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Vanessa Druskat, Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior and Management, travels to India

Vanessa Urch Druskat
University of New Hampshire, vanessa.druskat@unh.edu

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International Perspectives

Center for International Education

VANESSA DRUSKAT, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND MANAGEMENT

The recipient of a \$1,500 CIE Faculty International Engagement Award, Professor Vanessa Druskat, Department of Management, traveled this summer to the PGM Institute of Management in Coimbatore, India to attend an international conference on human resource management in the global economy and an adjoining faculty development program on the globalization of work and its impact on human resources.

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Prof. Druskat, lower left, with employees in the clothing design room of the Lakshimi Textile Mill which she visited on her research trip to India. Visitors were shown how colors and styles were selected future clothing designs.

This summer I travelled to southern India to learn information about globalization and its effects on the workforce worldwide. I teach courses at WSBE on organizational behavior, team dynamics, and leadership. Among other reasons, the growing number of references to Thomas Friedman's idea that "the world is flat," made me aware that I need to teach my students more about the impact of globalization on work in the 21st century, and about the global mindset they will need to be successful in the workplace today. In addition, my research on diversity and team dynamics would also greatly benefit from what I learned.

India has a booming economy. Indian college graduates are some of the best trained and most eager for good employment in the world. They are also frequently hired by US companies. Approximately 40% of the engineers hired by Microsoft in the U.S. are from India. The combination of well-educated, hardworking, available employees who speak English has also enabled a booming outsourcing business in India. It also makes sense for US businesses competing in a global

economy. The labor in India is cheaper than, and as competent as, that within the US. Outsourcing jobs to countries all over the world is now common. Business Week (Jan. 30, 2006) reported that in 2005 the US outsourced \$90 billion worth of information technology work and \$179 billion in logistics and procurement work to other countries, and that is just the tip of the iceberg. The following companies outsource work to India as well as to countries like Russia, Hungary, Poland, Mexico and Malaysia: GE, IBM, Citibank, AOL, Nortel, and American Express, and the list goes on.

The conference and faculty development program were superb. Conference presenters came from around the world, but primarily from all over India. I met faculty with similar research interests with whom I will now collaborate. I also learned a great deal about Indian culture from our gracious hosts and from the Indian business students who guided me from session to session and made sure I showed up on time (no small task). The faculty development program was a key highlight. We all, including the session leaders, faculty from around the world, and business leaders from Bangalore and Coimbatore, talked day and night for three days about issues related to globalization and human resources. We visited workers in textile plants in and around Coimbatore, and together we ate fabulous local food served on banana leaves. Already my students have benefitted from the examples and stories I am now able to share.



Indian women sewing the clothes at the Lakshmi Textile Mill

Many thanks to the UNH Center for International Education for funding much of my trip, to the Centers for International Business and Research (CIBERs) at the University of Colorado at Denver and San Diego State University who organized the conference, and finally to the host of the event -- the PSG Institute of Management in Coimbatore, India.

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223 Hood House • 89 Main Street • Durham, NH 03824
tel: 603-862-2398 • fax: 603-862-0169
study.abroad@unh.edu • international.affairs@unh.edu