Spring Break Miami Trip
March 13, 2016 – March 15, 2016

The IU Department of Economics took education beyond the classroom during the 2016 Spring Break trip. The Miami Career Trek Program gave a group of undergraduate students the opportunity to connect with IU Alumni, network with professionals, and gain exposure to a variety of major industries in the culturally diverse and economically dynamic environment of Miami, Florida.

The three-day program was organized by Dr. Gerhard Glomm in collaboration with Laura Fonseca of the Arts & Sciences Career Center. The program was sponsored by IU Alumni of South Florida and hosted experts from a wide range of career fields including financial services, consulting, marketing, law, and entrepreneurship. It involved a series of cultural events, company tours and overviews, a student-alumni mixer, and interactive professional panels.

The program kicked off with a Welcome Dinner, followed by a team-bonding workshop hosted by The Sol e Lua School of Capoeira, an organization dedicated to training participants in the Brazilian martial art of Capoeira. The workshop offered students an enriching lesson on the history of the martial art and the music and dance that accompanies it, as well as the broader influence that Latin American culture has had on Miami’s diverse community.

The next morning, the group attended a company overview session of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. presented by Michael Goldner, the company’s Vice President of Revenue Management. Mr. Goldner provided the students with insights into the highly competitive and dynamic environment of the cruise line market, and gave them a glimpse into some of the strategies he’s employed in overseeing the revenue channels of the world’s largest cruise company. That afternoon, the group traveled to Fort Lauderdale, Florida to tour one of Royal Caribbean’s most luxurious cruise lines, The Celebrity Equinox, experiencing firsthand what revenue and operational management for Royal Caribbean Ltd. looks like in practice.
After arriving back in Miami, students were given the chance to connect with IU Alumni over some beverages and hors d’oeuvres at the student-alumni mixer hosted by Marion, a charming Mediterranean café and restaurant in the financial district of Brickell. Dr. Gloomm concluded the evening with a seminar and discussion on Income Inequality, during which both students and alumni exchanged ideas and provided feedback.

The final day of the program involved a series of interactive professional panels that took place at Burger King Corporation’s Miami Headquarters. The overarching theme of the first panel was employability, in which the first group of panelists emphasized the advantage that flexibility and versatility have on overspecialization in the job market. Dr. Hugo Hervitz, Executive Director of Forum-Nexus Study Abroad, discussed the role of “International IQ” in employability, and how critical it is to develop an awareness of foreign cultures, geography, and linguistics in today’s highly globalized and interconnected economic environment. Another panelist, Rahul Ketkar, has held positions in health care, investment banking, and consulting and is currently the Vice President of Marketing for Burger King’s Corporate Office. Among other things, Mr. Ketkar attributes this dynamic career path to a skill he calls “structural problem-solving”—a skill he claims is crucial for young students who want to gain an advantage in their career search.

Entrepreneurship was the overarching theme of the second panel, which hosted enterprisers in finance, startup labs, men’s fashion, and human resources. These enterprisers stressed the importance of establishing and maintaining a strong professional network and, moreover, actively seeking valuable markets with large upside potential. Greg Sugar, an IU Alumni, did just that as he pursued e-commerce as the platform for his multimillion-dollar online men’s clothing line, The Tie Bar, circa 2004. Seeing value in online retailing and executing his price-competitive business model before e-commerce was the norm allowed Mr. Sugar to dominate competitors and allowed his business to thrive in the midst of the 2008 Financial Crisis. His experiences, along with those of the rest of the panel, helped demonstrate exemplary practices for young aspiring entrepreneurs.

* Thomas Collis, Class of ‘17
Student Impressions

From the comfort zone shattering cultural experiences to meeting with successful Indiana University Alumni, the trip down to Miami was an incredibly valuable one. As an aspiring entrepreneur and businessman, I found particularly of interest hearing the panelist on Tuesday discuss the roundabout paths which they took to success. The panelists emphasized the necessity of taking advantage of opportunities when they are presented, and for me this philosophy is the biggest takeaway from this trip.

Simon Willard, Class of ‘17

The aspect of the trip that I appreciated the most were the variety of career paths and areas of study that were represented by the alumni, even though they all had connections to the study of economics. This really helped me visualize the multitude of directions in which I can choose to steer my career with my economics major from IU. I appreciated the advice from many of the alumni, and I especially enjoyed talking with Dr. Hugo Hervitz. He was one of the guests whose field fit my area of interest very well, and he encouraged me to continue with my education beyond a bachelor's degree and consider a career in academia, which now is more interesting to me.

Karis Neufeld, Class of ‘18

The panel was particularly helpful in illustrating that it is okay not to know where you are going or that your path may not be as clear cut as you had thought. All of the professionals that I talked with, not just those at the panel, have stressed the importance of soft skills for career progression. This in particular has helped solidify my decision to continue to graduate school.

Carrie Miller, Class of ‘18

As a mathematics major student, this is my first time to participate in the social networking event with IU alumni. Although the program was only two and a half days long, we got plenty of opportunities to learn from alumnus' experience by talking with them in a free environment. The transition from college to a job can be confusing and difficult, but a journey like this helps me identify where I want to go and how to get there.

Li Liu, Class of ‘18
From the conversation with alumni, I learned that the knowledge of social science (economics belongs to that) would have a huge positive impact on career. An economics major can provide many career possibilities in various fields. Catching timing and having interpersonal skills are also very important. We should strive to make ourselves a "complete" person by exposing ourselves to different knowledge and culture. I would like to pursue a career in investment banking or attend grad school for economics after graduation.

Ronnie Lin, Class of ‘18

As my journey at Indiana University is coming to an end, I am glad that I was able to connect with the IU alumni community in Miami. This program allowed me to engage with many professionals in a variety of sectors, all of whom were eager to give advice and invest in our personal success. We also had time to enjoy Miami’s rich culture and warm weather on our tour of Royal Caribbean’s Celebrity cruise ship, as well as learn the fascinating history and movements of the Brazilian martial art Capoeira. All in all, this trip caters to the motivated, forward-looking student that wants to enrich their lives while advancing their career opportunities.

Nicholas A. Garcia, Class of ‘16

During the Miami trip, I liked the culture event that we went on the first day. It is great to know and participate in a different regional culture event of America. Also, it was really a great, fun and quick way to know our peers on the first day. Also I enjoyed visiting Royal Caribbean. It gave me an inside view of what the work environment would be and helped me understand more about what the revenue job looks like. It was also really great to know the alumni; they are really nice and friendly. They shared their great and unique career stories with us and talked with us about the careers we’re interested in the future and what would be useful in the work.

Liuchang Dong, Class of ‘15

During the panels on the third day, I talked to the most successful group of people that I’ve ever met in my life. Not only did they share their own unique career paths but also their decision-making process while facing different life choices. Given my interest in data science, they shared how data influences their works and discussed some future data-related career opportunities which intrigued me. All in all, I really enjoyed the whole trip.

Yifei Lin, Class of ‘16