

Bush Faculty Development Funds Grant Report  
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The purpose of the Faculty Development grant was to enable me to travel to Norway to visit with several institutions of higher learning there and also to visit high schools for student recruitment. My travels to Norway in January of 2005 included visits to Trondheim Okonomiske Hogskole (Trondheim Business School), Hogskolen i Oslo (Oslo Business Faculty), and Handelshogskolen i Bodo (Bodo Graduate School of Business). In addition, we visited several high schools in Trondheim and Oslo to visit with students interested in an international educational experience and to market Augustana College as an excellent choice for their educational and cultural experience.

Immediate outcomes expected:

- a. Enhancement of my own knowledge of European business

While in Norway I was able to both observe the state of economic activity and also dialog with Norwegians and Norwegian educators about their economic affairs and international business focus. Norway is a small country both geographically and in population, and requires a close working relationship with other countries for international commerce. Norway is especially attentive to European affairs, and watches the development of the European Economic Community closely. At this time Norway is one of several European states that have opted not to convert to the Euro, which is somewhat controversial in the rest of Europe. This is ostensibly due to the relative strength of the Norwegian economy compared with much of Europe, due primarily to their extensive oil production and exports (they are the world's third largest oil exporting country). As a country Norway is debt-free and has a substantial financial reserve, which is the envy of many other European countries.

Domestically Norway has a fairly high tax structure relative to the US, and their citizens receive a substantial number of social program benefits from their government, such as free health care, maternity/paternity leave, and such. Taxes on automobile purchases are extremely high, as are fuel costs in spite of their large oil production capacity. In Oslo, homes are extremely expensive, and living costs in Oslo are high. Oslo vacillates with Tokyo as the most expensive city to live in the world. Still, the economy appears to be robust, and the country appears to be free from blighted areas of poverty and the like. The country does appear to be struggling with immigration policies and burdens on their economy posed by immigrants seeking to take advantage of the positive economic climate and social programming. Current influxes of immigrants are coming primarily from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. People we met with seemed to have strong feelings about the current educational reforms happening in Norway, both in the elementary and high school levels, as well as in higher education.

As a result of my trip to Norway and the assistance I received from Norwegian faculties in the various institutions I visited, I became interested in preparing and delivering a class in Managing International Business Opportunities, which I taught in the Interim of 2006. Fourteen students were enrolled and the feedback from the class was very positive. Students reacted quite favorably to expanding their thinking about current trends in globalization and to the changes in technology and communication which are leading the current rapid development in India, China, and the former Soviet Union. These changes represent threats to the Western European economy as well as to the job prospects for Americans as more work is outsourced overseas.

b. Establishment of a faculty exchange program in International Business

Norwegian faculty members were most welcoming and generous in sharing their curriculum information and individual class design. Much of their curriculum is now being delivered in the English language, both to make their class offerings more attractive to foreign students studying in Norway, and to equip Norwegian students to compete in a global economy where English is the most common language of business. A few reacted positively to the prospects of an exchange with an Augustana professor, but were hesitant due to the realities of relocating for an extended period of time and its impact on family and finances. It is apparent to me that it will be challenging to make such arrangements, but our January term and the summer sessions remain a more reasonable option for both our faculty to travel to and teach in Norway and their faculty to come to Augustana. In fact, we will entertain the first such opportunity this summer when a Norwegian educator comes to Augustana to team teach Principles of Management course with Shelly Gardner. Hopefully this will stimulate continued interest in future such opportunities. Shelly Gardner and Jaciel Keltgen both traveled to Norway in January of 2006 to further develop our Norwegian connections and encourage cooperation and exchange.

c. Stimulate further interest in study abroad opportunities for Augustana students, and stimulate interest of Norwegian students to study here.

Norwegian educators seem to be focused on the continued development of their curriculum to meet the standards of European education programming. Norwegian business students are encouraged to study abroad, especially in European institutions, but also in Oceania and the United States. Current difficulties in traveling to the US seem to hinder or discourage travel and study here, but Norwegian educators continue to encourage students to make the necessary arrangements because of the quality educational experiences they perceive to be here. At the same time they are somewhat concerned about the lack of rigor in Australian and New Zealand educational programs, yet these remain extremely popular among Norwegian students due in part to the easier classes, but also due to the favorable climate and the availability of recreation and social activities.

At this time it is somewhat expensive for Norwegian students to travel to and study in America, yet once here they find living expenses to be quite favorable compared to in Norway. The Norwegian government continues to provide study abroad assistance in the form of grants and loans to students wishing to obtain an international experience. We continue to have a number of Norwegian students matriculating here at Augustana, with particular success in the Nursing and Business programs. It is apparent that we continue to have favorable relationships with several institutions in Norway, and have a number of Augustana alumni who speak favorably about their experiences here and encourage current students to attend.

I am most grateful for the assistance the Faculty Development Grant funds provided, and can point directly to the development of the International Business course offering as a result of my exposure to more international business knowledge and experience. My hopes are that Augustana can continue to offer courses of study in international business as a way to equip our students to better compete in a global economy where knowledge of the rest of the world is very important.