

EMBA IX GOES ABROAD

Ninth International Research Course takes students to Spain



The ninth Executive MBA (EMBA) cohort took a trip to Barcelona as part of the International Research Course. The trip concluded with presentations on Corporate Social Responsibility and Global Governance, a major focus of the trip. The cohort spent a week in Spain with meetings at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), the International Chamber of Commerce, the Barcelona Lab for Urban Environmental Justice and Sustainability, two international law firms, and AdiosCO2, a renewable energy company.

The trip, now in its ninth iteration, always includes academic lectures, corporate visits and cultural site tours. Students from the cohort visited Montserrat, a mountainous region in Spain, the Picasso Museum, The Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, and the Alta Alella Mirgin winery. Various walking tours gave the cohort the chance to soak in the architectural marvels of Barcelona. Many of the students also caught a soccer match between FC Barcelona and Lyon at a Champions League game.



A Note from MBA Program Staff

Welcome to the UTEP MBA newsletter!

Our newsletter is a snapshot of the exciting developments within the UTEP MBA Programs — such as new concentrations, course offerings, and community engagement projects — that have taken place over the last few months. We also want to highlight your many achievements — whether you are a current MBA student or alumni! The UTEP MBA Team encourages you to share career promotions, transitions and professional achievements because we want to celebrate your successes.

We aim to publish the UTEP MBA Newsletter quarterly, so please be on the lookout for future issues.



COBA WELCOMES DEAN PAYNE

James Payne, Ph.D., comes to UTEP from Benedictine University

James E. Payne, Ph.D., began on May 1 his time as Dean of the College of Business Administration at UTEP. He replaces Stephen Crites, Ph.D., who served as Interim Dean. He also will hold the Paul L. Foster and Alejandra de la Vega Foster Distinguished Chair in International Business.

Payne joins UTEP from Benedictine University in Lisle, Ill., where he served as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

"We welcome Dr. Payne to UTEP as dean of the College of Business Administration," said President Diana Natalicio. "His extensive experience as an academic administrator and teacher-scholar promises to enhance the work of the college's faculty, staff and students. We are very pleased that he will play a leadership role in COBA as it continues its mission of providing UTEP students world-class educational opportunities that ensure their competitiveness in a global marketplace."

Payne has over 30 years of experience in higher education with 16 years in administration. His past appointments include Dean of the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business at Georgia College & State University, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of New Orleans, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Illinois State University and Chair of the Department of Economics at Illinois State University.

In addition to his administrative background, Payne has a distinguished record of accomplishments in research. He served as a Fulbright Research Scholar and a Fulbright Senior Specialist at the Institute of Economics. He has published 250 peer-reviewed journal articles and his scholarly work has been cited more than 11,000 times. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Economics and Finance, and serves as an editorial board member for a dozen other academic journals.



Payne

THE DECISION MAKERS

Area CEOs, board members share career lessons with EMBA cohort



Mary Kipp, CEO of El Paso Electric; Rick Francis, Executive Chairman of Weststar Bank; and Woody Hunt, Senior Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hunt Companies, Inc., share a laugh during a panel discussion moderated by UTEP professor Gary Hedrick at the UTEP Graduate Business Center in Downtown El Paso.

Some of El Paso's most influential businesspeople shared their stories with UTEP Executive MBA (EMBA) students as part of the program's Corporate Governance course at the Graduate Business Center in Downtown El Paso.

An integral portion of the EMBA program, the course dives into the relationship between corporate ownership and control, the accountability of a CEO and the relationship between a CEO and a board. Moderated by UTEP professor Gary Hedrick – a former CEO of El Paso Electric – the panel covered topics of leadership, accountability, resilience and leadership. Split across two panels, the discussions are a major opportunity for EMBA students to directly hear from El Paso's most influential businesspeople.

The first panel focused on the role of the CEO and its participants included Tasha Hopper, CEO of Hospitals of Providence – Transmountain; Cindy Stout, President and CEO of El Paso Children's Hospital; Kirk Robison, Founder, CEO and of Owner Pizza Properties, Inc; and Luis Alvarez, CEO of Ready One Industries.

"When I ask somebody to do something, I always try to remember I was there one time," Robison said. "It's important to remember where you came from and how you got to where you are now – because somebody else is on that same path and they might even do it better."

The second panel explored the dynamics between executive leadership and board governance, broadening the cohort's understanding of the symbiotic relationship



Kirk Robison, Chairman of Pizza Properties, Inc., speaks to the EMBA cohort during a CEO panel moderated by UTEP professor Gary Hedrick.

between a CEO and its overarching leadership. Panelists included Mary Kipp, CEO and President of El Paso Electric; Rick Francis, Executive Chairman Weststar Bank; Ed Escudero, board member and Audit Committee Chair for El Paso Electric; Tripper Goodman, board member of Capital Savings Bank; and Woody Hunt, former board member of El Paso Electric and Public Service Company of New Mexico.

Kipp and others dispensed stories and advice for the EMBA cohort, often stressing the ethical and legal responsibilities that are tied to positions known for power and influence,

but also reminding them of the impact of such leadership roles in a community.

"Most people don't become financially successful in big ways by doing things they don't enjoy. Only a few people become CEOs and only a few people become board members." Kipp said. "Go [into these roles] with the mindset of enjoying each day instead of waiting for an opportunity that you may or may not get."

The Corporate Governance course is part of the EMBA curriculum. Hedrick has hosted CEO and board panels each year since the inception of the EMBA in 2010.

Q&A: Associate Dean Discusses New Role at COBA

Fernando Jiménez Arévalo began new UTEP post in Spring 2019

Fernando R. Jiménez Arévalo, Ph.D., began the Spring 2019 semester with a new position within the College of Business Administration: Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Jiménez is stepping in for Steve Johnson, Ph.D., who previously held the position for 13 years.

Jiménez discusses his new role at COBA and the qualities that he believes make an effective student and teacher with COBA News. To read the full Q&A, visit the COBA News Blog at utep.edu/cobanews.



Jiménez Arévalo

What does the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs do for the College of Business Administration?

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the College of Business Administration oversees the college's baccalaureate programs and the MBA program. Primarily, the Associate Dean assures that the learning objectives of the programs match the needs of the stakeholders, and that students accomplish excellence in learning outcomes.

How do you see COBA affecting the Paso del Norte region in the next 20 years?

Our graduates will continue to attract businesses, which will generate economic development. Importantly, our college will be a source of entrepreneurs not only locally, but globally. Our students will create and grow new businesses in the Paso del Norte region and beyond.

What qualities make a good student?

For me, a good student is motivated to serve. A good student is motivated to learn for a reason, to help others. Business is about understanding customer needs and helping customers satisfy those needs. Good students understand that the value of knowledge is determined by its application. A good student is not interested in learning how to do stuff, or accumulating knowledge for the sake of it. A good student understands why knowledge is important, and uses it ethically to improve the situation at hand. A good student has the intrinsic motivation to become a better person, to become a more useful individual. The rest is secondary.

UTEP Earns Coveted Top Tier Research Designation

The University of Texas at El Paso has attained a coveted R1 designation (top tier doctoral university with very high research activity) in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

UTEP is one of only 130 (4.5%) top tier universities among the 2,883 four-year higher education institutions across the U.S. to earn this prestigious R1 distinction, joining the ranks of such universities as Stanford, M.I.T., Michigan, Arizona and California-Berkeley.

The Carnegie Classification process analyzes higher education institutions in the U.S. on the basis of such factors as research expenditures, undergraduate and graduate instructional programs, enrollment profile, size and setting, and basic classification.

Thirty years ago, when Dr. Natalicio began her tenure as UTEP's president, the university boldly set a goal of expanding the scope and quality of research activity and increasing the number of doctoral pro-



UTEP President Diana Natalicio celebrates UTEP's recent top tier designation in Centennial Plaza. (Photo courtesy of University Communications)

grams. Since then, annual research expenditures have grown from \$6 million to \$95 million, and doctoral degree offerings have increased from a single program in geology to 22 programs offered by all colleges and schools across the campus.

New Director of Corporate, Alumni Partnerships Named

Vanessa G. Leon has been named Director of Corporate Partnerships and Alumni Relations for the College of Business Administration (COBA) at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP).



Leon

Leon is responsible for cultivating strong relationships with COBA's corporate partners and building an engaged network of business alumni.

"Corporate partnerships – like the ones formed through the MBA Program's Corporate Engagement Project – connect UTEP's full-time MBA students with regional and national enterprises," Leon said. "These connections create valuable opportunities on both sides: Students develop professional skills, while corporations benefit from the problem solving and research capabilities of our students."

Leon comes to the University from United Way of El Paso County, where she served as the nonprofit's development

GET INVOLVED

Are you looking to begin a partnership with COBA? Contact Vanessa Leon at 915-747-8636 or via email at vgleon@utep.edu.

director. Prior to that position, she helped lead the fundraising efforts for El Paso Children's Hospital with the University Medical Center Foundation.

She received a B.A. in Organizational and Corporate Communication with a minor in Creative Writing from UTEP.

The College of Business Administration actively partners with global industry leaders – including ADP, Lockheed Martin, and Prudential Financial – to offer corporate academies that integrate specialized courses, industry-specific technologies, and co-curricular activities for enrolled students.

Participants of these academies are uniquely prepared for challenging careers in a number of high-demand business fields.

GECU's Long Earns National Banking Honor



GECU CEO Crystal Long speaks at the National Credit Union Foundation's award ceremony on March 11, 2019. Long, a graduate of the EMBA program, was honored with the 2019 Herb Wegner Memorial Award (Courtesy of National Credit Union Foundation)

The National Credit Union Foundation announced President and CEO of GECU Crystal Long as a recipient of the 2019 Herb Wegner Memorial Award. Long was recognized with the Outstanding Individual Achievement Award on March 11, 2019, in Washington, D.C., at the annual fundraising gala hosted by the foundation.

Long is a graduate of UTEP's Executive MBA program.

The Herb Wegner awards are the credit union movement's highest national honors, as they celebrate individuals and programs that put the belief into action. Their achievements fulfill the mission of promoting financial freedom for millions of people around the world.

Under Long's leadership, GECU has made a commitment to the community and enabled many El Paso residents achieve financial security and prosperity.

The award is named in honor of Herb Wegner, late president and CEO of the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), whose dedication, ideas and accomplishments revolutionized the ways that credit unions serve their communities.

The Herb Wegner award is given to individuals who have shown outstanding individual achievements in the credit union movement. Long, who has been with GECU for more than 30 years, has been leading El Paso's largest locally owned credit union as president and CEO for almost seven years.

The National Credit Union Foundation is the charitable arm of the U.S. credit union movement and works as a catalyst to improve people's financial lives. The Foundation focuses on the needs of consumers and the unique ability of credit unions to meet them.

MORE THAN A PROJECT

Corporate Engagement Project creates opportunities for research, innovation for local businesses and full-time MBA students

What started off as an extracurricular activity has evolved into a fully realized elective allowing full-time MBA students to develop soft skills while providing analytical assistance to area businesses.

Originally known as the Business Solutions Group — an extracurricular activity — the group looked into ways full-time MBA students could provide research and analytical assistance to local businesses. The group was renamed the Corporate Engagement Project — it was also formalized as an elective class for full-time MBA students in 2013.

Each semester, teams composed of three to five FMBA students are assigned a semester-long project proposed by corporate partners. Students research and analyze the assigned project and present findings to a panel of enterprise executives and board members.

The CEP is considered a win-win for students and businesses.

For corporate partners, the CEP provides opportunities for a dedicated team of graduate business students to investigate needs of a corporation or nonprofit. For students, the CEP presents an opportunity to develop skills that only come from practical work experience.

A Graduate Management Admission Council survey found interpersonal and intrapersonal — "soft" — skills make up the majority of skills employers most frequently seek in business school hires, but seldom find in applicants.

Skills include how an employee handles working with others, time/resource management, and professional network development.

In the ten years since the project began, more than 120 students have helped more than 25 corporate partners across 31



Full-time MBA students Edmundo Esparza and Guillermo Lopez Ramirez recently worked with Wells Fargo Advisors' Michael Velarde as part of their Corporate Engagement Project elective this semester.

GET INVOLVED

Entities interested in participating in the Corporate Engagement Project are encouraged to reach out to Corporate Engagement Project Director Bill Conwell at (915) 747-7719 or via email at wjconwell@utep.edu.

projects. It's estimated more than 12,000 student hours of research and real-world experience stem from the CEP.

Past partners include the El Paso Chihuahuas, University Medical Center of El Paso, The Hospitals of Providence and, most recently, Wells Fargo.

The program surveys its corporate partners to track and adjust the CEP each year. Comments collected from past partners consistently praised the professionalism of the student teams along with the "wonderful and dead on" analysis presented at corporate levels.

MBA Association Hosts Alum's Lecture

The UTEP MBA Association in March brought Jose Burgos, MD, to the GBC for a lunchtime discussion that had Burgos sharing extensive stories of his time in the EMBA program, his career in health care — and his parallel career as an entrepreneur, and restaurateur. Burgos, Medical Director for University Medical Center El Paso, has launched successful side businesses, including an urgent care facility and two restaurants in West El Paso, Gusto and Poke3.

To see more photos from the event, visit www.utep.edu/business/mbaa/Events/Burgos.html

