is confined to the period of travel. Most often, short-term study abroad courses are designed to satisfy the International ("I") credit required of all undergraduate OSU students. For many students, a short-term study abroad course is their first time to travel internationally and provides experience and confidence about the details of international travel such as passports, visas, customs, language, foreign currency exchange, and navigation in a country with minimal language skills. The cost of short-term study courses varies greatly and many students have been very resourceful in seeking and accumulating funds to support study abroad.

Semester or academic year abroad involves enrolling in a semester or more of formal coursework at a foreign university. Participants may pay OSU tuition and fees and receive resident credit for courses abroad or they pay a private program provider and receive transfer credit. Regardless, careful planning is necessary to insure that the courses and credit received will apply to the individuals degree requirements here at OSU. OSU has an office and staff who are trained and well prepared to assist students in planning and executing semester abroad experiences. As you might expect, many students who enrolled in short-term study abroad courses catch the international bug and then plan semester abroad opportunities. The language skills required for semester abroad varies greatly and this is one of the details the Study Abroad personnel will assist students in planning. Costs also vary greatly and many students find that the overall cost for reciprocal exchange is about the same as a semester here at OSU plus airfare. It is clear that a semester abroad enables students to be more immersed

in the culture of the host school and country. This is of course one of the primary objectives of the semester abroad program!

Service abroad is increasingly popular and can be a very rewarding and life changing experience. I like to think of service abroad as a mini-Peace Corps experience. Basically, service abroad involves providing a critical service to others overseas. There are too many variations of service to begin to describe them all but good examples would include; assisting rural communities in digging and securing water wells, providing learning experiences for AIDS orphaned children, examining the nutritional needs of families, and assisting in any aspect of improving food security. The key issue to consider in service abroad is the advanced training students may need prior to the experience to insure that the student can truly be of service and not, in fact, be a burden to the host family, community or organization. Service abroad experiences may be organized through faculty members who have developed relationships abroad, foreign governments, or a wide variety of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and service learning organizations. Service abroad experiences may or may not require enrolling in a formal course or to satisfy an academic internship requirement. Even if formal coursework is not required, some students do want to have a record on their transcript of having completed a service abroad experience and this is easily accomplished through a special problems course with a faculty advisor as the instructor.

There are many variations to these basic international opportunities and it should not be at all difficult to seek and find faculty and staff who can help you develop a plan.

Dr. Ed Miller

An International Service Experience in Argentina

Along with two other Oklahoma State University students and Dr. Henneberry, Jake Walker traveled to Cuyin Manzano, Argentina this summer.

“It was the best experience of my career at OSU, I learned so much from it and would love to go back if I had the chance.”

Jake Walker is pursuing his Masters of Agriculture with a concentration in International Agriculture and is set to graduate in December 2011. He first obtained his Bachelor of Science from OSU in Animal Science with a production option in May 2010. His love of agriculture developed through the raising and showing of beef cattle and goats.

“Choosing Argentina for my internship was an easy decision for me. I was able to couple my love of agriculture with my area of academic focus to help improve agriculture practices in a part of the world that is not nearly as advanced as we are,” Walker said.

Cuyin Manzano is located within the Patagonia Region of Argentina. It is situated within a valley and the terrain is extremely rocky, making it ideal for raising sheep and goats. There is also a strong presence of cattle within this region of the country. The nearest town to purchase goods is 30km; therefore people living within Cuyin Manzano must be self sufficient to a certain degree.

Walker spent 7 weeks living in Cuyin Manzano and working with the community on their Livestock Development Program. Approximately 60 people live within this region and maintain 550 head of cattle, 100 horses, 300 sheep and 300 goats. The cattle consist mainly of replacement heifers and goats, which are raised for their hair.

“My daily tasks included feeding and cleaning of stalls, maintaining horses which were used for general farm work because they did not have

advanced agricultural technologies such as tractors and garden work. We helped them develop a compost pile for their garden, which was a great accomplishment because they were having trouble getting vegetables to grow. They had never heard of a compost pile, so it was great to see American practices being not only being utilized but work successfully for them.”

Walker also got the chance to participate in slaughtering a cow, assistant in a branding session and help with the vaccination of sheep and goats.

“There are no fences in Cuyin Manzano so every single animal must be branded in order to identify which animals belong to who. Brandings occur four times a year to make sure any new animals in inventory are identifiable.”

During his 7-week stay in Cuyin Manzano, Walker lived in a house without electricity. Electricity was provided via generator from 6-10 p.m. daily. Water for both drinking and bathing came from streams that ran through the town. Water had to be heated by fire because water heaters do not exist there.

“While living conditions were not up to American standards, they were not nearly as bad as I anticipated before arriving in Cuyin Manzano. However, there was a shortage of natural gas in Argentina during my stay, making us unable to cook with the stove in the house. We had to cook everything by fire.”

Also during his stay, Walker experienced the eruption of the Puyehue-Cordon Caulle volcano in Chile. Despite this snafu in his trip, Walker would return in a heartbeat.

“Traveling to Argentina was a wonderful experience. It opened my eyes to the international perspective on agriculture firsthand and I would recommend that everyone do an international service-learning trip who has the opportunity.”

Upon completion of his masters, Walker wants to become involved in an animal science/agriculture based organization that does business internationally. Specifically, he would like to focus on international marketing and/or export sales.

