Faculty development resources/benefits

Manuel Serapio, Don Stevens

CIBERs offer a wide range of FDIB programs designed to expand the world for international business faculty, said Manuel G. Serapio, Jr. and Donald L. Stevens.

Manuel Serapio is an associate professor of International Business and Management at the University of Colorado at Denver. He also serves as faculty director for faculty development programs at CU Denver’s Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER). He received his PhD in international business from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research interests are foreign direct investments, the internationalization of R&D, international alliances and cross-cultural management.

Don Stevens is assistant vice chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs at the University of Colorado at Denver, and managing director of the university’s Institute for International Business. He is also director of the Institute’s Center for International Business Education and Research. He holds an appointment as professor of finance in the College of Business and was dean of CU-Denver’s College of Business & Administration from 1981-1991. He received his PhD in business administration/finance from Michigan State University.

Schools that would like to internationalize their courses would be well served to “focus on the many different types of FDIBs available,” said Manuel Serapio. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, “there are programs to fit specific needs and interests.”

Don Stevens agreed. “FDIBs are designed to make good use of faculty interests and faculty talents. Manuel develops these courses and people who attend learn the different approaches different schools take with the same subject matter.”

The result, said Stevens: “You end up with an incredible enhancement to your own professional capabilities and a great network of people who have similar interests.”

As the global environment has changed, “there has been an emergence of new subjects and geographic areas of interest, resulting in offerings of FDIBs that flow right from the news of the day,” said Serapio.

“I am currently doing research on international outsourcing and one of the things I’m learning from this research is that the skills IT graduates should have are changing,” said Serapio. “What they need is knowledge of business as well as knowledge of international business.

“However, many of the faculty members who control IT programs do not have the training to do the international piece. FDIB programs can fill the gap and provide this very necessary background,” said Serapio.

In addition to new program offerings, new delivery methods of FDIBs are also emerging. “Resource constraints are motivating program developers to make use of technology. Consequently, online programs are seen as a way to meet budget restrictions and serve a greater number of faculty.

“There are benefits to an online program,” said Serapio. “The program can be updated yearly and the number of live meetings can be cut back,” he said, adding, “Collaboration between and among disciplines is necessary to make it work.”
Faculty development resources/benefits

Manuel Serapio, Don Stevens

In the meantime, said Serapio, “We’re doing the best that we can to provide resources and scholarships to help faculty who would like to attend these FDIB programs in person but who have severe budget restrictions.”

While there are benefits associated with all FDIBs, “When a program involves international travel, the benefits are even greater,” said Stevens.

Last January Stevens and 25 others set out on a faculty development trip to China. The group, which included mostly business school professors and about six or eight community college instructors, traveled to Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong Province and then to Shanghai.

“The Pearl River Delta is where the entrepreneurial activity is happening in China. There’s a lot of risk and a lot of return,” said Stevens. “China has grown at 10 percent a year for the past 20 years. This area is growing at twice that rate.

“This is the part of the world where young women from rural China come and get jobs and it’s the first time they’ve left their homes. They live eight to a room in company-supplied dormitories and work three shifts a day. On one of those three shifts they earn 62 cents an hour, which affords them six times their standard of living in the town they left,” said Stevens.

“When we were there five years ago, we were told that the women work a couple of years and go home with a lot of savings. With that they can get good husbands because they have big dowries. This time we found out that increasingly they don’t want to go home. If they do go back, they don’t want to marry some peasant boy who never did leave that village. They’ll go back and open a small business, which might be a restaurant, a bakery, a beauty salon or some other enterprise where they’re in control.

“In 20 years the entrepreneurial managerial class in China could very well be dominated by 40-year-old women who were the first generation of migrant workers to flock into factories.

“There are 100 million of these migrant workers, mostly in the Yangtze and Pearl River deltas, and there are 500 million Chinese who will leave rural China over the next generation looking for one of these jobs. So if you’re sitting in Germany with a fully loaded wage of $55 an hour, working 32 hours a week seven months a year, with 19 holidays and 35 sick days and not wanting to change any of your rules, I think there’s a market message headed your way,” said Stevens.

“The last day of the program each of four groups we set up according to interests reported back on how they saw the two-week experience as professionals. I can say I probably learned more on this China trip than any other two-week experience of my international career. To get there and put your hands on what’s going on really changes your perspective.

“But if China is not your thing, take a look at the schedule in the book. Contact a CIBER and see if there’s something that would work for you. You can choose any one of these programs and find the same kind of enriching experience that I had in China. I want to encourage you to participate in one,” said Stevens.