

BUSINESS GRADUATE STUDENTS HELP INTERNATIONAL BUSINESSES FIND SOLUTIONS

Utah Business leaders wrestling with global challenges can find solutions to their international problems in Cache Valley.

At least, that's the contention of the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business. It has a cadre of successful graduate students who are applying their international experience, know-how and work ethic to finding practical solutions for businesses in need.

A major area of focus for the Huntsman School of Business is its rapidly expanding international business programs. The school recently established a Field Studies program that offers international consulting to Utah businesses, according to Mark Thomas, the program's director.

For the students "field studies" is technically a class, but it is no ordinary class. The lessons don't come from a textbook, Thomas said.

Thomas is someone who goes out looking for trouble. He said he goes to businesses and asks



USU graduate students working in the Huntsman Field Studies program are offering international consulting to Utah businesses. Mark Thomas, the program's director, and the students work with a wide variety of consulting projects, including foreign market entry strategies, supply chain issues, outsourcing in foreign countries and establishing lean management systems.

them to identify one of their most consistent and troubling challenges. He then unleashes the graduate students on the problems, with total confidence that they will find solutions the company needs.

“It’s not like a normal class because there are always surprises, and there are always things that you discover that you didn’t expect,” Thomas said. “So that’s part of the fun and maybe part of the drama of this class. You don’t know what you’re going to find.”

That is, apparently, part of the learning process, according to Thomas. He’s preparing the students for the business world.

Nick Baldwin, a graduate student who worked on a project last year, said the class taught him how to find the information he needed.

“All the information isn’t always going to be in a textbook,” Baldwin said. “You are going to have to go and look and find the information yourself. It can be very difficult.”

Baldwin’s group was assigned to do a financial feasibility study for Mountain Crane Service. The company wanted to know if it would be profitable to purchase and rent out a type of crane typically used to set up wind farms.

Thomas said the Huntsman Field Studies Program helps with a wide variety of consulting projects, including foreign market entry strategies, supply chain issues, outsourcing in foreign countries and establishing lean management systems.

“Field Studies matches experienced faculty members with student teams that have the expertise to meet the needs of the firms they serve,” Thomas said. “The Huntsman School of Business has the ability to deliver high-quality international consulting results.”

Thomas said failure or a half-baked project is not an option for these students. The program’s reputation depends on the students delivering excellent results.

“In the end, what we’re trying to do is deliver an extraordinary product that will help a client be very happy,” he said. “That’s how the students are graded.”

Chris Fawson, senior associate dean over academics and international affairs, said Thomas is the right man for the job.

“Thomas is the most experienced and successful director of university field study programs in Utah,” Fawson said. “The students, under his direction, consistently deliver the results that businesses need.”

Those interested in more information about the Huntsman School of Business Field Studies program and the consulting services it offers, may phone Mark Thomas at 801-828-0654.

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August 2008