

Master the World

By Jan Collins Stucker

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When Sallie Warren completed her Master of International Business Studies (MIBS) degree in 1987 at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina, she was snapped up quickly by the American Express Company. Warren was already fluent in Spanish and comfortable with Latin American culture from her six-month student internship with American Express in Mexico.

"My internship helped me prove to myself and to American Express that I could adapt to a different culture and work effectively abroad," Warren says. After 18 months with American Express' Latin American/Caribbean office in Miami, she was transferred to Mexico. Today she is a marketing manager for Service Establishment in the Travel-Related Services Division of American Express in Mexico City.

Warren, 31, is one of a growing number of savvy individuals who understand that succeeding in a dynamic global economy requires new strategies and structures. In addition to international business courses, cross-cultural interaction skills and foreign language training are critical.

Warren opted to acquire her degree at the University of South Carolina's Moore School of Business, voted the best international business department in the country in 1990, 1991, and 1992 in surveys conducted by *U.S. News & World Report*. South Carolina's MIBS program was begun in 1974, and it was the first business school in the nation to require all students to be fluent in a second language, receive cross-cultural training, and complete a six-month internship abroad with multinational companies. The school offers language classes in French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Russian, Arabic, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese.

Today, other universities are offering—or will soon introduce—similar programs. Aimed at highly motivated students, mainly those in their mid-to-late 20s who already have some business experience, these programs feature work internships abroad as well as language, business, and area studies components.

At the University of Miami's School of Business Administration, a new Master of International Business Studies program combining an MBA with a Master of Science degree in International Business will be launched this August. The two-year total immersion program (no part-timers are accepted) will include a four-month foreign corporate internship, fluency in a second language, and various seminars that will give students special knowledge and skills vital to doing business abroad.

"We will be teaching dinner skills, for example," explains Professor Luis Dominguez, director of the school's MIBS program. "In Latin America, it's totally inappropriate to speak about business during the first 30 minutes of the meal. Trust needs to be developed first. So we counsel our students not to talk business until the last 10 minutes."

Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, began its Master in International Business program in 1989 because of demand from both students and corporations. "It's a huge growth area," says Jack McManus, director of Pepperdine's MBA and MIB programs in Malibu. It takes 20 months of full-time work to earn an MIB degree here, and students spend eight of those months in classes and

corporate internships in France or Germany. "We want to put out culturally sensitive graduates who hopefully can function in an international context without making the faux pas that some Americans are subject to," says McManus. Pepperdine is now considering additional internships in the Far East and Spain.

Another California school, UCLA's John E. Anderson Graduate School of Management, established a separate international business center to train its students in July 1989. The intensive 24-month certificate program combines language and area studies with the Anderson School's top-flight MBA program. Other programs are available at Memphis State University, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, Columbia University, and Harvard University.

The American Graduate School of International Management (popularly known as Thunderbird) in Glendale, Arizona, is the granddaddy of them all, though, having opened its doors back in 1946. How's enrollment after all 46 years? Applications to the school have quadrupled in the last three years.