MSIB program striving to meet pent-up demand

Manuel Serapio, Jr.

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In 1990, when the CU Denver College of Business was in the early stages of internationalization, Manuel Serapio’s Introduction to International Business class drew only 18 students. “And we had to get two more students to be observers in the class to get the necessary numbers,” Serapio told the Global Executive Forum.

At the time, the low numbers of the intro course stood in sharp contrast to the 15-20 other sections of international courses that achieved very good student enrollment every year.

Things have changed dramatically.

In the spring 1998 semester, there were 100 students in the Introduction to International Business class, spread between two sections. This includes both degree and non-degree students.

These numbers are indicative of the pent-up demand for international business studies and the expertise that can be gained through CU Denver’s Master of Science in International Business program. Established in 1995, the MSIB program is now turning a corner as it sets new goals to help make students more marketable and meet the growing needs of the business community.

"There are about 47 students in the incoming class," said Serapio. "Our goal is to increase MSIB enrollment to 75 students by 1999-2000 and 100 students by 2001-2002." Included in the 100 is an estimated international track of 25 students. The goal is in line with anticipated resources necessary to build the program.

Crosscutting themes

The College of Business has identified three crosscutting themes that will be incorporated into the curriculum: entrepreneurship, information technology, and internationalization, according to Serapio. Traditionally, programs have been developed around specific disciplines such as accounting, management, marketing, etc. But in changing times, it has become necessary to de-compartmentalize certain subjects and cast them in the context of the global arena.

"This new approach is customer-oriented," said Serapio, designed to give students the marketable skills they will need in the international marketplace.

Under this plan, the seven M.S. programs - accounting, finance, health, information systems, international business, management, marketing - the two MBA programs, and the undergraduate program will integrate these three themes into their programs and activities.
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Joint programs proposed

In support of the MSIB program and in collaboration with CU's College of Business Administration, the Institute's CIBER (Center for International Business Education and Research), has proposed several objectives and activities for the next grant period, 1999-2001. Some highlights:

- **Multi-campus and interdisciplinary alliances** between the Denver and Boulder campuses of CU, later to include universities across the U.S. An example of such a partnership, said Serapio, is a proposed new five-year B.A./M.S. degree at the Denver and Boulder campuses. Once decisions are finalized, this degree will give the 600-plus students in the international studies undergraduate program an opportunity to pursue graduate studies in business in a fast track format combining a B.A. in international studies with an M.S. in international business.

- **Joint studies programs on emerging markets** (China, Russia, Argentina), targeted to graduate students in international business, international studies, M.B.A., and M.S. business programs, and conducted on site in Beijing, Moscow, and Buenos Aires. In these four to six week summer intensive programs, "students will be immersed in the dynamics of doing business in an emerging market against the backdrop of that market's political, economic and cultural environments," said Serapio.

- **Internationalization of programs** and new study abroad options. The CU Denver College of Business Administration (CBA), the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS,) and CIBER have addressed the "internationalization needs" of a diverse student body comprised of part-time and full-time students. As a result, CIBER will establish a Global Competency Program for undergraduate business students and work with the CBA in redesigning the undergraduate area of emphasis in international business. "This will include a study abroad component," said Serapio.

- **New teaching materials.** CIBER will initiate several new projects to transform Global Executive Forum sessions into timely teaching materials such as videos and CD-ROMs for use in the classroom or on the Internet. "There is a lot of wisdom at these meetings," said Don Stevens, managing director of the Institute. "We want to come up with new and innovative ideas for distributing that wisdom." Other CIBERs and small and remote schools with limited access to global executives will also be targeted for distribution of edited Global Executive Forum proceedings.

- **Summer Institute in International Business.** Working adults do not have the flexibility to spend a semester abroad, said Serapio. To offer an alternative, CIBER is proposing the development of a Summer Institute in which students would spend six weeks in Denver and two weeks at CU Denver's overseas campus in Beijing, Moscow, or Katmandu.