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Suffolk University

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Words to Live By
Melissa Julian’s first international politics seminar with Professor Judith Dushku was a defining moment. Melissa, BS ’89, has been talking about the need to improve living conditions in developing countries ever since. And as a Belgium-based consultant for two leading European nongovernmental development organizations, she inspires audiences of her own.

“Boston was such an exciting place for me,” the Tennessee native says. “We didn’t talk much politics at home.” Not only did Melissa learn from Dushku’s lectures, she eagerly joined her professor on a class trip to Nicaragua. Living with a local family for almost a month and witnessing the social, political, and economic consequences of the Contra war and Sandinista Revolution was “a real eye-opener,” she says. “That Suffolk experience changed my life. From then on, I knew I wanted to work to help influence government policy so that it did not prevent people in third-world countries from enjoying their right to live their lives in security and free of poverty.”

Back in Boston, Melissa and her classmates founded Baseballs for Nicaragua with Professor Dushku and raised funds to buy sports equipment for impoverished children. “We played many a game with sticks and rocks while we were there,” she says. “We thought we could give them something for their spirit.”

Her own spirit helped her land her first job after graduation. While on a European vacation, she saw an ad for a political assistant to a member of the European Parliament. “I still think it was the enthusiasm I had right out of Suffolk that convinced them this American was the one for the job,” Melissa says.

She learned the inner workings of the European Union for three years, then applied that knowledge to her work as an advocacy officer on the five-year campaign for the Millennium Declaration of 2000.

“During that time, I met a nice Belgian boy,” she says, “and had the true fairy tale—falling in love, getting married, and having children.” However, she remains true to her first passion. Melissa now consults for the European Centre for Development Policy Management, which strengthens Europe’s relations with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific; and the Caribbean Council for Europe. She analyzes both EU policies and conditions in the countries those policies are meant to help, serving as a liaison between colleagues around the world.

Wherever her work takes her, she travels with a wallet-sized picture she took on that influential trip to Nicaragua. A motto accompanies the photo—“Life cannot be measured in the number of days an existence lasts, but by the depth of a commitment.” These words aptly describe Melissa’s way of life as well.
Dear International Graduate,

Welcome to the fifth issue of the International Observer. In these pages you will find articles highlighting the achievements of Suffolk University's alumni around the world as well as the activities of the Office of International Alumni Relations. In 2004-2005, we held 19 events for international students and alumni.

In January and September 2005, Vice President Marguerite J. Dennis and I traveled to Asia and met alumni from Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. In Boston, the International Alumni Board hosted a successful international career networking event that connected more than 80 international alumni with current international students. For the first time, we hosted two career workshops to help prepare Suffolk international students for careers in a global environment.

Please contact me with your thoughts on how we can strengthen our connection to you and your fellow international graduates. If you have story ideas or suggestions for this newsletter, or would like to learn how you can get more involved, please email me at dzahir@suffolk.edu. All of us in the Office of International Alumni Relations look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dorothy A. Zahir
Director of International Alumni Relations

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Asian Alumni Celebrate Suffolk

In January and September 2005, Vice President of Enrollment and International Programs Marguerite Dennis and Director of International Alumni Relations Dorothy Zahir met with alumni at receptions in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

The Japanese Alumni Chapter of Suffolk University held receptions at Tokyo's New Otani Hotel. In January, guest speaker Kazuo Sakiyama, MBA '04, who is launching his new company International Business Transformation Laboratory, Ltd., shared his observations on life at Suffolk and in the business world. In September, alumni and prospective students heard Dean Shahriar Khaksari talk about the University's global initiatives.

In January at the Lotte Hotel in Seoul, South Korea, guest speaker Jong-Hyuck Kim, BS '97, MBA '03, entertained his audience of alumni, parents, and friends of the University, including Carmine D'Aloisio, BS '75, minister-counselor for commercial affairs at the American embassy. Kim also assisted Suffolk representatives in September, when Vice President Dennis gave a talk on "How to Select a US University" to more than 50 prospective students and their parents.

In Taiwan, alumni hosted two events at Taipei's Grand Formosa Regent Hotel. Eddie Shyu, vice president at Smith Barney Citigroup and uncle of current Suffolk student Albert Hsu, spoke about investment bonds in January. During their September visit, Vice President Dennis hosted a web chat for prospective students on selecting a northeast university, while Dorothy Zahir enjoyed a city tour and dinner with area alumni.

Alumni in these three Asian countries are currently planning a regional reunion next year to mark Suffolk University's centennial. Stay tuned for more information!

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Turkish Alumni Reunite

Turkish alumni met with Director of Study Abroad Programs Youmna Hinnawi in their native land to share their experiences as Suffolk students and graduates. Organized by Melike Bardakci, the get-together took place on August 12, 2005, at the New Yorker restaurant in Kurucesme, Istanbul. Alumni discussed the issues they faced upon returning to Turkey, as well as their plans for guiding future graduates through the reentry process. Graduates volunteered to organize internships for graduate and undergraduate students and to assist with contacting prospective students.
As on the American version of the show, 16 contestants lived together for four months in an elegant residence, and completed tasks on steep deadlines and little sleep. "I was even dreaming about the projects most of the nights," Didem says of her hectic schedule. In marked contrast to Trump and his blunt "You're fired" catchphrase, businessman Tuncay Ozilhan, the Turkish show's host, preferred saying "I don't want to work with you" because "he didn't want to sound rude," Didem says.

While she did not become Ozilhan's apprentice (she was eliminated in Week 11), Didem has been fielding and researching job offers before deciding on her next career move. She credits Suffolk with her success on the show. "I was thinking of the case studies at Suffolk and trying to figure out if I could use them during projects," she says, "especially when we were doing marketing and advertising." By earning her MBA in a foreign country, she feels she became "open to new trends and able to get along well with different people from different backgrounds," skills that she used as a contestant.

Didem hopes to run her own business in Istanbul someday. In the meantime, her experiences at Suffolk and on The Apprentice have inspired her. "I know there is nothing I can't succeed at if I really want it and believe in it," she says. "Even if I have to stay on another planet, I can still survive and succeed." •

Japanese Student Association Makes it Official
Suffolk's Japanese students and alumni gather over dinner every semester to welcome the newest members of the campus community. This academic year, they had reason to be especially festive. The Office of Student Activities and Service Learning has recognized the Japanese Student Association as an official campus group. Led by President Masa Abe, members have brought Japanese culture to special events such as Asian American Night, the International Luncheon, and Unity Week's International Tea Party. •

International Alumni and Students Take Manhattan
Last year, a group of 25 international students and alumni traveled to New York City to see the sights around town and on Broadway. Dorothy Zahir, director of international alumni relations, accompanied international students to the World Trade Center site, Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, and Times Square. Director of International Programs R. Scott Reedy and several alumni headed for Broadway, where they enjoyed seeing Beauty and the Beast and The Phantom of the Opera. The group capped off their New York trip with dinner in Chinatown. After their day in Manhattan, current international students and alumni look forward to planning more trips in the future. •

Welcome to the newest members of the International Alumni Board!
Mohamed Brahimi, BA '02
Zhang Chen, BSBA '03
Momar Fall, BSBA '05
Amilcar A. Giraldo, MBA '98
Juan Lopez, G MBA, MBA '05
Svetoslav M. Milenkov, BSBA '04, MSA '05
Mauricio A. Munoz, MBA '03
Shinlei Pan, MA '02
Arjun C. Rao, MBA '03
Rudy Rudy, BS '03
Daniella Souza, BSBA '05
Ana Carolina E. Torres, BS '01
Li Xi, BSBA '01, MBA '03, MSA '03
Jenny Zhan, MSA '98

If you are interested in joining the Board, please visit www.suffolk.edu/internationalalumni/IAB_form.html. For more information, please email Dorothy Zahir at dzahir@suffolk.edu. •
From CPA to CEO

When Toshio Sato, MBA '04, arrived in Boston from Yokohama, he encountered a number of cultural differences that have enriched his career and worldview.

"Getting a US university degree is harder than getting a CPA license in Japan," he says. "I was really surprised at the number of pages of a textbook and the volume of homework." Toshio also enjoyed comparing outlooks with his diverse classmates at Suffolk. "It is hard to have a real international view of economics, religion, politics, and business," he says of life in Japan. "I learned that different places have different histories and customs, and different people have different opinions."

He gained further insight into the American education system as a graduate fellow for Visiting Assistant Professor Thomas Whalen. "The first time I prepared a mid-term," Toshio recalls, "that exam was too much for undergraduate students. I completely confused my understanding of accounting as a CPA with the understanding of undergrads." After reviewing the impossible exam, Whalen advised him that, "the most important but toughest thing to teach is how to encourage students." With his teacher's "gentle thoughts" in mind, Toshio went on to successfully tutor ten students in accounting theory and corporate finance. "That was the most exciting and memorable experience of my Suffolk days," he says.

Toshio graduated with the highest GPA in the MBA and Master of Taxation programs, and his academic accomplishments translated into professional success. When he left Japan, he also left behind his job as a senior manager at the Yamada CPA Firm. Upon Toshio's return home, Mr. Yamada offered him the CEO position at one of his spin-off companies. Today he is president of the Owner Management Research Institute, part of the TFP Consulting Group. Toshio has built a thriving business that provides management and financial consulting and asset management for owner-management companies, political and economic research on owner-management companies, and policy proposals to regulators and governments.

He is also eager to share his knowledge with others. Toshio has written two books, one on the new Japanese LLP system and another on Japanese commercial law's relationship with corporate governance. Since he runs his own company, Toshio looks to Boston, his "second hometown," to broaden his network. "We may ask employees to get a degree through a Suffolk graduate program," he says, "or we could corroborate research with the excellent faculty. We need employees, researchers, and consultants who have international experience." *

Venturing into the Business World

By the time he came to Suffolk University for his executive master's in business administration, Gautam Mahajan, EMBA '79, already had earned an engineering degree from the Indian Institute of Technology in Madras, India; completed his master's in engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology; and been awarded a fellowship at Harvard University. Yet he wanted more.

"I'd always wanted to be in marketing and in general management," he says, "not just technology management. Also, I noticed that management types had better visibility and opportunities than most 'techies.'"

After graduating from Suffolk, Gautam went on to a successful career running the Continental Group's plastics businesses in the United States. He registered 18 US patents, received the distinguished alumni award from Illinois Tech, and served as president of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce.

He now generates his own opportunities as president of Inter-Link Services, an international consulting firm. Gautam and his team of consultants advise clients from America, Europe, Asia, India, and Australia on how to successfully break into the Asian and Indian markets as well as how to master the intricacies of technology transfer, marketing, business development, and operations. The firm also counsels Indian organizations on globalization strategy. "Indian companies played dead when multinational conglomerates entered India in the 1990s," he says, "but they eventually understood they could compete. Today they need our help to compete hard and well."
Certified Global Professional

Some people change postal codes when they follow new opportunities. Marcela Porporato (MSA '96) changes continents. Born in Argentina, she completed her undergraduate studies there before pursuing her master's degree in accounting at Suffolk. She next moved to Spain to earn a PhD in management with a concentration on managerial accounting. Marcela now works and lives in Toronto, Canada, a city where, fittingly, “multiculturalism touches every aspect of our lives,” she says.

She worked as a certified public accountant in Argentina before packing her bags for Boston. “I was looking for a small and flexible full-time program that allowed me to get a master's degree in one calendar year,” she says. “I wanted a degree that provided me with the technical tools and managerial skills I needed to keep improving my professional career.”

Once on Beacon Hill, Marcela was impressed with Suffolk’s efforts to make her feel welcome. “I spent my first weeks attending different events for new students, for international students, and for graduate students,” she says. Her time in the business school’s classrooms was equally enriching. “Professors Laurie Pant and Morris Mclnness challenged me the most,” she says. “Stephen Tomczyk became a friend as well as one of the greatest professors I’ve ever had.”

After graduation, she returned to her CPA firm in Argentina and taught accounting at various universities. Now that she's earned her doctorate, Marcela leads an academic life in yet another country—Canada. She became an assistant professor in York University's School of Administrative Studies in July 2004. She teaches management accounting courses, conducts research, and advises students as the department's coordinator. Once a year, she jets to her Argentinian alma mater to teach an MBA course.

Her successful career complements her personal happiness. Marcela arrived at her new home in Toronto with special traveling companions. She and her husband, Carlos, have two children: Ivo, “a three-year-old big boy,” and Nadia, “a one-year-old smiley baby girl.”

Venturing into the Business World, continued from page 4

For Gautam, joint ventures are far more than a quick fix for companies entering new markets. “When you enter a joint venture,” he says, “you are really looking for a long-term relationship, not a short-term deal. Many JVs don’t last because the partners do not have synergies in thinking and strategy. Also, too many people want market research; they want numbers. It's more important to get a business sense of the market.”

Communication and cultural understanding are key ingredients of meaningful long-term relationships in global business. Gautam founded the Customer Value Foundation to promote companies' focus on customers. He also travels the world giving talks at international conferences to help today's executives forge new partnerships for the future. •

Gautam can be reached at maha@gmail.com.
Life in the Executive Suite

Michael Barretti guides future executives through the world of global business

Director of Executive Education and Lifelong Learning Michael Barretti (EMBA '82) brings more than 25 years of business savvy and a healthy sense of humor to his classroom. "The program is a lot different than what it was one year ago," he says. "It's a lot different than what it was ten years ago, and it's certainly a lot different than, I don't want to say how many years it's been since I got through!"

One significant change to the executive program is its global focus. "The dean has done a terrific job in getting the global theme inculcated in the school," Barretti says. "I think the faculty is responding beautifully to it." Students pursuing their EMBA degrees benefit from this focus by taking mandatory seminars overseas and witnessing firsthand how business is conducted in foreign countries. Under his stewardship, the executive program has developed a rotating travel schedule. Depending on their matriculation date, students fly to Europe, Asia, or Latin America for a week-long, hands-on business experience.

"They work!" Barretti says. "It's no vacation by any stretch of the imagination. They come back pretty tired, but well educated. What we're trying to do is to replicate the real business world inside the classroom. And I think the students appreciate that.

"I think they need to understand what's going on with outsourcing and the drive for productivity," he says. "And above all, it's about culture. Interacting with people from another culture is a tremendous experience. Not everybody does it the American way. Not everybody is subject to our rules and regulations. Students need to understand there are differences in the way people do business."

Before joining Suffolk's business faculty in 1996 as an adjunct professor (he's been a full-time assistant professor of marketing since 1998), Barretti was president and CEO of HSNE, Inc., an international healthcare services corporation. He also founded North Fleet Management Group, which incubated international small-to-medium-sized enterprises for success in the American domestic market. "We did a lot of work in the UK, Israel, Germany, Italy, and Japan," he says. "Boy, we made some cultural faux pas in those days—and I still make them! That's how you learn."

Now he's guiding executives through the nuances of global business. "My experience as the CEO of several companies combined with what I learned here at Suffolk was very helpful to me. It prepared me very well for what I'm doing now."

Whether he's leading his classes through the headquarters of an international conglomerate or giving a lecture in the Sawyer School of Management, Barretti believes student interaction is the key to a sound business education. "We have lawyers, doctors, and dentists in the Executive MBA Program," he says. "The mix is incredible, and their perspectives are so different—they have great debates. I tell the students, 'You'll learn more from each other than you will from me.' And I'm usually right!"
Professor Sebastian Royo

An Accent on Diversity

Madrid native son Sebastian Royo takes over Suffolk’s Madrid Campus

Sebastian Royo began his first government classes at Suffolk University with an explanation. "I remember saying, 'My weird accent is from Spain,'" he says with a smile. "The students I had seven years ago were working full-time, so having a foreigner like me was a bit of a surprise." Now that he has been appointed the new director of Suffolk's Madrid Campus, Royo will use his intercultural skills to strengthen the communication and school spirit that bind his birthplace and Beacon Hill.

"It was a major surprise," he says of his new assignment. "I was at Suffolk for six years and had never visited the Madrid Campus. At the same time, I always felt this was an amazing opportunity for Suffolk students, and for the University as a whole." Citing professors' chances to teach abroad and Spanish students' academic visits to the Boston campus, Royo says, "I really believe in this project."

In Spain, Dr. Royo anticipates facilitating the kinds of sociopolitical debates that have invigorated his government courses in Boston. "It's very enriching for everyone to get the perspectives of people who have been exposed to different realities and who have such a different outlook on the world," he says. Students at the Madrid Campus are either degree-seekers who complete their first two years of studies there before transferring to Boston, or study-abroad students who arrive from Suffolk's Boston Campus or other schools for a semester. "We have people from countries like Nigeria, China, Portugal, and of course, Spain," he says, "so there is a very interesting mix.

"One of my main objectives," Dr. Royo says, "is to make the experience for students who come to Madrid a Spanish experience." Because classes are taught in English, he hopes to engage Suffolk students in an array of activities with their peers at other Spanish universities—from gardening, to dancing, to cooking. Focusing on inspiring a Madrid Campus spirit all its own, he also aims to create a greater sense of community between Suffolk's Boston and Madrid Campuses. "I want this to be one University," he says. "We're two campuses, but we're Suffolk."

Dr. Royo, who has dual citizenship in the United States and Spain, will split his time between his two homelands. He also will have some culture shock of his own to absorb. For example, "In Spain, meals are a very important part of work," he notes. "They last forever—they can take 2–3 hours! So it's typical to have business meetings while you're having lunch." Whether he is interviewing government sources for his research on the European Union, organizing videoconferences for faculty in Boston and Madrid, or overseeing his new staff and their interactions with students, it's clear Dr. Royo will be making the most of his lunch hours.

"We have people from countries like Nigeria, China, Portugal, and of course, Spain, so there is a very interesting mix.... One of my main objectives is to make the experience for students who come to Madrid a Spanish experience."
We Want to Hear from You!
If you recently began a new job, earned a degree, married, celebrated the birth of a child, or have any news to share with your fellow alumni, please email Dorothy Zahir, director of international alumni relations, at dzahir@suffolk.edu. Please include your name, phone number, or fax so we can confirm the news with you.

For up-to-date information on Suffolk University, visit us online at www.suffolk.edu.