Developing Green Leaders in New Costa Rica Study Abroad Experience

From Jan. 3-13, 21 JCPenney Leadership Associates took Price College’s MGT 3133 leadership course in Santa Ana, Costa Rica, with the director of the Leadership Program, Cindy Lopez. In addition to focusing on leadership theory and practice, students learned about protecting the environment, “green” business, and its relevance to leadership. Also, students visited the Poas Volcano, Doka Coffee Farm (a Starbucks provider), the National Institute of Biodiversity and the company, Nature Air. The most exciting part of the Costa Rican adventure included an all-day, off-the-beaten path, rainforest adventure where the group hiking through muddy trails in the forest and completed a series of four zip lines, varying in height and speed, in the cold rain. While in Costa Rica, students kept a journal regarding their observations and perceptions about their new environment and what they were learning. At the end of the course, students were required to put together a personal leadership development plan intended to help them process and organize all that they learned about leadership and themselves into a useful tool.

On one of many corporate visits in Costa Rica, JCPenney Associates visit Doka Estate Coffee Farm, which sells 60 percent of what they produce to Starbucks.

Eighth Annual Bruzzy Westheimer Presentation Competition Awards Student Teams

At this year’s Bruzzy Westheimer Presentation Competition, coordinated through the Business Communication Center and open to all Price students, 14 teams composed of both undergraduates and graduates delivered presentations on the theme, “What is so great about Price College?” Students were scored on their presentation delivery skills, and all teams took home cash awards, with the first-place team, consisting of John Paul Albert, Kristina Sutton and Chris Maupin, winning $4,200. Judges for the event included Carl Gibson, COO of Inoveon Corp.; Lloyd Hardin, attorney with McAfee and Taft; E. Scott Henley, president of Henley Associates Inc.; Donald “Pat” Roane, chair of the OU Department of Naval Science; and Mary Stephens, executive assistant to the dean, Price College. The Business Communication Center thanks Bruzzy Westheimer and all of the judges for their time, energy and support of this annual event.

Full-time MBA students, from left, John Paul Albert, Kristina Sutton and Chris Maupin are awarded first place in the Bruzzy Westheimer Presentation Competition.

Washington or Wall Street: Which Is the Tougher Environmental Cop?

Gary Emery, Oklahoma Bankers’ Chair in Finance, organized a forum Dec. 10 titled “Washington or Wall Street: Which Is the Tougher Environmental Cop?” The forum focused on the impact, fairness and effectiveness of fines versus market reactions for guiding corporate behavior as it relates to the environment. Featured speaker was Clifford Smith of the University of Rochester, who has studied these issues from a finance perspective. Joining him in the panel discussion following his talk were Mark Sharfman, director of the Division of Management and Entrepreneurship and professor of strategic management; Brian Cantrell, chief financial officer of Alliance Holdings; and Chitru Fernando, director of the Price College Business Energy Solutions Center and Michael P Price Professor of Finance, who moderated the discussion.

The program focused on the Gulf oil spill and prompted calls for the re-regulation of large parts of the energy industry. Many of the people calling for a tougher stance on environmental protection, however, are unaware of or choose to ignore the severe penalties the financial market itself applies to companies that violate society’s norms. Penalties the market applied to BP include large losses in market value, significantly higher credit costs and changes in leadership.

The sponsors for the event included the Oklahoma Bankers’ Chair in Finance, the Price College Business Energy Solutions Center and the Price College Center for Financial Studies.

The panel and moderator, including, from left, Chitru Fernando, Brian Cantrell, Clifford Smith and Mark Sharfman, talk to faculty and staff during the Washington vs. Wall Street discussion held in Oklahoma Memorial Union.
Mel Penn served not only as Price College's first Student Support Center director and MBA corporate relations executive, but also was considered a friend and mentor to thousands of people over the span of his life. Penn died on Feb. 15 after a courageous battle with cancer and will be sorely missed.

He was born in Tulsa in 1950 and grew up with his parents and triplet brothers and sister in Wagoner, Okla. Penn always had a love of music that would grow from playing in the Wagoner High School band to leading the University of Oklahoma Pride as drum major and graduate assistant. While at OU, Penn earned both his bachelor's and master's of business administration degrees.

After graduation, Penn worked at Kerr-McGee Corp., first in their Oklahoma City office and then Atlanta, where he met his future wife, Betsy. In 1991, they moved to Perth, Western Australia. There, he was promoted to director of operations for the Tiwest Joint Venture, which involved Kerr-McGee Chemical Corp. and Minproc Engineering. After three years, they returned to the United States and Penn served as director of total quality management for the company. He then had the opportunity to return to the college he loved so much, and in 1997 he began the growth of the Student Support Center to what it is today. He and Tom Greenlee, director of MBA external relations and career management, together provided mentoring, career planning and corporate development services to MBA students.

One of the many accomplishments of Penn's career at Price College involved the establishment of the Price Scholars program, which provides internships in New York and classes at NYU's Stern School of Business during the summer for select MBA students. A major achievement in Penn's career at OU was being presented with the Otis Sullivant Award for Perceptivity in April 2010. This honor is accorded to a faculty or staff member, student, alumnus or alumna, or community resident who has made a significant contribution to the university.

“Mel was a great OU ambassador,” says Dean Ken Evans. “He was vital in helping Price College establish our MBA Price Scholars Program and in taking this same concept to London, England. Not only did he work on assisting students in job placement, but he was vital to the overall MBA professional development experience. He will be sorely missed by students, corporate recruiters, alumni and the faculty and staff of the college.”

Accounting and Finance senior and OU offensive lineman Brian Lepak has been selected for the 49-member ESPN the Magazine Academic All-America Football Team by the College Sports Information Directors of America. He carries a 3.86 grade-point average and has played in 10 games last season at both guard and center. He is the recipient of the John F.Y. Stambaugh Outstanding Accounting Senior Award and is a JCPenney Leadership Associate.

“When you consider how many players there are nationally, and that only 49 make the team, it’s quite an accomplishment. He has been a solid contributor to our program and has maintained a good balance between football and the other aspects of college life.”
Leon Price, professor emeritus of management information systems, was inducted in October as one of 11 honorees into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame. The Oklahoma Higher Education Heritage Society recognizes outstanding teachers who have excelled in higher education and who have encouraged others to contribute to the economic development and quality of life in Oklahoma. Since 1994, more than 150 educational leaders have been inducted. Price is the first professor from the Michael F. Price College of Business to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Price's career began with the U.S. Navy, where he worked on some of the first administrative computer systems available at that time. He then worked at the Federal Aviation Administration in several capacities while also pursuing a bachelor's degree in management at OU. Price later earned an MBA at the University of Tulsa and a doctorate in business administration from OU. As an assistant professor, he began building the MIS program and published extensively during his career. He co-authored an MIS textbook and presented papers at numerous scholarly conferences. Price has taught more than 27,000 students over the years and has received an unprecedented number of teaching awards, including five Outstanding Faculty Member honors in Price College, the university's AMOCO Teaching Award, the Burlington Northern Teaching Award, five Southwestern Bell Master Mentor awards, the Exxon Teaching Fellow, the Conoco Teaching Award, four Athletics Department Teaching awards and four Delta Sigma Pi Teaching Awards. In 1995, he and Richard Van Horn, president emeritus of the University of Oklahoma, founded the Center for Management Information Systems Studies. Price currently serves as the executive director of CMISS, which has 22 member companies and continues to fund MIS faculty research and MIS student scholarships.
**OU alumnus, Rod Roberts, Surprises Former Professor with $1 Million Commitment in His Honor**

Rod Roberts returned to his alma mater for more than a visit with his former teacher and mentor, V. Ross Brown. He also came to campus to make a $1 million commitment to the Energy Management program in Brown’s honor. The V. Ross Brown Professor of Industry program endowment will assist in recruiting industry experts to teach, advise and mentor Energy Management students. “No greater gift can a teacher have than to play a role in a student’s accomplishments,” said Brown. “To be recognized in this extraordinary way by Rod is very moving for me, but it is also a tribute to all those landmen who have worked over the years to establish and continue to support our Energy Management program.”

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**Awareness Raised Through the Inaugural Women and Business Leadership Conference**

The Women and Business Leadership Conference was designed to prepare the men and women in the Price College of Business and surrounding community in understanding some of the unique issues facing women in today's organizations. The conference took place Sept. 10 and was composed of four keynote speakers who provided their individual thoughts, followed by a panel discussion. The speakers included Claudia San Pedro, vice president of investor relations and brand strategies for Sonic Corp.; Lori-Scott McWilliams, regional managing partner for Deloitte Financial Advisory Services; Jill Hughes, director of development for the University of Oklahoma’s College of Engineering; and Sherri Coale, OU head women’s basketball coach, who provided the luncheon keynote. Beverly Carmichael, former human resources executive for Ticketmaster and Southwest Airlines and adjunct faculty member, served as moderator. The conference included both a formal and informal discussion of timely and relevant topics and served as a learning opportunity with the hopes of encouraging all those who attended to be more aware of the different dynamics in the workplace.

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**Gift From Winnifred Freshour Provides for Unique Entrepreneurship Study Abroad Experience**

Winnifred Freshour has committed a $100,000 gift to create an endowment to provide scholarships to deserving students participating in the Price College Center for Entrepreneurship’s Study Abroad program in Arezzo, Italy. Recipients of this new scholarship will be able to study in the four-week entrepreneurship program in the Tuscany region of Italy, which includes visits to Rome, Florence and Venice. The students receive six hours of OU credit while learning from OU faculty in English and visit leading Italian manufacturers, museums, and numerous historical and cultural sites. “International communities will benefit as well by the presence of students from Oklahoma, who will spread good will from the American heartland while studying abroad,” Freshour commented.
**Energy Executive Management Program Provides New Perspective to Energy Industry Employees**

Price College offered an Energy Executive Management Program Feb. 28 to March 4 that was geared toward those who have been technically trained in the energy industry, but lack expertise on the business side. The program is designed to help fill the gap and equip participants with the knowledge to develop their business acumen, strengthen their strategic decision-making skills, and update and expand their management skills to lead their companies to greater success.

The intensive, five-day program to accelerate the development of high-potential managers and prepare them for advancement into senior management combines lectures, class discussion, small-group projects and case analyses. Participants studied such business areas as economics, mergers and acquisitions, corporate risk hedging, legal studies and corporate strategy. They also took part in an interactive process of exchanging new ideas and best practices with faculty and industry specialists from different energy companies. The program was such a success that plans are being made to offer the same program in the fall.

**Williams CEO Stress Importance of Diversity as Price College’s Distinguished Speaker**

Delivering one of his final speeches as CEO of Williams before his retirement in December, Steve Malcolm spoke to students, faculty, alumni and friends of the college Oct. 20 about why his company and other businesses invest in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. Malcolm stated that embracing diversity encourages authenticity and allows employees to be comfortable with who they are, which in turn creates a positive and more productive work environment.

The Distinguished Speaker Series presents top-level business executives from a broad range of backgrounds, industries and geographies. It is designed to promote face-to-face interaction between global leaders, the Oklahoma business community and Price College students.

**Alternative Energy Discussed by Professionals in the Field**

A panel of experts discussed current and future trends in the energy industry at a standing-room only forum Sept. 24 sponsored by the Price College Business Energy Solutions Center and the Division of Management and Entrepreneurship. Titled “Is Alternative Energy a Fad or Business Opportunity,” the panel focused on the issues and business opportunities associated with the growing need for wind and solar power. Serving as panelists were Ron Bolen, managing director of HFBE Investment Banking; Paul Dickerson, partner with Haynes and Boone; and Michael Skelly, founder of Clean Line Energy Partners. Mark Sharfman, director of the Division of Management and Entrepreneurship and professor of strategic management, served as the discussion’s moderator.
Second Annual Pitch Competition Helps Propel Students’ Business Ideas

The Second Annual Pitch Competition, held Nov. 19 at the National Weather Center on OU’s Research Campus, featured five finalists who participated in the presentation round and competed for up to $20,000 in cash awards. Students were required to conceive a new idea for a project venture and, in the qualifying round, present an executive summary as well as a presentation to a panel of judges. The competition is based on the elevator pitch: a concise presentation of an entrepreneur's ideas, business model, customers, competition and unit economics. Judges evaluated the perceived viability of the venture and the poise and professionalism of the presentation. They also ranked the finalists based upon the quality of the content, the articulation of the team ideas and executive summary. The first-place team this year, consisting of Amy Henderson, Mimi Nguyen and Ashley Zumwalt, were awarded $8,000 for their Languana program.

OU and Price College Name Outstanding Seniors

Price students Neda Navabha and Matt Deimund have been honored as this year’s Outstanding Senior at the University of Oklahoma. Navabha, who graduated from Price College in December with degrees in energy management and finance, was named Outstanding Senior for Price College. Deimund, a finance and accounting major who will graduate in May, was named as overall Outstanding Senior Man at OU.

Price College’s Natalia Martynova named as 2010 Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellow

The Muskie Graduate Fellowship program is designed to help foster the healthy development of economic and social growth in Eurasia. It offers students an opportunity to gain skills and experience in a major that they are not able to pursue in their home countries, which allows them a competitive advantage in their professional lives when they return home. This year, Natalia Martynova, who is originally from Russia, was named as a fellow. She graduated with honors from Far Eastern National University. She currently is working on her graduate degree in business administration at Price College with a focus on financial markets and business entities.

Executives-in-Residence Share Varied Backgrounds

Three Executives-in-Residence visited the college during the fall semester, meeting with students, faculty and staff. The program promotes face-to-face interaction between business leaders in different industries and Price College students, faculty and staff. Brian Turrentine, managing director of J.P. Morgan’s Private Bank in Dallas, served as the first EIR of the semester. He met with students and discussed areas in which he works, including investment management, corporate finance, wealth advisory and banking services. William “Bill” Engel, chairman of Consumer Orbit Inc., also visited Price College. He spoke during undergraduate and graduate classes focused on marketing and supply chain management. In addition to classroom time, he was able to participate in an informal breakout session with MBA students and address a meeting of the marketing and supply chain management student club, ConnXions. The final EIR during the fall was Mark Smith, chief financial officer of Ultra Petroleum, who drew on his personal experiences to share lessons involving strategic planning, corporate finance and business development in the energy industry. He spoke during undergraduate classes and attended an informal roundtable lunch with energy management students and JCPenney Leadership associates.