UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA ALUMNI are introducing selected master’s of business administration students to new worlds of business in New York, London, Dallas and, soon, Houston.

These students are benefitting from the Price Scholar, Dunham Scholar and Corporate Scholar programs. Each one of these summer programs is made possible through the generosity of time and money from former Sooners and friends of OU.

“The Price College and MBA program is so fortunate and blessed to have alumni in all four locations to step up and counsel and be part of these students’ lives, and to provide feedback to them and us,” says Mel Penn, director of the Student Support Center and MBA corporate relations executive. “About two-thirds of each MBA class apply for these prestigious opportunities to study, work and live off-campus.”

Chris Yarberry was chosen to participate in the Price Scholars program in New York this summer. “This is a remarkable experience,” Yarberry says. “My life has been altered significantly because of this.”

Yarberry, who is originally from Choctaw, said without the scholarship program he likely wouldn’t have looked for work outside of this region of the country after graduation. The Price Scholars Program allowed him to move to New York to live and work for two months and enjoy new experiences, he says, all at no cost.

While in New York, Price Scholars are involved in various internships, attend the Stern School of Business at New York University and a value investment seminar at Columbia...
University. Alumnus Michael Price established the Price Scholars program 11 years ago through a generous gift.

Now in its second year, the Dunham Scholars program enables students to attend a class at the London School of Economics and participate in internships in London, giving them international and cultural exposure. The Dunham Scholars program was endowed by alumnus Archie Dunham and his wife, Linda.

Nicole Heyland was one of the first four Dunham Scholars. “I am extremely grateful to the Dunham family for their generosity. I will never be able to fully express what a lasting difference this program will have on my future and the future of so many other MBA students.”

Heyland says the experience she gained during her internship had a direct impact on her decision to pursue a career in the energy industry, giving her vital experience that was paramount in her job search and ultimate success in starting her career at ExxonMobil. She also believes the dedication of the MBA program’s faculty and staff to helping students is a vital component of the program’s success.

“I look forward to the future and to the opportunity to give back to the program and help future MBA students at the University of Oklahoma,” she states.

The newest of the three programs, the Corporate Scholar program, kicked off this past summer at alumnus Merrill Lynch Vice President Art Alexander’s home and is based in Dallas.

Penn believes the pearls of this program are the alumni mentors. These are alumni who have achieved a significant level of accomplishment in their careers and are willing to spend the summer working closely with the Corporate Scholars.

In Dallas, the students intern at AT&T and American Airlines. They focus on professional development, networking and hands-on skills taught by the individual mentors and other alumni who are executives in the area.

As one of the four mentors, OU alumna Beverly Carmichael says they provide advice, coaching and moral support, an advantage for these students that helps make them better prepared for the real world.

Carmichael, a former human resource executive and current consultant, states that employers are eager to participate in OU’s three scholars programs. “They know we are sending them mature, strong men and women, and that helps them in their recruiting process.”

Dipankar Ghosh, executive director of the MBA program and John T. Steed Professor of Accounting, says no other MBA program has opportunities similar to the scholars programs offered through Price College. Participating in these helps students make a transition from the classroom to the company, he adds.

According to Ghosh, in each location, students interact with alumni and successful business leaders. In addition, the company visits, networking events and significant cultural exposure make these experiences memorable.

“The whole purpose is to layer their academic experience with genuine corporate knowledge to help them become successful leaders of the future. It is all about the students at the end of the day. Anything we can do to enhance students’ experience with the MBA program is a win-win situation.”

And more programs such as these are coming. Ghosh says plans are under way to add an energy corporate scholars program in Houston next summer as well.