

## MSOE's Experience with International Programs



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## About This Presentation

- Intended for post secondary faculty and administrators.
- Our experience generalized for other institutions.
- Not an scholarly discourse – just our informal observations.
- Wide-ranging – from strategic vision to practical tips.

2

## About This Me



- I'm an engineering educator, not an international education expert.
- I am the academic coordinator for our India program and have consulted other faculty members about our other programs.
- About you?

3

## Selected Programs

- Engineering 2+2's with the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE).
- Business and Technical Communications (TC) 2+2's with MAHE Dubai (under development).
- Electrical Engineering Dual Degree with Lübeck University of Applied Sciences.

4

## MAHE 2+2 History

- In the early 1990's, a MAHE alumnus (Mr. Shajan John) who works for MSOE introduced the institution presidents.
- The presidents recognized the opportunity for a mutually beneficial relationship between the institutions.
- Shajan invested substantial personal time and energy developing a program.

5

## So what is a 2+2

- 4? Not in this case.
- Students start their education in their home country in a program designed for effective transfer to a foreign country (often the U.S., Great Britain or Australia).
- After 2 years the students transfer to a "foreign" institution to complete their education.

6



Manipal, India

7

## MAHE-Dubai Program

- MAHE operates a branch campus in Dubai (mainly for the children of Indians living there).
- We are in the process of developing 2+2 programs with them in business and technical communications.
- This will be a meta-global program where we recruit students from an intermediate country.

8



Dubai, UAE

9

## Lübeck Dual Degree

- Partnership with the Fach Hochschuler Lübeck (FHL).
- The president of MSOE and the rector FHL meet and discovered extensive similarity between their schools' EE curricula.
- Details of the program were developed by a few dedicated faculty members.

10

## Lübeck Dual Degree

- In their Junior years U.S. and German students in classes together in Germany (they receive credit for MSOE courses).
- German students spend their senior year at MSOE in Milwaukee.
- Students receive degrees from both institutions.
- First group of students went in 1994. About 150 participants to date.

11



Lübeck, Germany

12



## Key Points



- International programs must have top level buy-in (vision).
- International programs must have a champion (often someone with a special connection to the overseas country or institution involved).
- Involvement with specific institutions rather than countries or regions.

13

## Language Issues

- For better or worse, English has become the *de facto* (pun intended) standard for education in the world.
- The students in our 2+2 and dual degree programs study in English in their home country.
- One advantage of these programs is that students generally arrive on our campus with excellent English skills.

14

## Faculty Involvement

- International programs generally involve some extra effort on the part of the faculty (evaluating transcripts and course descriptions, extra time with students, etc.).
- It is important to obtain faculty buy in to program.
  - Solicit faculty input.
  - Arrange meetings between the faculties (travel).

15

## Inevitable Changes

- Our MAHE 2+2 enrollment peaked in the late '90's and early '00's.
- What changed?
  - The Indian economy. Most Indian students now want to go home and desire schools with high worldwide name recognition.
  - Schools and governments in Great Britain and Australia now aggressively recruit in India. This problem is aggravated by MSOE being on a quarter as opposed semester system institution.

16

## Dealing with Change - Need

- Ongoing Assessment
  - Frequent surveys of students (in the U.S. and abroad).
  - Frequent academic (faculty) reviews.
- Ongoing market and marketing evaluation.

17

## Dealing with Change - Action

- Ongoing investment. This requires vision and commitment by institution officers and administrators.
- Willingness by all parties to change. This may be complicated in international programs.
- This combine as ownership without possessiveness.

18



## Key Points



- Faculty must be involved.
- Programs must be continuously adjusted to meet:
  - Student needs
  - Institutional needs
  - Global political and economic environment.

19

## Personnel - Roles

- Program director (authority and overall responsibility).
- Academic coordinator.
- Dedicated admission (enrollment) advisor (counselor).
- Dedicated student services advisor/counselor to assist with visa, employment, financial, personal and educational issues.

20

## Personnel - Skills

- Operating international programs takes a good deal of knowledge and understanding.
- Much of this knowledge and understanding is gained through experience.
- Rapid turnover in any of the roles listed on the previous slide can be very detrimental to international programs.

21

## Face Time is Essential

- After startup, routine matters can be handled by e-mail, but detailed planning and major program adjustments require regular face-to-face meetings.
- These meetings also enhance personal involvement and commitment to the program.
- Program budgets should include plenty of money for travel.

22

## Dedicated Marketing

- Like anything else, international programs must be marketed.
- The international audience is different from the domestic audience.
- Special approaches and materials may have to be developed.

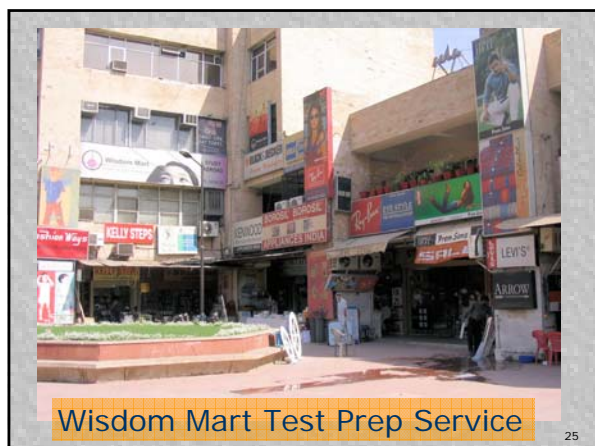
23

## Sample Marketing

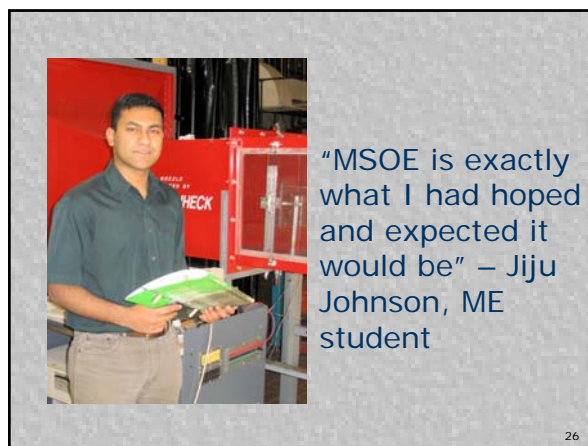
- Student testimonials (graduates at work and students on campus).
  - Fliers
  - CD's/DVD's
- Small promotional gifts (pens, key fobs, window decals, etc.)
- Presentation with nicer prizes (ball caps, tee shirts, movie posters, etc.)
- Contact through schools, test preparation services & recruiters

24





25



26

## Time to Develop

- Newly established programs may take time to develop.
- Word of mouth may be the best form of marketing, but establishing a network of individuals (including alumni) to spread the word takes time.
- Programs may not be born perfect (few are). Time may be required to make adjustments.

27



## Key Points



- Long term institutional support is essential
  - Personnel commitments
  - Travel costs for regular meetings
  - Dedicated marketing materials
  - Time for programs to develop

28

## Some Other Issues

- At this point, I've covered the major issues I wanted to address.
- Now would be a good time for some discussion.
- Are there any questions or comments?
- Otherwise, I have plenty more slides.

29

## Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's)

- Communications is always difficult. International communication can be especially challenging.
- MOU's are a useful tool for assuring all parties in an international program share the same expectations.
- MOU's should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each party involved in the program.

30

## Visa Issues

- International students must obtain visas to enter the U.S.
- Schools issue I-20 forms permitting students to apply for a visa. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the visa.
- However, it may be prudent to provide students with advice regarding the process.

31

## Politics & Economics

- International programs are inherently subject to global economic and political factors.
- Most of these are beyond the control of individual institutions.
- However, some can be anticipated (MSOE successfully anticipate the warming of U.S.-Indian relations and India's economic growth).
- Beware of creating "me to" programs.

32

## Key Points

- Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) are valuable and may be expected.
- Guiding students through the visa process is worthwhile.
- Political and economic factors will have a major impact on any international program.

33

## Cultural Issues

- Cultural issues can be subtle.
- Examples include not being overly complimentary of small items in the Middle East and the reluctance of some Indians to say "no."
- Consult with a native or a cultural anthropologist if possible.
- Travel guides (printed and video) are also useful.

34

## Educational Styles

- In the U.S. (at least at MSOE), we assign a lot of homework and give "midterm" exams.
- In India (at least at MAHE), grades are based largely on compressive exams given at the end of semesters.
- Student's traveling in either direction may need "coached" on adapting to the foreign system.

35

## Microeconomics

- We have assumed that our target population of students generally will not participate in a program unless it makes some economic sense for them.
- U.S. engineering degrees are highly valued world-wide, therefore students will come to MSOE for engineering.
- It is not clear that students will choose to come to MSOE for other degrees.

36

## Financial Aid

- Many international students are just as cost conscience as American students (everybody likes to get a discount).
- Seek funding (institutional or external) for your program in general or for scholarships for particular students.

37

## Key Points

- Beware of cultural issues. Educate yourselves.
- Help students adjust to different educational styles.
- Be sure your program has a sound economic basis.

38

## Organizational Involvement

- There are numerous organizations that promote international study. These include:
  - NAFA (http://www.nafsa.org/)
  - USEFI (http://www.fulbright-india.org/)
  - USEFP (http://www.usefpakistan.org/)
  - AMIDEAST (http://www.amideast.org/)
- Find the ones that are right for your school and program.

39