

Prairie View International Business Digest

Center for International Business Education

Prairie View A&M University - College of Business

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Summer 2008 Field Trip to Mexico



The Prairie View A&M University Center for International Business Education (CIBE) organized a field trip to Mexico during May 18-25, 2008. The main goal of the trip was to enhance the experiential learning opportunities in our international business program. This was the 4th annual field trip to Mexico organized by the CIBE and

funded by the U.S. Department of Education (BIE grant).

The trip was attended by fourteen participants - six faculty members and six students from PVAMU and two high school teachers from Houston. Altogether, the group spent six days in Puebla and one day in Mexico City. The field activities in Mexico were organized by our partner university - *Universidad de las Americas (UDLA)* at Puebla, one of the finest private universities in Mexico.

The group attended daily lectures presented by UDLA faculty members on the Mexican economy and business environment, and visited several local businesses and cultural sites. The field activities in Puebla included visits to the pyramid ruins and the church of Our Lady of Remedies, a large textile factory (Providencia), a semi-automated automobile factory (Volkswagen), and two local handicraft (talavera and onyx) factories. In the evenings, the group explored downtown Cholula and Puebla, both of which featured main plazas surrounded by magnificent architecture, live entertainment, shops and restaurants.

While in Mexico City, the group visited the city square (*Zocalo*), National Cathedral, Presidential Palace, Parliament and a museum (*Museo del Templo Mayor*). This part of the trip provided us an international setting and some of the best cultural, political, culinary and sightseeing spots in all of Mexico.

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Editor's Note



Editor, Dr. Rahim Quazi

Greetings. It gives us immense pleasure to present to you the 16th issue of the *Prairie View International Business Digest*, an electronic quarterly newsletter produced by the Center for International Business Education at Prairie View A&M University.

The main section in this issue (*Summer 2008 Field Trip to Mexico*) presents an overview of our recently organized summer field trip to Mexico. The feature also presents excerpts from the participants' assessment of the trip and some photographs taken during the trip. The trip was funded by the Business and International Education (BIE) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The section on *Upcoming Events* presents a brief overview of upcoming events organized by the Center.

We hope you continue to find this e-newsletter a valuable channel for important information relating to international business. We do hope our efforts will inspire greater number of local firms to seek out new opportunities in international business. Should you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact us. We would also like to hear from you on the content of future issues of this newsletter. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rahim Quazi'.

Rahim Quazi, Ph.D.
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Upcoming Events

- A one-day training workshop for high school educators will be organized in early August. All participants will receive teaching tips and materials suitable for course and curriculum design, unit and lesson planning, a letter certifying participation in the training workshop that will satisfy 8 CPE hours, and travel stipends.
- A half-day educational field trip to the Port of Houston will be organized in early fall.
- The Center is purchasing new books and video cases on international business, which will be available for free public use.



Summer 2008 Field Trip to Mexico

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One of the biggest delights for us was to see the students interact with a new culture, try to come to terms with it and use their varying levels of Spanish to negotiate social and financial transactions. The students came away with a much better knowledge of Mexico, and several of them expressed an interest in studying abroad at UDLA. The field trip provided us with an opportunity to have a much better understanding and knowledge about Mexico and its economic challenges, business ethics, history, culture, and people. The trip was truly an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to broaden the participants' educational, cultural, and intellectual perspectives.



Participants Reflections

" To understand how global economies can successfully operate and prosper one must study macro- as well as microeconomics to see how businesses and countries interact with each other. The CIBE organized a very informative global business workshop for high school teachers earlier in the spring, which piqued my interest in learning more about international business. First-hand observations and targeted lectures were offered at the summer field trip.

Professors and guest speakers who are involved in research and policy-making in the area of Mexican economic development presented topics such as pre- and post-NAFTA events in Mexico, changes in economic policies, views and projections of the future for Mexico, and the needs and remedies for stimulating sluggish growth. I found the information to be enlightening and the chance to discuss the topics with the speakers to be most helpful in understanding the problems of Mexico's economy.

Learning of the Mexican culture and business practices during the trip was expected, but talking with economists, professors, and a variety of occupational workers was very interesting and informative. Factory workers, business managers, drivers, college students, and other workers provided plenty of discussions concerning lifestyle and standards of living. The professors were very interesting to talk with due to their assorted nationalities and culture. Many informal discussions during travel, while eating, and during leisure activities together was most educational and lent to better understanding of the motivations and histories of many cultures.

Overall the Mexico trip was very productive and enjoyable. I believe it has exposed me to new knowledge, understandings of global business, Mexico's economic development, and many varied cultural experiences that do not specifically lie solely in Mexico. I believe the experience will allow me to instill in my students the need for further education to build career knowledge and skills in whatever jobs they partake. Understanding the business climate and economic needs of countries will allow me to inform my students of the changes of international careers. Being exposed to cultural differences and similarities can be shared in my Business and Travel course I will continue to teach next year. I hope I can participate in a similar field trip again."

- Daniel Seibert
Career and Business Teacher, La Porte High School

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Participants Reflections

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" The trip to Mexico allowed me to see and experience a country and culture very different from the United States. The lectures were informative and interesting, but my primary interests were in exploring the culture and everyday lifestyle. Yes, it was a country rich in resources, history, culture, tradition and other very important fundamental aspects of life, but it was also a country with a lagging economy, high unemployment, poverty, and inferior infrastructures. Being there forced me to just appreciate Mexico for what it was and what it was not."

- Taryn Dunn

Undergraduate Student, PVAMU



" It was my first trip to Mexico (and Latin America) and has greatly widened my horizon. Apart from giving me the opportunity to have a much better understanding and knowledge about Mexico and its economic challenges, job opportunities, business ethics, environment, history, culture, people and food, the seven-day adventure has given me the opportunity to mingle with other group members. All of us have interacted well with the local culture. We managed to apply basic Spanish to bargain for prices and services with the local traders. The local environment has fascinated us and, in fact, three students in the group have decided to spend a semester studying abroad at UDLA in fall 2008. I feel this was overall a worthwhile trip."

- Dr. Gin Chong

Accounting Faculty, PVAMU



" I was impressed with the high level of organization that I had witnessed at the Volkswagen automobile factory and the Providencia textile factory. I was particularly impressed with the digital aspect of planning the catalog and working the website for Providencia. The Volkswagen factory was impressive for its use of technology and for the fact that automobiles are completely manufactured on site... The lectures cleared up a lot of doubts and misinformation that I had concerning the nature and effects of the NAFTA agreement and its evolution."

- Dr. John Sullivan

Foreign Languages Faculty, PVAMU



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Participants Reflections

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“ The Mexico field trip was very enlightening and educational. It has made me realize that each country has its advantages and disadvantages that we are not aware of unless we actually step out on their grounds. I would love to visit as many countries as possible to totally grasp each culture and its lifestyle. It will be a valuable experience for the rest of my life.”

- Jennifer Lopez
Undergraduate Student, PVAMU

“ The field trip was an amazing experience in a multitude of ways. The program allowed me to meet new people and learn about an entirely different culture to my own. This trip gave me a chance to look back on all I have accomplished since I graduated from university back in 2001: from teaching in Japan, to traveling through Asia, to studying in Australia. Being in Mexico reminded me how much I love visiting new places.



I was very impressed with the level of organization and the ease of each day's journey during the field trip in Mexico. The lectures each morning were very interesting and informative. During my master's degree, I mainly focused on the Asia-Pacific region. Thus the details of NAFTA and its effects on Mexico were all new to me. I felt just like a student again. I would highly recommend this field trip to anyone. I only hope that I will be able to experience such a fantastic trip in the future.”

- Carri Reisdorf
CTE Teacher, Sharpstown High School

“ I have always wanted to travel to different lands, meet different people and explore new things. I wanted my first taste of this to be in Mexico. I chose Mexico because it is our neighbor and this nation speaks my favorite language - Spanish. When I found out about the field trip program and study abroad program in Mexico, I jumped right on it. The field trip program was absolutely awesome and also frustrating in some ways. I learned a great deal and I think it has started the training of a well-rounded business professional in me.”

-Victoria Davenport
Undergraduate Student, PVAMU

“ The field trip to Mexico was a success as it was last year. The opportunity that the faculty and students had interacting with the native population and the faculty at the *Universidad de las Americas* was fantastic. Besides, the field trip provided the participants with the awareness and practical knowledge of business in Mexico. So, by combining the lectures and the field trips, we experienced the theory and practice of the business reality of the country. This trip made of us aware how the culture and the way of doing business is combined into an interesting component, different from that of the United States.”



- Dr. Robert Rodriguez
Foreign Languages Faculty, PVAMU



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
EXPANDING EXCELLENCE • CHANGING LIVES

Vision and Mission Statements

The vision of the College of Business is to be a premier business institution that empowers students to realize their dreams through an excellent education.

The mission of the COB is to provide a diverse student body with a business education that produces readily employable professionals who are productive, ethical, entrepreneurial, and prepared to succeed in a competitive global economy. The College is committed to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and service. We will achieve these through an outstanding faculty and alliances with stakeholders. While undergraduate education remains our primary focus, the COB aspires to expand its graduate programs. The student experience will be distinguished by personal attention, teamwork, leadership training, and an understanding of the link between business and society.

In the next issue:

**More in the world of
International Business.**

**Available in
September 2008**

If you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter, please contact Dr. Rahim Quazi in the College of Business at 936-261-9225 or via e-mail at rmquazi@pvamu.edu.

Visit our website at

<http://www.pvamu.edu/business>
