HTM Students Study Abroad in Dubai and Oman

More than 20 HTM, CSR and MGMT students spent their 2008-09 Winter Break traveling and studying in Dubai of United Arab Emirates and Oman. The group left Indiana immediately after the Christmas and returned just before the class started in the spring semester. It was the first time for most of the students to celebrate a New Year outside the United States.

The students visited several unique educational sites including hotels and shopping mall. One of the most valuable experiences for many HTM students was their interaction with the managers and employees at the Monarch Hotel. They had the opportunity of a customized tour of the facility both front and back of the house, and to attend a professional presentation made by the senior management. In addition to the diverse academic learning opportunities, the students had ample chances to experience the unique cultures of the region.

As one student put it, “I feel much more open and accepting of Middle Easterners now. Having a better understanding of their culture, their religions, and their environment, and being able to experience each of these things and more, I have more appreciation for their way of life. Many of the people we encountered were very friendly and extremely willing to help us with whatever we may have needed at that time. I was also very impressed with the hospitality showed to us throughout our trip. The customary offering of coffee and dates was always a warm welcome in both commercial and residential places alike — the extent of welcome that those in the Middle East show continues throughout the whole visit and is a sincere offering of welcome and of what they can offer you to make you feel more at home.”

Another student commented, “It was nice to see that Middle Eastern people do not follow the stereotypes that the media portrays to the US citizens.”

The Winter Break study abroad program was organized by the CFS Office of International Programs for HTM and CFS students. About two-thirds of the students are HTM majors. Professors Richard and Kay Widdows led the group throughout the 12-day trip. The program will be offered again for the 2009-10 Winter Break and open to CFS alumni and industry friends. The program information can be found at www.cfs.purdue.edu/studyabroad/.