

SOM trips offer international exposure

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[The Business School of Renmin University of China](#)

From Israel to Indonesia and from China to Chile, students at the Yale School of Management ventured to a variety of international destinations over spring break, studying global commercial environments, touring local businesses and shaking hands with the who's who of industry and government.

Throughout the academic year, the SOM organizes a number of short international trips through which students can fulfil the Global Studies Requirement of the school's master's degree program. During spring break, students may choose from the five-day, biannual "Global Network Week" mini-courses or the nine-day "International Experience" trips, which run every March, to satisfy the requirement and gain insights into international business.

The School of Management has organized Global Network Weeks since March 2013 and the International Experience trips since 2007. As the school's enrollment has risen, there has been an uptick in the number of students participating in both programs. This spring, 750 students from 17 different schools participated in various Global Network Week trips and 230 students participated in seven different International Experience courses.

According to Managing Director of Global Initiatives at the SOM Camino de Paz, the Global Network Weeks aim to provide students an opportunity to learn in a different country and to interact with other master's students from other schools. Member business schools of the Global Network of Advanced Management, spearheaded by the SOM, collaborate to coordinate these trips and host incoming delegates from partner institutions.

"I think [the Global Network Weeks] went really well," de Paz said. "Each school offers a module in which they have expertise, and students benefit from that knowledge that is not available at their home schools. It is always insightful [for students] to learn about master's degree experiences different from their own in other countries and with different programs."

Although all 17 schools that participated in this spring's iteration of the Global Network Weeks had also participated previously, de Paz said she hopes the business schools new to the Global Network of Advanced Management — SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan, Strathmore Business School in Nairobi and UNSW Business School in Sydney — will join the initiative in the future.

According to Kristen Hammar, the senior associate director of academic affairs and student life at the SOM, the purpose of the school's Global Studies Requirement is to offer students exposure to complex issues facing business and society in different regions of the world.

"The [International Experience] trips went exceptionally well from all perspectives, which I believe our course evaluations will reveal," Hammar said.

She pointed out that the SOM this year introduced a new type of trip, the Cape Town Design Practicum. The Practicum differed from traditional International Experience trips, which generally focus on business meetings in the host country, in that it was centered on a sustainable-design project.

Nathanael Whipple SOM '18 participated in the International Experience trip to India, which involved cultural excursions and 27 visits to company and government offices, including a meeting with former President of India Pranab Mukherjee, a tour of a Bollywood studio and a dinner reception with the owner of one of India's largest real estate developers. Whipple, who had previously attended a Global Network Week course in Istanbul, said his experiences gave him enough exposure to allow him to feel confident about conducting basic business management tasks in those regions and avoiding major stumbling blocks.

He added that he was impressed with the tremendous effort the SOM makes to ensure that students on the trips meet with leaders in the business, government and nonprofit sectors, that they are safe and that they are able to experience local culture.

The SOM also hosted two Global Network Week mini-courses in New Haven — one on behavioral science and another on design and innovation. Rodrigo Canales, a professor of

organizational behavior at the SOM who taught sessions on design and innovation, said his students were “highly motivated” and “impressive.” He added that one of the highlights for students participating in Global Network Weeks is the opportunity to learn from one another and develop a network that they can leverage in the future while also learning to work across cultural, geographic and linguistic boundaries.

Four teaching assistants for two courses at the SOM said in interviews with the News that they valued the opportunity to interact with management students from around the world.

“I had a great experience meeting students from across the network, exchanging experiences in business schools as well as personal stories,” said Afiq Mohd Nasir SOM ’18, who was a teaching assistant for the course on Behavioral Science and supervised participants’ work for Synchrony Financial, a consumer financial services company headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut.

Nasir added that the Global Network Weeks could improve by expanding the group of participating schools and the range of student backgrounds represented as well as by organizing more company trips and opportunities to engage directly with industry players.

Vicki van der Westhuizen SOM ’18, who was a teaching assistant for the design and innovation course, had previously participated in several international trips through the SOM, including a global social entrepreneurship course in India, which inspired her to return to her home country of South Africa after graduating.

“As a TA, I got the opportunity to give back to the Global Network for Advanced Management community after exceptional prior experiences,” she said. “I made such wonderful connections through these programs and an added bonus is that it marries two of my passions, travelling and meeting interesting people.”

Upon matriculation to the SOM, master’s students are provided a Global Studies Account worth 10 days of international travel through an official School of Management program, provided that these trips satisfy the SOM’s Global Studies Requirement. According to Hammar, in the case of the International Experience trips, the Account funding is applied directly to the trip. Students are only responsible for their airfare and an average of one meal per day. In the case of the Global Network Weeks, de Paz said, students pay for their trip, and then the SOM reimburses them for five days at 50 percent of the per diem rates for meals and lodging, as determined by the U.S. Department of State.

School of Management students who cannot travel may fulfill the Global Studies Requirement through designated online courses.

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