International Resource Center Update

IUIRC, CIEDA Attend Training Exposition

Indiana University's new International Resource Center worked with the Center for International Education & Development Assistance to sponsor a booth at the American Society for Training & Development International Conference and Exposition in Washington, D.C., May 18-22. The conference attracted over 12,000 domestic and 3,000 international corporate and non-profit human resource managers and trainers.

IUIRC Director Shawn Reynolds was on hand to promote his center's programs and services, while Office of International Programs Associate Dean Charles Reafsnyder spoke about CIEDA's operations. School of Continuing Studies Dean Jeremy Dunning represented IU's Distance Learning Program.

The exhibit was part of a joint IUIRC and CIEDA effort to publicize how IU's international resources can benefit the American business community. As companies expand their global efforts, there is an increased need for specialized training for international operations.

The IUIRC offers orientation programs and cross-cultural training for U.S. employees being sent abroad. It also arranges half- or one-day country briefings for companies interested in educating their management or workforce on international issues and regions.

CIEDA, on the other hand, develops specific training programs for both international companies and U.S. companies with overseas operations. CIEDA helps companies identify programs at IU or elsewhere that offer specialized short-term, non-degree, academic, and professional training courses.

Reafsnyder said the IU booth received over 200 specific enquiries from companies wanting more information about IU and its programs.

One office supply company needed cross-cultural training for their executives who are involved in negotiations in Europe, while a consumer products company was looking for English as a second language instruction and basic business training for its Latin American managers. Conference participants were also very interested in the possibility of using IU's distance learning technologies to develop employee training programs.

Reafsnyder and Reynolds will follow up the conference with a mailing to conference attendees to further explain IU's various international services and programs.

—Shawn Reynolds

IUIRC, EASC Brief Indiana State Delegation

The IUIRC, working with IU Bloomington's East Asian Studies Center, coordinated its first country briefing on May 20 for members of the Reverse Investment Mission to Japan and Taiwan.

The 35-man mission, organized by the Indiana Department of Commerce International Trade Division and led by Lieutenant Governor Joseph Kernan, includes mayors, state legislators, economic development officers, chamber of commerce members, and utilities representatives from around the state.

The June 6-18 mission will focus on developing relationships with both Japanese and Taiwanese business and industry representatives in order to attract investment to Indiana.

At the briefing, EASC Director George Wilson and Professor Gregory Kasza of the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures provided background information and discussed trends in Japanese employment and their impact on society.

Tomoyuki Tsuruoka, an IU MBA student from Japan on leave from his position at the Institute for International Business Communication, presented a "Japanese Business Culture" session, pointing out tips on etiquette and other behavioral factors important to crosscultural relationships in business.

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The dormitory in which I stayed was Spartan at best, my room having no hot water or shower. A heating unit in the window was turned on for my benefit, but for students there is no heat. Temperatures were in the forties Fahrenheit, both inside and outside the building. However, the hospitality of my Chinese hosts made the accommodations unimportant to me. I was escorted by one of their English language teachers wherever I wanted to go in the city and was even loaned a bicycle which I peddled five miles to downtown Ningbo.

In the evenings, I had as many as 12 students in my room, anxious to practice their English and absolutely fascinated by American culture and lifestyle. They asked no questions about American political and social issues, which may be the result of the unavailability of Western news media. Their only source of outside news is The China Daily, an English language publication that appears to be an official organ of the government.

All things considered, the most significant aspect of the trip for me was the educational potential I saw in these exchanges. There is so much to be learned from study abroad, not only about other cultures, but about our own, because of the way in which living in a foreign culture affects our perceptions of our own culture by providing contrasts.

For example, I questioned several faculty and students about China's one child per family policy. Their response in all cases was that it is an essential and reasonable policy for a country with over a billion people and because of the severe population pressure this puts on China's resources. (China has one-seventh of the arable land America has, with a population more than four times as large.) I sensed no resentment or bitterness toward the one-child policy. For me, it made our own failure to confront the problem of population control seem backward and irresponsible by comparison.

We have a lot to learn from one another through these exchanges. I look forward to a time when study abroad is available to all American students.

— David N. Silk

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Jim Wheeler, director of economic and financial consulting at Arthur Andersen in Indianapolis, discussed current economic trends in both Japan and Taiwan. All delegates received information packets containing background reading materials.

Country briefings are among the key services provided by the IUIRC to assist businesses and organizations in developing international components. IUIRC staff work with appropriate area studies centers and other partners, such as the School of Business' Office of Global Programs, to identify expertise within the university which will address the specific needs of each client.

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Islam speaker was U.S. State Department official John Herbst, Deputy Coordinator for the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Herbst outlined U.S. policy in Eurasia and the Balkans, noting that the principal objective is to promote stability, democracy, and a positive climate for international trade.

Friedman and Shahrani followed Herbst with a summary of the previous day's panel discussions. A lively interchange developed between Friedman and Shahrani on the one hand, and Herbst on the other. Again, the key issue was concern over whether the State Department has fallen into the trap of Islamophobia and is supporting regimes that repress the free exercise of religion.

This REEl forum was jointly planned and coordinated with Bloomington's West European Studies, the Inner Asian & Uralic National Resource Center, and the African Studies Program.

— David Ransel
Director, REEl