



LOOK OUT WORLD

Here Comes
SUFFOLK.

A decade later, the Sawyer Business School
is redefining global business education.

BY STEVE HOLT

“The Sawyer Business School is preparing
the way for global leaders of tomorrow
and supporting leaders of today,”

– SAWYER BUSINESS SCHOOL DEAN WILLIAM J. O’NEILL, JR.



INTERNATIONAL AFTERSHOCKS from the recent global financial crisis begin to subside, skeptics of globalization's significance must now acknowledge its industry-altering power. In good times and bad, our world is more connected now—economically, culturally, technologically, politically—than at any time in history.

Knowledge and ideas now circle the globe in milliseconds. Collaboration thought impossible a half-century ago now happens every day. Like it or not, globalization is reality now. Companies and professionals will either embrace a global focus, or they won't. The latter will inevitably be left behind.

In 2001—before Google or Twitter or *The World is Flat*—the Sawyer Business School set out to ensure that each student graduates with a global mindset. This year marks the 10th birthday of the school's global mission, a statement permeating every lecture, trip abroad, project, paper, and internship. The mission reads:

We create a learning environment that enables our students to emerge as successful leaders in the practice of global business and public service.

The school is effectively fulfilling this goal. On top of high-profile recognition from publications like *Financial Times* and *Princeton Review*, student consultation with international Fortune 100 firms, and ever-increasing numbers of international students and faculty, graduates of the Business School are beating out their peers for coveted jobs and internships.

The school's administrators, faculty, and students agree that one thing is clear: the Business School's best days are ahead.

FROM A GREAT SCHOOL TO A GLOBAL LEADER

For almost 75 years, Suffolk has offered students a quality business education in downtown Boston, "the hub of the universe." The School of Management opened its doors to America's future business leaders in 1937. The MBA degree program was added in 1948. New England's first Executive MBA program began in 1975, and the MBA Online program followed in 1999—another New England first.

At the dawn of the new millennium, however, it was clear that globalization was changing business and commerce irreversibly. Visionary leaders—most notably incoming Dean William J. O'Neill, Jr.—recognized an opportunity to expand the Business School's reach and strengthen its impact by establishing it as a global place.

Dean O'Neill remembers sitting in planning meetings with faculty, asking, "What kind of curriculum do you put together that's going to expand the students' global mindset?"

International immersion would be crucial, so the Business School significantly expanded its Global Travel Seminars and international internships. The school created the Strategy and International Business Department and added an undergraduate major in global business. On the graduate level, the core curriculum of the MBA received an international shot in the arm, and the career-focused Global MBA was created.

Welcome to the Sawyer Business School: Business education 3.0.

SUFFOLK BUSINESS: A MINI UNITED NATIONS

At the orientation for new MBAs, Assistant Dean Lillian Hallberg has groups of students stand up by country and say, in their native tongue, "Good morning. I'm





LEFT TO RIGHT Alan Dillaby (BSBA '2010, MSA '2011), Christine Adams (BSBA '2010), Carol Medina (BSBA '2010), BSBA student Luther Yee, Emily Pytko, and Jessica Pereira Amado

happy to be here in the Suffolk MBA." It's not unusual, she says, for languages from 25 or 30 countries to be represented.

"It's so amazing, because what you end up with is a mini U.N.," said Hallberg, who directs both the MBA and the Global MBA programs. "I tell them, 'This is not just your Boston neighborhood. This is your global neighborhood that you are now taking part in.'"

The curriculum matches the international diversity of the graduate student body. The Executive MBA—named in 2009 by *Financial Times* as one of the top-95 programs in the world—requires students to attend a one-week Global Travel Seminar. The MBA curriculum was beefed up to include a capstone course on global management and the infusion of international business into each of the core courses. The Global Travel Seminars program expanded to include more offerings to MBA students.

Perhaps most significant, however, was the creation in 2003 of the Global MBA, which builds on the MBA core with additional international business electives, a concentration in either International Finance or International Marketing, a one-week Global Travel

Seminar, and a three-month, full-time internship outside the student's home country.

Students hailing from 10 nations comprised Suffolk's Global MBA class in 2010. They accepted summer internships in 10 countries, each immersing themselves full-time into the company and culture and completing projects that added value to their sponsoring organizations. Greek international alumna Konstantina Tsouroufli, GMBA '10, entered the Global MBA to transition from a career in engineering to finance. Her internship in the Fixed Income Division at State Street Global Advisors in Boston led to a full-time position.

"The internship program introduced me into the world of finance and allowed me to make the connections that I would eventually need to obtain a rewarding full-time position," she said.

It's no wonder *Princeton Review* placed Suffolk among the top-15 graduate programs in global management.

GLOBAL TRAVEL SEMINARS: "A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE"

Patrick Lynch's was just one in a stack of applications for a prestigious law internship at Framing-

ham-based Bose Inc. Corporate law positions are notoriously competitive because of the uniformly high caliber of nearly every applicant. “A lot of law résumés look the same coming out of law school,” said Lynch, JD/MBA ’10.

But Lynch’s stood out, and he landed the internship. The difference? His consulting work with international corporations in Germany while on a Global Travel Seminar in 2008.

While in Germany, Lynch and his classmates consulted with giants Lufthansa, Adidas, and the Volkswagen Group. They toured their headquarters, discussed current challenges in the companies with top executives, and worked in teams on possible solutions. After a half day of intense brainstorming and research, Lynch and his team presented their ideas to the executives, receiving immediate feedback.

“I think those experiences made my résumé stand out above the rest,” Lynch said.

Besides Germany, students can choose from about five seminars each semester. But it wasn’t always this way. Until the school expanded its Global Travel Seminars in 2001, it offered just one or two destinations. Today, undergraduate and graduate students study in places like London, Israel, Turkey, and Scandinavia, beefing up their training with robust cultural immersion and site-specific coursework, focusing on current business issues with top national firms. Students are given the opportunity to pick the courses that relate to their interests, both geographically and content-wise, said Michael Behnam, program director and associate professor of strategy and international business.

“The students won’t be experts in that culture through one course,” said Behnam, who leads the popular seminar in his native Germany, “but we try to give them the opportunity to do something hands-on that they would never learn in a Boston, campus-based course. For some of the students, this has been a life-changing experience.”

It certainly has been for Lynch. He recently completed another legal internship with French company Altran Inc., a position he earned because of his internship at Bose. He now lives in Providence, Rhode Island, and is studying full-time for the bar exam. He’s well on his way to achieving his dream position: in-house legal counsel with an international corporation.

“I believe my experience with Professor Behnam and my time in Germany helped me get started on the right foot,” Lynch said.

UNDERGRADUATES: GLOBAL FROM THE START

Kait Capone and Aaron Lumnah, sophomores at Sawyer Business School, have only been in Boston for one year, but already, they’re immersed in its multiculturalism, innovation, and ambition.

Capone, who is from Hamden, Connecticut, jumped right into a number of business clubs on campus and plans to eventually open a global chain of restaurants. (“I could never sit at a desk all day,” she said.) Lumnah, from Plainville, Massachusetts, serves as the International Business Club treasurer and maintains a 4.0 GPA. They’re two of the sophomore class’s finest, and both were members of Suffolk’s Global Business Living Learning Community—an initiative launched last fall in which 10 global business majors are selected to take classes together, attend networking events and field trips, and even live in the same residence hall.

“They are establishing friendships with each other and exchanging information and dreams,” said Carlos Rufin, associate professor of strategy and international business and director of undergraduate international programs. “The feedback I’m getting is highly positive.”

Both star students in high school, Lumnah and Capone credit the strength and focus of the Business School for their choosing Suffolk, where both double-major in entrepreneurship—a program requirement. “Students need an additional set of skills,” Rufin said.

Global business students are required to participate in at least one Global Travel Seminar and take a foreign language. Lumnah thinks he will travel either to France or Spain. Capone is settled on Italy, with its countless family-owned businesses. That is, unless she changes her mind.

“I would also love to go to Asia. That’s such an up-and-coming center for business,” she said. “So we’ll see.”

Suffolk’s image has evolved from being merely a “commuter school,” as evidenced by an undergraduate business population that has increased by 65 percent since 2001. Every undergraduate will leave with a strong global foundation. The general undergraduate business curriculum now features entry-level and capstone courses with an international focus, and professors must discuss





Sawyer Business School Dean
William J. O'Neill, Jr.

global issues in nearly every other course. Many students' experiences are shattering their preconceptions about life in the business world.

"There's so much more to [business] than a boring desk job," Lumnah said. "You don't have to necessarily be at a desk. It doesn't have to be boring."

FACULTY SHAPING STUDENT WORLDVIEWS, BUSINESS PRACTICES

In his 2005 best-seller, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas Friedman describes in fascinating detail an unlikely force behind rapid globalization: supply chains. Welcome to the specialized world of Associate Professor Kuo-Ting (Ken) Hung, chair of the Information Systems & Operations Management Department. Hung's research is helping to streamline the flow of goods at major international companies.

"When you begin to peel back the layers of distribution and manufacturing, you realize that the products we have were assembled using parts from many different countries, thousands of miles away," said Hung, who is applying his knowledge toward the creation of a concentration in global supply chain management for the MBA.

Born in Taiwan and having worked in Singapore, Hung is one face in a rapidly diversifying Business School faculty. "We have significantly increased the number of international faculty or faculty who focus on doing research internationally," said Dean O'Neill,

who believes internationally focused professors now make up half of the faculty.

Encouraging faculty research of international business will be the focus of the Business School's next initiative—the Center for Global Business. The center will also help get that research into the hands of industry leaders.

"We not only want to be building internationalization within but sharing that with the outside world," said C. Gopinath, who will direct the new center. "This will be both an internal and an external center."

FORGING AHEAD

What lies ahead for the Business School? For Dean O'Neill, it boils down to exposure within the business community, but not from billboards—flesh and bones.

"I could go out and spend all kinds of money on advertising, but in reality, it's the students," Dean O'Neill said.

The school is expanding its internship program in an effort to get more Suffolk students into top companies in the area. Dean O'Neill said his dream is for employers to look first to Suffolk to fill their open positions. Similarly, he wants Suffolk to be first-to-mind for prospective business students. He emphasizes much work is left to do.

"We've developed a reputation, but we've got a long way to go," Dean O'Neill said. "Frankly, I think we're about a third of the way of where we should really be, but we're getting there." **SB**