

11-2004

## GlobalMBA: A Blueprint for Creating an Integrated, International Trilateral MBA Program

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### Recommended Citation

Steagall, Jeffrey W.; Michelman, Jeffrey E.; and Traynham, Earle, "GlobalMBA: A Blueprint for Creating an Integrated, International Trilateral MBA Program" (2004). *Accounting and Finance Faculty Publications*. 6. [https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/bacc\\_facpub/6](https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/bacc_facpub/6)

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# GlobalMBA: A Blueprint for Creating an Integrated, International Trilateral MBA Program

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**ABSTRACT.** Graduate business education is becoming increasingly international. However, the complexity of creating truly integrated, cross-country curricula has stifled the development of innovative degree programs, leading most institutions to rely on the tried-and-true semester-abroad model. This article makes the case for a significantly more integrated joint curriculum, such as that embodied in the GlobalMBA Program (<http://GlobalMBA.unf.edu>) jointly developed by the Fach-

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The authors would like to thank their colleagues Lothar Černý, Harald Sander, Harald Weyel and Denis Peguin for their invaluable help in developing and operating the GlobalMBA program, as well as for their insightful comments on drafts of this article.

This article was made possible in part by a research grant from the Université de Provence.

Additional details about the GlobalMBA are available at <http://GlobalMBA.unf.edu>.

Any errors or omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

Journal of Teaching in International Business, Vol. 16(1) 2004

<http://www.haworthpress.com/web/JTIB>

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Digital Object Identifier: 10.1300/J066v16n01\_02

hochschule Köln, Germany; the Université de Provence, France; and the University of North Florida, United States. In order to stimulate other consortia to create integrated international programs, the paper identifies several sources of difficulty inherent in designing such programs and provides recommendations for overcoming them, resulting in a blueprint for program creation. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2004 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

**KEYWORDS.** Integrated MBA curriculum, multinational multiple degree cohort program

The increasingly integrated global economy continues to pressure business schools to produce more internationally-savvy MBAs. This effort is required because American MBA programs have tended to focus nearly exclusively on domestic business well into the 1990s. That bias has been due to several factors, including the sheer size of America's domestic market, the dominant (though shrinking) position of the US in the global economy, and the resultant lack of demand for MBAs with strong international skills (Richards-Wilson, 2002). Recently, however, business schools have begun responding to the increased demand for internationally-trained MBAs by internationalizing their curricula to varying degrees (White and Griffith, 1998; Kumer and Usunier, 2001). Moreover, business schools in the new millennium find themselves at a crossroads of competition versus collaboration (Boyd and Halifond, 2001; Oxenberry, 2000).

The literature on internationalizing business education has focused on espousing the rationales for doing so (Arpan, 1993; Beamish and Calof, 1989; Bonaparte, 1988; Cavusgil, 1993; Scherer et al., 2003) and on cataloguing achievements in the field (American Council on Education, 2002; Arpan, Folks, and Kwok, 1993; Arpan and Kwok, 2001; Folks, 1999; Johnson and Edelstein, 1993). These publications tend to discuss internationalization from a strategic perspective. Even the business press has begun to acknowledge the benefits of globalizing the curriculum and the strategic reasons for engaging in education abroad (Auerbach, 1990a and 1990b; Raju, 1991; Waxman, 1993; Grimes, 2002; Pohl, 2003; Fowley, 2004). However, in order to operationalize an internationalization program, it is helpful to have tactical guidance from institutions with experience. Toward this end, Scherer et al. (2003) provide some general guidelines for internationalization, but does not provide specific

suggestions regarding the pitfalls inherent in designing cooperative international programs. Hudzik, Ingraham, and Peterson (2003) also provide some operational suggestions regarding study abroad. However, neither of those publications truly provides a model for designing and implementing new international programs. In the authors' view, this deficiency remains a significant impediment to the creation of innovative international programs. This article provides one model for developing new cooperative international programs, using the experience of the University of North Florida and its partners in creating their GlobalMBA program as a case study.

Initial attempts at internationalizing business schools involved merely adding or infusing international content to existing courses, with the goal of exposing students to international business ideas. This approach introduced students to concepts that add complexity to international business activities vis-à-vis the domestic business issues covered in students' other MBA courses. Arpan (1993) termed this basic, introductory approach to internationalizing the curriculum "awareness."

Some schools have determined that awareness is no longer an appropriate goal in this era of globalization. Students must do more than recognize that international events occur and affect business. They must also reach Arpan's level of "understanding" international business concepts. This can only be accomplished by having one, or preferably more, internationally-oriented courses in the curriculum.

A few institutions have identified Arpan's highest level of "competency" as the appropriate goal. With competency, students can transform their understanding into business actions. Clearly, competency requires an integrated approach to business education that is free from artificial distinctions between domestic and international business. Key components of a program characterized by competency include foreign language and cross-cultural competencies with an interdisciplinary bent that integrates economic, geographic, historical, political, and social competencies in the business curriculum. Arpan also recommends an "overseas experiential component" to round out students' curriculum with firsthand knowledge of living and, if possible, working abroad.

This article assumes that competency is the desired goal for international business education in the MBA program. Furthermore, it presumes that close cooperation with foreign partners is an effective way to operate a program of that nature. The next section describes various models of cooperative graduate international business education that exist, and includes a rationale for cooperation. It concludes with a discussion of how to select the appropriate model for a given set of institutions. The following section profiles the development and present state of the GlobalMBA program jointly developed by the Fach-

hochschule Köln (University of Applied Sciences Cologne), Germany (FHK); the Université de Provence, France (UP); and the University of North Florida (UNF). It identifies the major obstacles that a consortium must overcome in creating a cooperative degree program, and provides suggestions for doing so. The next section describes the myriad issues that evolved during the implementation phase of the GlobalMBA program and outlines how the consortium overcame them. A concluding section expositis criteria that are critical for cooperative program success and offers a blueprint for developing a cooperative graduate international business degree program.

### ***COOPERATIVE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION MODELS***

A number of US institutions utilize the traditional semester abroad to enhance the domestic curriculum or integrate short-term faculty-led study tours into their full-time and part-time graduate programs (Greenhouse, 1991; Singletary, 1996; Decker, 1999; Frisbie, 2001; Murray, 2001). More recently, however, several universities have created cooperative full-time MBA programs with foreign institutions. Typically, these programs fall into one of two categories. The first category includes joint programs between two institutions, one in the US and one abroad. These programs vary in length between fifteen and twenty-four months, with students spending approximately one-half of their time at each university and earning a degree from each institution. Examples of this model include: University of South Carolina and Vienna University of Economics and Business; Texas Tech University and The University of Anáhuac; and Texas Christian University and Universidad de las Americas. An analogous model that does not include a US university is the partnership between the National University of Singapore and Peking University. The second category involves a consortium of three or more institutions, one in the US and two or more abroad. These programs are generally shorter, ranging between eleven and fourteen months, with students spending at least fifty percent of their time abroad and earning one degree, the MBA, from the US institution. Examples of this model include: Long Island University, European Business School–London, and The American University of Paris; Georgia State University, IAE–the Graduate Business School at the Sorbonne, and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro Coppead Graduate School of Business. A variation on this model is The Consortium Institute for Management Business Analysis (CIMBA), in which students study in Italy and earn a degree from the University of Kansas.

Table 1 compares these eight programs across seven important criteria. It includes all full-time programs having at least two participating partners located in different countries and specifically described as “International MBA” or “Global MBA” programs on the one of the institutions’ websites on January 30, 2004. Program duration varies between 11 and 24 months. All programs except TCU/UDLA follow a cohort model. The GlobalMBA program stresses the value of the cohort taking all classes together, while several programs allow a significant percentage of credits to be electives. Electives decrease the cohort nature of the program, yet they also expose cohort members to other students. Perhaps even more importantly, it allows domestic students more interaction with international students, which is particularly valuable in many American universities. Only three schools require students to be bilingual before beginning their programs, although the others incorporate language components to various degrees. The number of degrees offered varies between one and three with most programs awarding two. Instruction can occur in between one and four countries, with two being the most common. The share of student time abroad varies between 40% and 67%, with 50% being typical. Half of the programs require an internship, but only the Singapore/Peking program requires a thesis. The GlobalMBA program requires a major consulting project.

Some MBA programs have gone even further, billing themselves as international MBAs. The International MBA (IMBA), formerly known as the Master of International Business Studies (MIBS), at the University of South Carolina and the MBA in International Management from Thunderbird, The Garvin School of International Management, are two prominent examples. Both curricula include an optional foreign language track, and South Carolina requires a 20-week international internship.

Given the variety of existing models, a group of institutions seeking to develop its own cooperative degree program must determine which model best suits its needs. First, the time and financial resources that can be devoted to program development are critical. At one extreme is the traditional semester abroad, which requires start-up cost, limited to determining course equivalencies and working out the administrative details of student exchanges. At many universities, turf battles complicate cooperation. The GlobalMBA program represents the polar opposite, with complete program integration, to the point where the program runs almost outside the normal operating parameters of the partners. The remainder of this paper details the intensive process of creating and implementing this program, as well as the benefits of such close cooperation. Second, money and personnel for program operation are also keys. Internships are indisputably fantastic experiences that greatly enhance alumni’s job prospects, but they require relatively large resource allocations. Programs requiring language components often must have cooperation from non-busi-

TABLE 1. A Comparison of Full-Time International MBA Programs

School(s)	Web Address	Program Name	Duration in Months	% of Electives	Required Internship	Bilingual	# Degrees Offered	Countries of Instruction	% of Program Abroad
University of North Florida, University of Provence, and University of Applied Sciences Cologne	<a href="http://globalmba.unf.edu">http://globalmba.unf.edu</a>	GlobalMBA	15	0%	Yes	No	3	3	50%
University of South Carolina and Vienna University Of Economics and Business	<a href="http://www.wu-wien.ac.at/inst/imba/">http://www.wu-wien.ac.at/inst/imba/</a>	International MBA	15	35%	No	No	2	2	40%
Long Island University, European Business School-London, and The American University of Paris	<a href="http://www.cwpost.liunet.edu/cwis/cwp/colofman/mba/mba1.html">http://www.cwpost.liunet.edu/cwis/cwp/colofman/mba/mba1.html</a>	Accelerated International MBA	12	0%	No	No	1	3	67%
Graduate Business School at the Sorbonne, and Rio de Janeiro—the COPPEAD Graduate School of Business, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	<a href="http://www.cba.gsu.edu/gpmba">http://www.cba.gsu.edu/gpmba</a>	Global Partners MBA Program	14	0%	Yes	No	1	4	50%
Texas Tech University and The University Anáhuac	<a href="http://mba.ba.ttu.edu/MBA/MBA_Prospective/MBA_P_JP_Anahuac_pg2">http://mba.ba.ttu.edu/MBA/MBA_Prospective/MBA_P_JP_Anahuac_pg2</a>	Joint MBA	24	0%	Yes	Yes	2	2	50%
Texas Christian University and Universidad de las Américas (UDLA)	<a href="http://www.mim.tcu.edu">http://www.mim.tcu.edu</a>	Master of International Management	24	31%	Yes	Yes	2	2	50%
National University of Singapore and Peking University	<a href="http://www.bschool.nus.edu/Programs/IMBA/home.htm">http://www.bschool.nus.edu/Programs/IMBA/home.htm</a>	International MBA	22	0%	No	Yes	2	2	50%
University of Kansas and The Consortium Institute for Management and Business Analysis (CIMBA)	<a href="http://www.business.ku.edu/gen/bschool_generated_pages/Italy_Program_m714.html">http://www.business.ku.edu/gen/bschool_generated_pages/Italy_Program_m714.html</a>	CIMBA	11	13%	No	No	1	3	60%

ness departments and colleges. Third, student characteristics, such as incoming students' language abilities and the duration for which they are willing and able to study abroad, are important considerations. In short, institutional idiosyncrasies, including those of partner institutions, must be considered carefully before the optimal model can be determined.

With its two European partners, the University of North Florida (UNF) has developed a highly-integrated curriculum, the GlobalMBA Program, which offers several advantages over the more traditional programs described above. However, the process of creating the integrated curriculum has been both complex and time-consuming. By describing those experiences here, the authors seek to provide a blueprint for other institutions seeking to establish similar programs.

### ***BENEFITS OF AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM***

The integrated curriculum with a required internship has several advantages over the simple semester abroad option within an MBA program. First, it allows for easy implementation of a cohort system. The collegial learning environment was found to be particularly helpful to MBA learning (Baldwin, Beddell and Johnson, 1997). Second, the student bonding inherent in the cohort system assists students in overcoming the culture shock and homesickness that they experience during their time abroad, in part because students are introduced to the host country through the eyes of native students. Third, it allows students to benefit by choosing courses that represent particularly strong fields at each university. Fourth, after three semesters, all students bring a common body of knowledge to the final semester's capstone course and project. Fifth, the final consulting project becomes a more meaningful international business experience because all students in the cohort will have lived and studied in all three countries; taken business, language and culture courses; studied the business styles in all three nations; and developed a global perspective on business. Finally, the internship provides real work experience not only in international business, but likely in a country that is not the student's native country.

A related issue is the perception by educators, politicians, journalists, and others in Europe and Asia that American universities are charging high prices for degree programs that are of lower quality than those offered by local institutions. Creating an integrated degree program can mitigate such concerns by ensuring that the programs receive appropriate ministry certification.



### THE GLOBAL MBA PROGRAM

As mentioned above, the motivation for the GlobalMBA program was to provide graduate business students with the opportunity to achieve competency in international business through an intensive, rigorous course of study that requires two semesters abroad and a significant internship experience conducting international business. The GlobalMBA is modeled loosely on an analogous undergraduate program, known as Applied Languages Europe (ALE), which exists, but is not common, in the European Union. In the ALE, students spend one year at each of three universities in three countries, study in three different languages and receive a degree from each upon completion.

Three institutions collaborated to create the GlobalMBA—the Université de Provence (UP), located in Aix-en-Provence, France; the Fachhochschule Köln (FHK) or University of Applied Sciences Cologne, Germany; and the University of North Florida (UNF), located in Jacksonville, USA—beginning in 1999. Prior to initial program discussions, bilateral exchange agreements had existed between UP and UNF and between UP and FHK. Moreover, both student exchanges had been active for several years, including ALE cooperation between UP and FHK, providing the basis for mutual trust and commitment that was often critical during the design and implementation processes. While the parties agreed upon the conceptual framework for the program quickly, negotiations regarding details continued for several months.

The entire program is delivered in English, since UNF is unlikely to find sufficient candidates fluent in both French and German. Each institution may have as many as ten students in its cohort, a restriction generated by classroom size at UP. All students must have taken a common set of prerequisite courses, including *Principles of Micro- and Macroeconomics*, *Financial Analysis*, *Principles of Management*, *Principles of Marketing*, and *Business Law*. These courses are required for admission to UNF's regular MBA program and the consortium considered them to guarantee a sufficient common business background for students, which was particularly important because the majority of European GlobalMBA students had majored in language, not business.

Table 2 shows the GlobalMBA curriculum for the fourth cohort that will begin in August, 2004.

The curriculum requires that students who do not speak French take a two-course sequence introducing them to the language. Typically, only the American students need this sequence, since most of the German GlobalMBA students speak French. The initial three-credit course occurs intensively during a one-month period at the beginning of the traditional academic year, from late August through the end of September, taking advantage of the down-time before the German fall term begins in October. A one-credit follow-up course

TABLE 2. 2004-5 GlobalMBA Curriculum

Term (Institution)					
Aug./Sept. 2004 (UNF)	Fall 2004 (FHK)	Jan./Feb. 2005 (varies)	Spring 2005 (UP)	Summer 2005 (UNF)	Fall 2005 (UNF)
French I	Global Economics	International Business Internship	International Management	Advanced Financial Management	Modeling and Management of Operations
	International Managerial Accounting		International Marketing	Making Decisions with Data	International Finance
	Theory of Intercultural Communication		Game Theory Applied to Business Strategy	Management of Information Technology	International Business Consulting Project
	Techniques of Verbal Communication		French II	Organizational Theory	Advanced Business Policy
	German Culture & Language				

occurs during the UP semester. In Germany, students take a one-credit course entitled *German Language and Culture*, which focuses on learning about and adapting to a new culture, rather than on intensive language education. Foreign language courses are offered at the undergraduate level for two reasons. First, UNF teaches language courses only at the undergraduate level. Since UNF students register at UNF for all courses, including those taken abroad, there is no graduate course number to use for foreign language. Second, it keeps tuition costs lower for students. The remainder of the curriculum consists solely of graduate-level courses, all of which are 3-credit courses. Graduate courses are distributed across partner schools according to the respective institutional strengths. FHK's participation includes two colleges, the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Communication Studies, allowing for half the coursework there to focus on the communications issues inherent in international business.

During the program, an internship, which is required for both the FHK and UP degrees, occurs. Ideally, FHK and UP students would do their internships in the US, while the UNF students would intern in Europe. However, with the internship period falling between the two European semesters, this rarely happens. Upon completion of the internship, each student must write a comprehensive *Internship Report* describing and analyzing his experiences in terms of business models and methods, in order to satisfy the FHK and UP thesis requirements.

The final semester consulting project requires student teams, each comprised of at least one student from each university, to complete an interna-

tional business consulting project for a company, under the supervision of UNF faculty members. Moreover, faculty from both UP and FHK visit UNF during the fourth semester and are available for email consultation, in order to apply their expertise to the problems.

The GlobalMBA curriculum consists of 45 graduate and 5 undergraduate credits, and satisfies all requirements for the master's degree at each institution. GlobalMBA graduates earn an *MBA* from UNF, a *Masters of International Management and Intercultural Communications* from FHK, and a *DESS/Master "Affaires Internationales-LEA"* from UP. Moreover, the program provides students with a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach (known as *Allgemeinbildung* in German) to achieving competency in international business.

### **DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

Developing the GlobalMBA was a complex process, requiring the melding of educational cultures. Differences between student expectations and faculty expectations not only between the EU and American partners, but also between the French and German schools, were often difficult to overcome. Moreover, each institution was concerned with its unique accreditation requirements. Table 3 identifies the main problems encountered in developing the GlobalMBA, together with brief descriptions of the solutions employed.

It should be noted that the GlobalMBA program was developed at the turn of the millennium. Since then, the European Union (EU) has committed to the so-called "Bologna Process," which harmonizes EU educational processes. In particular, degree programs will be based on the Bachelor's-Master's model familiar in the USA. The GlobalMBA is among the first Master's-degree products in that process. Negotiating new cooperative programs will likely be simpler once the Bologna Process has been completed.

Also, accommodating UP's maximum classroom size by allowing only two cohorts to be at UP simultaneously created a suboptimal student mobility model. For instance, during the second term, the French students went to UNF, while the FHK and UNF students spent the spring term at UP. In the third term, the UNF and UP students were at FHK, with the FHK students at UNF. Only in the final semester did all students spend a semester together at UNF. The GlobalMBA program used this mobility model for its first two years, before dropping the maximum number of students accepted by each school to ten and keeping the 30-student cohort together for the entire program. As an added benefit, foreign students now spend their initial and subsequent semesters abroad with native students, easing the cultural transition. It is clear that the

TABLE 3. Development Issues and Solutions

Issue	Solution
EU students expect zero tuition; UNF charges high out-of-state tuition	GlobalMBA operates through bilateral exchange agreements, allowing EU students to avoid UNF tuition and fees
Operation of GlobalMBA has associated costs	Students pay 300 dollars/euros to each school
Classroom capacity constraint = 30 at UP and FHK needed to enroll at least 15 students per year to get program approval	Initially, the entire cohort only studied together as a single group during their final semester at UNF
Diverse academic calendars	Faculty teach in accelerated, non-standard semesters, making it difficult for non-GlobalMBA students to enroll in courses with the GlobalMBA students
Meeting program prerequisites for students without undergraduate business majors (including more than half of EU students)	European students' planning horizon for joining the GlobalMBA is a full year, so that they can acquire prerequisites
Students must complete admission paperwork for all three institutions (admissions applications, transcript evaluations, etc.)	Partners developed a common application form that met all schools' requirements and created a form that all schools accepted in lieu of official undergraduate transcripts
Scoring high on the GMAT is sometimes difficult for even very bright European students (cultural bias, unfamiliarity with techniques for taking objective tests)	The minimum GMAT score for acceptance by any partner is 500 (38th percentile)
TOEFL exam	UNF agreed to waive TOEFL requirement for all European GlobalMBAs, as partners agreed to certify English in admission process
UNF student selection	Top applicants have a personal interview with UNF faculty to determine their reasons for selecting the program and their ability to deal with cultural diversity
UNF requires at least 24-hours in residence to earn a master's degree	Students spend 2 semesters at UNF, but only one at each other partner
UNF was concerned about how faculty qualifications abroad would be viewed by its accrediting bodies	Given the high quality of the European institutions, UNF believes that their faculty are well-qualified to teach at the MBA level
Communication among partners; funding for travel	Program directors agreed to meet in person twice per year to discuss issues and solve problems; partially funded by GlobalMBA fees
Approval processes for UP and FHK	Time and patience were required

initial mobility model was flawed, and the authors strongly recommend that it be avoided.

American schools considering developing cooperative programs must be prepared for the lengthy ministry approval processes required in Europe (as well as most other nations), where government oversight of curricula is considerable. The UP and FHK processes were also obscure to the UNF program leaders, who hadn't been through them before. In the German case, ministry approval was eventually given, but not until nearly one year into the GlobalMBA program, and more than one year after the proposal had been submitted. Moreover, it was later learned that once the ministry approval was obtained future, flexibility of the program became quite limited. Fortunately, recent changes in German

higher education due to the Bologna Process give German universities more autonomy over their own programs, so long as the basic structure of the initially-accredited program remains intact. In the UP case, problems arose at the departmental, university, and ministry levels. At all three levels, the English-only delivery of material was strongly questioned, providing a clear reason to incorporate French language into the revised year 2 curriculum. In the end, ministry approval was withheld, and the GlobalMBA is being offered as an option under UP's existing *DESS "Affaires Internationales-LEA"* program, which is sanctioned by the ministry. In this sense, UP's model mirrored the approach taken by UNF, which was to meet the minimum requirements of the existing MBA program.

### **IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

Implementing the GlobalMBA brought new problems to light, some of which had been created by decisions made in the development process. Not surprisingly, continued communication, particularly in face-to-face meetings, has been crucial to the program's success. Communication with and cooperation from key university officials has also been essential. Table 4 outlines the main implementation issues.

### **SUMMARY: CRITICAL CRITERIA AND A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS**

Despite the difficulty of developing and implementing cooperative degree programs at the international level, the authors wholeheartedly endorse doing so. Providing students with innovative, outstanding educational opportunities is a reward in itself. Moreover, engaging in such an endeavor provides faculty with a real-world experience in conducting international business that pays off in the classroom.

The factors determining success of international academic cooperation are not so different from those influencing the success of international business endeavors. However, there is one crucial difference in that all businesses have a similar, bottom-line goal, while the ultimate goals of educators are less clear and do vary across borders, lending an additional degree of complexity to educational consortia. In order to weather the associated storms, three features are essential.

First, the effort required to develop and implement a project on the scale of the GlobalMBA should not be taken lightly. Established bilateral relationships

TABLE 4. Implementation Issues and Solutions

Issue	Solution
The GlobalMBA program raised administrative issues that had never been considered at UNF, which was founded in 1972 and has had little experience with international programs; often, these issues could not be handled within standard procedures	Communication with key administrators was essential, but the "can-do" perspectives of UNF's provost, director of admissions and registrar, among others, were critical. Any school considering a cooperative program should ensure that these administrators will be proactive and solution-oriented, or the program will fail
Exchange student status for EU students at UNF	Exchange status allowed EU students to avoid UNF tuition and fees, but also prevented them from earning UNF credits. Only creative and helpful input from key administrators resulted in a solution that allowed EU students to be awarded MBAs.
The GlobalMBA exchange is unbalanced (20 EU students at UNF for two semesters, but 10 UNF students abroad for 2 semesters)	UNF administrators agreed to allow surpluses from other exchanges to balance GlobalMBA shortfall; discussions are underway to allow GlobalMBAs to earn the UNF MBA while spending only one semester at UNF (adding a fourth partner and having students spend one semester at each school)
UNF students adjusting to EU education model (harder to meet with faculty, grades dependent on just one or two exams/projects)	UNF conducts an orientation for students before they leave for Europe
EU students adjusting to UNF education model (fear of approaching professors, very high daily workload, etc.)	Arrival orientation at UNF prepares international students for differences between US and their home educational cultures
Student recruitment at UNF (young institution with no study abroad culture, non-traditional student body, lack of foreign language offerings, etc.)	Coggin College of Business has hired a staff person to develop promotional materials and recruit for all study abroad programs; scholarship funds have been raised; German is now being offered, in addition to Spanish and French
Meeting GMAT minimum for EU students	Although several apparently very bright EU students have been unable to achieve a 500 on the GMAT even after three or more attempts, the consortium agreed that the standard would be enforced
Grading expectations (e.g., what is "passing") vary	Concordance was created between each pair of partners
Incomplete courses, retaking courses, resitting for exams (complicated by the UNF 24-hour rule, which means that a student failing a UNF course would have to retake it at UNF)	This issue remains under discussion. The UNF model forces students failing courses to retake them; FHK requires that students complete incremental work until they have passed
Continuous communication is crucial, but long-distance communication is a limited forum in which to solve problems	Face-to-face meetings have proven to be the only mechanism for solving problems. There is no substitute for having program directors in the same place at the same time, explaining complex issues in detail and brainstorming to generate creative solutions

among at least some, if not all, partners is critical for working through complex issues that are often outside the control of the faculty members or administrators designing the program. In addition, having an existing relationship at stake provides extra pressure to solve program problems. Ideally, the strong relationships will be between program directors, not just between institutions.

Moreover, program directors should have some flexibility and authority to commit their universities to support administrative irregularities that international degree programs necessarily generate. In this sense, the commitment of the dean, particularly at the US based school, is critical. Second, significant institutional support, both administrative and financial, is necessary. The former ensures that it is possible to solve those issues that are beyond the control of an individual college. Financial support for program-related travel, development of materials (including creating and maintaining a current website), and other program costs is required. Moreover, because the GlobalMBA program will not appeal to the typical American student, a commitment of resources to make a wide variety of students aware of the program, as well as to provide scholarships or fellowships for GlobalMBA students, is needed. Finally, all partners need to be committed to scheduling and attending face-to-face meetings on a regular basis. Although e-mails are an effective way for solving immediate problems that transcend time and distance, it is not a substitute for interpersonal interaction, or establishing and maintaining trust (Treviño, Webster and Stein, 2000). The sustainability of a program of this type is dependent on the continued commitment of all parties involved.

In conclusion, the authors offer the following blueprint for developing and offering a successful cooperative international degree program:

- Choose partners carefully. Institutional compatibility and personal relationships among program directors are both crucial. A sense of humor also helps.
- Obtain financial and administrative commitments of support for program development and operation.
- Discuss the program with admissions and registration personnel, university administrators, and faculty early enough in the development process to be sure all constraints are known and key stakeholders are supportive.
- Know the issues on which compromise is possible for your institutions and on which institutional policies cannot be revised.
- Discuss each institution's program goals and constraints early in the process. Be sure that all program directors investigate and understand constraints, so that the consortium does not expend effort on a solution that will not work.
- Clarify all grading issues, including reporting grades and what happens when students fail courses.
- Meet in person several times, with periods between for contemplation and investigation of implementation issues. Continue to meet regularly after the program begins.

- Commit program directors to responding quickly to requests for action by counterparts at partner institutions.
- Market the program effectively to ensure full, high-quality cohorts. A marketing plan for each institution should be part of the program development process.
- Implement a consortium-wide continuous improvement perspective for the program.
- Prepare students well for living and studying abroad

With persistence and commitment from all levels at all partner institutions, an international degree program can provide outstanding educational opportunities for students, preparing them for careers in the global market.

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Submitted: April 2004

First Revision: June 2004

Second Revision: August 2004

Accepted: September 2004