



# Yours internationally

SUE BLAINE finds out exactly how serious the USB is about internationalisation.

**A**lmost all businesses face the issues of globalisation, whether these are breaking into foreign markets from Lesotho to Finland, competing with similar products abroad, or having to consider whether to buy components made far afield.

Technology has created the imperative of a global focus.

This means business schools have to give their students opportunities to learn how to deal with people whose cultural backgrounds are far removed from their own, and how to operate in starkly different business and legal environments.

For the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB) this means fostering working relationships with business schools in other countries, so that students can learn from experts in other regions and from their peers in other countries. In doing this, the business school is following a global trend – business schools across the world are increasingly

training their focus on 'internationalisation'.

Reciprocal agreements with business schools, leading to bi-lateral student exchanges, give students hands-on experience of the business and political culture of the other country.

"These experiences are invaluable for people entering a globalised business environment," says Hennie Oliver, the USB's head of international affairs.

Oliver is of the opinion that visits abroad to other business schools assist South African students to position themselves strategically in their current and future careers through the contacts established. Networking in the new global environment is of the utmost importance.

The USB has partnership agreements with 58 business schools (see box) around the world, and Hennie Oliver is working on the relationships with these schools on various levels. The relationships include activities such as student exchange (both individual and

in groups), faculty exchange, and research cooperation.

"You need to create relationships with schools of high calibre with whom you know you will actually work; it's not good enough just to have an agreement on paper," he says.

While most of USB's relationships are with European business schools, Oliver has turned the business school's focus on Asia because of the enormous economic growth in the region.

**students are understandably keen to visit the East to tap into the learning experience of these countries**

The Asian Development Bank's chief economist, Ifzal Ali, told *The Economist* in April 2008 that economic growth for non-Japan

Asia would hit 7,6% in 2008, following last year's growth of 8,7% – which was the highest in 19 years.

Oliver says students are understandably keen to visit the East to tap into the learning experience of these countries.

Asia is where the business of tomorrow lies, and, according to Oliver, more and more European business schools are sending groups to China to give their students a broad overview on how to function in that part of the world, and to understand the politics and economy of business in those countries.

Oliver has just returned from a trip to Asia, where he attended the APAIE (Asia Pacific Association for International Education) Conference and met with a number of prospective partner schools. He also visited Japan's Nagoya University, with whom a memorandum of agreement was signed in late 2007.

According to Quacquarelli Symonds, who runs the World MBA Tour, this school is one of Japan's top institutions.

"The Nagoya University is situated in Nagoya, right next to the Toyota headquarters. This may give rise to opportunities for our students studying on that campus to visit the Toyota head office – which would be very interesting for those in the motor industry or those studying modules like supply chain management," explains Oliver.

During his visit to Asia, Oliver also had fruitful discussions with numerous business schools: the Renmin University of China, Korea University, Hong Kong Baptist University, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The USB is in the process of signing agreements with these institutions.

Oliver also addressed delegates at the 2008 European Foundation for Management Development international congress in Estonia and conveyed the USB's message on the importance of internationalisation and the role it plays at the USB to more than 100 delegates from 56 business schools.

While at these conferences, Oliver was approached by various business schools (such as Pepperdine and Laval) from the North American continent, as well as from European countries such as Poland and Hungary. The USB is in the process of signing agreements with Pepperdine and Laval and is currently finalising an academic tour by Pepperdine to South Africa in 2009.

The USB is by no means ignoring the might of another Asian tiger – India (the Asian Development Bank believes India's economic growth will "moderate" to 8% this fiscal year). A visit to Indian business schools as well as selected business schools in South America tops the priority list for the near future.

The USB started taking MBA students

on study tours to foreign countries in 1998. Integrating the study tours, which are currently optional, as a compulsory element of the MBA programme is something Oliver is striving towards. However, certain challenges, such as the detrimental impact of the exchange rate, first need to be addressed in an innovative manner to open international access to all students. In order to address this issue, Oliver is constantly exploring ways to obtain additional funding to minimise the costs for the student body.



At the APAIE conference in Tokyo, Hennie Oliver, USB's head: International Affairs (middle), met Prof Tang Zhong, director: International Office (left), and Hu Juan, director: Higher Education Office, both of the Renmin University of China.

"Study tours add a lot of value and I can see that people would love to participate, but, beside the challenge of cost, there are also issues to consider such as available time. More than ninety per cent of our students are in full-time employment. To go on the study tour, they need additional time off in a year in which they have already taken significant study leave," he says.



## Through the eyes of students

"Exposure to different cultures is important, and I think this is something that should be compulsory in the MBA course," says USB MBA graduate Gretchen Arangies, who is director of Human Resources (Operational) at the University of Stellenbosch.

"It's completely different from sitting in a class in South Africa and theoretically dealing with cultural diversity," she says.

Firmly settled in South Africa, Arangies feels her exposure to French law and labour policy

during her student-visit to Paris has helped her in her work.

"The way they do things over there is completely different, like the way they set up their pension funds. Yes, it helps in your work: you can try to change your own policy, if you think aspects of theirs are better," she says.

Every year a number of USB MBA students conduct part of their studies abroad. This year students attended a two-week international study tour to CMC Graduate School in Prague in the Czech Republic and Durham Business School in the United Kingdom during the June/July semester break.

South Africa, too, serves as a destination for foreign business schools wishing to expose their students to the business and cultural environment of the emerging countries of the world. Each year a large number of foreign students, mainly from Europe, come to the USB on an exchange basis and spend up to six months in the full-time MBA programme. This figure is steadily increasing each year.

"The home institutions of these students see South Africa as a portal into Africa – which is home to 20% of the world's population – and therefore as a potential market," says Oliver. "These foreign business schools are eager to conclude exchange agreements with the USB, because of the school's high academic standard, the large variety and number of industries that can be visited in South Africa, as well as the excellent service the USB provides."

There is a significant increase in the number of student groups visiting the USB.

Oliver believes they are drawn by the USB's internationally-recognised academic standard and to learning from people who deal daily with diversity. They are also attracted, he points out, to the school's change management expertise and access to a wide variety of industries; and, of course, to Cape Town as an international tourism destination.

Coming to USB on for a few weeks this March was a "unique chance to get taught from a different perspective", says Nathalie Jonk, who is studying at The Netherland's Nyenrode Business University. >>

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“Seeing issues, problems [and] policies through different eyes ... [your] perspective changes when thinking about the fact there is a completely different world outside the European business world,” she says.

The warm South African welcome fellow Dutchman Thijs Dirkwager received when he arrived at USB last October was a pleasant surprise to him.

“The warmth and dedication of the people presenting the programme was a positive surprise. [We had] very good lessons in which I learned a lot, especially economics in South Africa, financial markets and business ethics. I [also] learned about diversity in business in developing countries”, he says.

This warm reception was also mentioned by Danish businessman Heino Lundgren, who says the programme met his expectations and gave him what he needed.

“I expected to obtain a better understanding of cultural differences and their influence on the organisation, obtain experience in the

strategic field through practical work in an organisation and create a usable solution to the organisation. The summer school [was] a great experience to me. I got many expressions of happiness, joy, sorrow, forgiveness that you don't see much in our culture. Furthermore, I got some strategic tools I can use in my own company”, says Ludgren, who received his MBA at Aarhus Business School.

This year altogether 14 groups of international students will spend time at the USB. This initiative has the benefit of increasing the destinations for SA students, thereby adding value to the experience of USB MBA students. Oliver wants to raise this figure substantially next year, and also bring Asian students to South Africa for one to two weeks.

## Business learning gateway to greater Africa

While most of USB's internationalisation initiatives are focused on the MBA programme,

that is not the full story.

“The business school is also doing a lot of executive education in African countries such as Nigeria, Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Ghana through its commercial arm, USB Executive Development (USB-ED). To date in Namibia alone, more than 1000 students have undertaken studies with USB-ED,” says Oliver.

An indication of the high esteem in which USB-ED is held is the agreement that has been formed with the prestigious Center for Creative Leadership based in the USA, England and Belgium, offering a programme in leadership development in South Africa in August. This organisation regards the USB as its gateway into Africa.

Furthermore, the majority of the USB's Master's in Development Finance students are from African countries outside South Africa. □

### USB International Affairs Office

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## The USB's 58 PARTNER SCHOOLS

### WESTERN EUROPE

#### Austria

- FH Joanneum Gesellschaft GmbH
- Campus02 Fachhochschulstudien

#### Belgium

- Solvay Business School
- Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School
- University Antwerpen Management School (UAMS)

#### France

- EM-Lyon
- Ceram Sophia Antipolis
- Reims Management School
- EDHEC Business School
- ESC-Grenoble Business School
- IECS-Strasbourg Graduate School of Business.
- ESCP-EAP
- Euromed Marseille Ecole de Management IAE Aix-en-Provence
- ESC-Toulouse Business School
- Groupe Sup de Co La Rochelle
- Bordeaux Business School
- Audencia Nantes Ecole de Management
- ESC Rennes School of Business
- IESEG
- Groupe ESC Rouen

#### Germany

- WHU-Otto Beisheim
- ISM-Dortmund
- University of Applied Sciences Wedel
- Europa-Universität Viadrina
- EBS Germany
- Zeppelin University Hochschule zwischen Wirtschaft

#### Netherlands

- Nyenrode Business Universiteit
- RSM Erasmus University
- Maastricht School of Management (MSM)
- University Maastricht Business School (UMBS)

#### Portugal

- Universidade de Nova de Lisboa

#### Spain

- Escuela de Alta Dirección Administracion (EADA)

### EASTERN EUROPE

#### Budapest

- Corvinus University of Budapest
- Czech Republic
- Brno International School of Business
- CMC Graduate School of Business

#### Estonian

- Estonian Business School

#### Poland

- Graduate School of Business Economics, Higher School of International Commerce and Finance, Warsaw
- Leon Kominski Academy of Entrepreneurship & Management

### SCANDINAVIA

#### Denmark

- Aarhus School of Business

#### Finland

- Hanken School of Economics

#### Norway

- BI Norwegian School of Management

#### Sweden

- Jönköping International School of Management
- Umeå School of Business and Economics

### UNITED KINGDOM

- Ashridge Management College
- Cranfield University School of Management
- Manchester Business School
- Nottingham Trent Business School
- EBS London
- Durham Business School
- Lancaster University Management School (LUMS)
- University College Dublin Smurfit School of Business and Quinn School of Business

### OTHER

#### Australia

- Curtin University of Technology
- University of South Australia

#### India

- Xavier Institute of Management

#### Japan

- Nagoya University of Commerce and Business (NUCB)

#### Pakistan

- University of Management and Technology

#### Singapore

- Singapore Management University (SMU)

#### Venezuela

- Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración (IESA)

#### United States of America

- Graziadio School of Business, Pepperdine University, Malibu