The Hong Kong Connection:  
Cultural Exchange Part of Entrepreneurial Package

In Fall 1997, Indiana University's distance learning technologies linked students from Indiana and Hong Kong in a study of contemporary entrepreneurship taught by Marc Dollinger, an IU-Bloomington professor of management. Twenty-five students from IUB and 29 students from Hong Kong's City University were enrolled in the course. The students met "face-to-face" in two video-conferences originating on the Virtual Indiana Classroom (VIC) Network, IU's interactive video system. During a third video-conference on Dec. 10, students made a final presentation describing their entrepreneurial efforts, said Michael Yoakam, director for the Office of Distance Learning in the School of Continuing Studies.

Between the video-conference sessions, Yoakam said, students stayed in contact via a Web-based conferencing software that is currently being pilot tested on the Bloomington campus by University Information Technology Systems (UITS). The software, AltaVista Forum, provides students with electronic conferencing, file sharing and group collaboration tools. Students met in early October to receive technical and cultural training, said Yoakam. The course objective, explained Dollinger, was to put the students into teams to start fictional "businesses." The businesses were constructed from elements of the Hong Kong and Chinese business environment combined with those of Indiana and the American Midwest. "Students in the class," explained Dollinger, "generated their own business ideas and, with the approval of the faculty, worked on the design, development, financing and implementation of the ideas."

In addition to creating and implementing a business plan, said Dollinger, "students had the opportunity to interact, communicate and collaborate with people from a different culture and business environment. We think that the process of interaction is just as important as the final project." "The IU-City University Entrepreneurship Project is a first-rate example of how distance learning technologies can be used to enhance students' educational experience," said Yoakam. "It's also a tribute to those IU departments—in this case, the School of Continuing Studies, the School of Business and University Information Technology Systems—who are forming partnerships to deliver programs that would have otherwise been impossible."

— Lisa Denlinger, IU Home Pages

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Annual Business Conference Series Begins with Focus on Asia

The Indiana Global Business Conference Series is widely recognized as the leading international conference series in the Midwest. Expert international scholars, business people, and public officials present their research findings and share experiences and practices abroad. This year, the series takes a comprehensive geographical and functional approach, designed to suit the information needs of top-level international business executives.


While this first conference will generally focus on sales and marketing, it also will examine such timely issues as extreme currency depreciation, rising interest rates, and growing political instability, in an effort help those in international business evaluate the relative merits of doing future business in China, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Southeast Asia.

James Lilley, resident fellow of Asian Studies of the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C., will deliver the keynote address on the future of Asia. Lilley has served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (1991-93), as U.S. Ambassador to China (1989-91), and as U.S. Ambassador to South Korea (1986-89).

Among Indiana University conference participants are Kelley School of Business faculty Larry Davidson, director of the Global Business Information Network (GBIN); William Sartoris, Chair of International Activities; and Marjorie Lyles; as well as George Wilson, director of the East Asian Studies Center; and historians Nick Cullather and Jeffrey Wasserstrom.

Other conferences in the 1998 series, each with their general business focus, are scheduled as follows: "Doing Business in Latin America" (May 5 - production and foreign investment); "Doing Business in Europe: After the Introduction of the Euro" (Sept. 29 - legal and accounting practices), and "Doing Business in Africa: New Markets and Opportunities" (Dec. 1 - human resources). For further information on the series, contact the GBIN office at the Kelley School of Business, (812) 855-5463.

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