

Article

Enhancing International Business Education Through Faculty Development in International Business Programs

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International business scholars emphasize the importance of gaining firsthand international experience to create effective learning opportunities. Such experience deepens instructors' understanding of the cultural and institutional forces that shape international business, whereas a lack of firsthand experience can undermine instructor credibility. This article presents an overview of Faculty Development in International Business (FDIB) programs, initiated by the Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBERs) to provide educators with direct exposure to international business. We highlight how these initiatives foster faculty development and offer recommendations for organizers to design effective faculty development programs.

INTRODUCTION

This article has two objectives. First, it seeks to inform educators and researchers about faculty development programs in the field of international business (IB). Second, it aims to guide faculty development program organizers in designing and implementing effective initiatives. To accomplish these goals, we provide an overview of programs that help educators gain context-based experience. Specifically, we highlight a faculty development program that offers educators and researchers direct exposure to foreign contexts: the Faculty Development in International Business (FDIB) program, launched by the Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER). We also offer practical recommendations and actionable insights for planning effective faculty development programs.

As IB educators, we bear the responsibility of preparing our students for the complexities of international business (Berg, 2020). To do so, we must cultivate the skills necessary to deliver impactful learning outcomes. Research highlights the importance of educators' own experiences in shaping student outcomes (Hruby, Calixto, & Mukhi, 2020). Ideally, these experiences should reflect IB contexts that shape the content of learning activities (Dau, Beugelsdijk, Fleury, Roth, & Zaheer, 2022). This highlights the importance of firsthand experience in various international contexts, to enable educators to offer more meaningful guidance; the lack of contextual experience may diminish an instructor's credibility and reduce student engagement (Bird, Panina, & Newburry, 2020). However, educators often lack the necessary skills and experience, or need additional support, to develop learning activities that effectively expose students to real-world IB issues (Chism, Gosling, & Sorcinelli, 2010). This underscores the importance of faculty development programs in providing IB educators with applicable skills and experiences.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Faculty development programs include initiatives aimed at enhancing faculty performance in their roles as educators, researchers, and academic leaders (Saroyan & Amundsen, 2023). Traditionally, these programs focus on five key areas (Riegle, 1987: 54):

1. Instructional development: emphasizes the importance of teaching skills and innovative teaching techniques.
2. Professional development: focuses on enhancing research skills.
3. Career development: highlights the importance of preparing for career advancement.
4. Personal development: underscores the value of interpersonal skills and individual growth.
5. Organizational development: stresses the value that faculty development provides to an institution through its faculty.

Existing research emphasizes the value of professional international experience, particularly through expatriate assignments (Hruby et al., 2020). However, such long-term opportunities are not feasible for every faculty member. For this reason, several alternative avenues have been proposed for faculty development. Educational institutions can organize workshops that bring together educators from various disciplines to focus on curriculum internationalization (Osakwe, 2017). Academics can host international colleagues in their institutions (Chism et al., 2010), allowing academics from both institutions an opportunity to collaborate on research and exchange ideas on teaching. Faculty members can accompany student groups on study abroad programs, which often include cultural tours and company vis-

its, offering educators valuable exposure to international business environments and practices (Paik, 2020).

In addition to these approaches, we describe the FDIB programs initiated by the CIBERs to inform educators and researchers about faculty development opportunities in international business. Currently, there are 16 CIBER centers of excellence located at various institutions across the United States. Several CIBERs organize their own FDIB programs, often focusing on different global regions to provide diverse international exposure. For example, While University of South Carolina's CIBER conducts its FDIB program in Sub Saharan Africa, and the University of Colorado's center focuses on the Philippines and Singapore. George Washington University's CIBER offers a program centered on the Nordic countries. Loyola Marymount University and Florida International University collaborate on a program in South Korea, and both Florida International University (FIU) and Brigham Young University offer FDIB programs in India. The purpose behind these offerings is to promote U.S. competitiveness in international business through immersive programs. To illustrate the scope of an FDIB, we provide an overview of FIU and BYU's India-focused program.

FDIB IN INDIA

WHY INDIA?

The rationale for the launch was India's fast-emerging economic growth, with its population of 1.45 billion people. Since its independence in 1947, India has experienced considerable transformation, including the 1991 launch of liberalization, deregulation, and privatization (Kim & Panchanatham, 2019). During the past decade, India became one of the fastest-growing economies with a GDP growth rate of 6% and the largest secular democracy in the world. In light of these developments, CIBER has run the FDIB in India program since 2008 to provide faculty with a deeper understanding of the country's economic and institutional transformation.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The program aims to provide a valuable understanding of a vastly diverse country. The FDIB program includes cultural tours and both business and academic visits. Participating faculty experience a 10-day immersion in India, resulting in a better understand of its economic, political, technological, and socio-cultural dimensions.

The FDIB India program includes visits to the major cities of the north, south, east, and west: Mumbai, Bengaluru, New Delhi, Hyderabad, Goa, Jaipur, and Kolkata, along with a side visit to Agra (to visit the Taj Mahal). Cultural tours include a rickshaw ride through Old Delhi, a boat ride and a visit to the historic Elephanta caves in Mumbai, and a walk through Kolkata's bustling flower market. Academic visits include AACSB-accredited business institutions in each of the major cities, facilitating connections with researchers in these schools. The most recent FDIB India program included visits to Narsee Monjee In-

stitute of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Goa Institute of Management, Management Development Institute, and Indian School of Business. Business visits are a key component of the program; recent visits have included a bus manufacturing plant, a subsidiary of the TATA group, Maruti Suzuki, an automobile plant, Bisleri bottling company, a leather and gold cluster in Kolkata, Bombay Stock Exchange, Zantye's cashew factory in Goa, and an innovation hub in Hyderabad. Each visit provides insight into the diverse businesses operating across India, many of which can only be understood through firsthand experience. Participating faculty described these visits as being transformative.

FDIB OUTCOMES FOR EDUCATORS

Each component of an FDIB program is structured to address one or more of the foundational pillars of faculty development. First, FDIB programs enhance *instructional development* through cultural tours, business visits, and academic visits. Business visits expose faculty to local business norms and practices, providing content for case studies and classroom discussions. Academic visits enable participants to build professional connections abroad and gain insights into different curriculum models. In this way, participants can synthesize alternative curriculum practices across different countries to enhance their curriculum development. Academic visits also foster opportunities for cross-institutional collaboration, including Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). Cultural tours further help faculty develop a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity, enhancing academics' abilities to incorporate global perspectives into their teaching.

Second, FDIB programs offer curated academic and business visits to support faculty in *professional and career development*. Academic visits facilitate opportunities for research collaborations, while business visits provide insights into local business practices that are not readily available for faculty not involved in such programs. Additionally, FDIB programs foster *personal development* and growth opportunities through cultural tours, which immerse participants in the host country's culture and provide them with firsthand experiences that broaden their perspectives. Lastly, FDIB programs contribute to *organizational development* by equipping faculty with new skills, experiences, and connections and creating opportunities for institutional partnerships for student and faculty exchange programs.

FDIBs, which have operated for three decades, are widely recognized for providing experience to support various learning activities. [Table 1](#) presents sample feedback from participants in FDIB programs at FIU.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPERS

In this section, we present our recommendations, along with access to a list of organizations with whom we have established partnerships as FDIB organizers, which can help

Table 1. Feedback from Participants of the FDIB Programs

Competency Area	FDIB Component	Exemplar Outcomes	Representative Quote from FDIB Participants
Instructional Development	Academic visits/ Business visits	- Development of case studies - Curriculum enhancement - COIL initiatives	<i>I was able to get firsthand experience with how Indian businesses operate (which I had a skewed vision of) and was able to immediately incorporate the information in my courses.</i> FDIB India participant
Professional Development	Academic visits/ Business visits	- Research collaborations - Insights into local business practices	<i>I was able to connect with Indian professors that have common research interests, for collaboration opportunities.</i> FDIB India participant
Career Development	Academic visits	- International faculty connections - Faculty exchange opportunities	<i>Our days were filled with a variety of experiences that will enhance my teaching related and research related to this country and topic of focus.</i> FDIB Korea participant
Personal Development	Cultural tours	- Exposure to different worldviews, religions, and cultures - Personal growth	<i>Meeting faculty members from numerous colleges across the U.S. and abroad further enriched my experience, fostering valuable connections.</i> FDIB Korea participant
Organizational Development	Cultural tours/ business visits/ Academic visits	- Study abroad opportunities - COIL initiatives	<i>My efforts to collaborate with industry partners like Innominds and university representatives aim to further bridge the gap between academia and industry globally, providing students with invaluable opportunities for hands-on learning and professional development.</i> FDIB India participant

The feedback from participants of the FDIB programs is presented as received, without any grammatical corrections

other program organizers to identify collaborators in Costa Rica, Ireland, India, South Korea, and Thailand.

First, it is important to remember that faculty have varying emphases on teaching, research, and service. Some faculty may be interested in programs designed to improve teaching skills, while others may seek opportunities for research collaboration. FDIBs should be versatile and offer multifaceted opportunities for faculty development. Program versatility can also help attract a diverse group of faculty participants. We recommend including cultural tours and both business and academic visits. This approach allows developers to address all five key areas of faculty development.

Second, we recommend that FDIBs incorporate visits to multiple regions within a country. While exposure to different cultures is undeniably valuable for faculty development, achieving a deep and nuanced understanding of culture remains a challenge. Cultural values can vary significantly within a country (e.g., House & Javidan, 2004), especially in large and culturally diverse nations, such as China, India, and Brazil. Regional diversification can thus enhance the FDIB's depth and relevance. Including intra-

regional experiences can foster a more comprehensive understanding. Accordingly, organizers may rotate the regional focus in successive iterations of the program in a focal country to provide a cumulative exposure to the country's internal diversity.

Third, business visits are important, allowing faculty to gain insights into local commercial practices, information which they can incorporate into their teaching. To increase effectiveness, we recommend that program organizers ensure the presence of senior managers during visits. This allows faculty to direct questions to, and gather insights from, executives, who are often difficult to access. For instance, during a visit to a bus manufacturing facility in India, the head of the facility accompanied the visiting faculty. When asked about the firm's internationalization strategy, the executive stated that the firm prefers to expand into emerging markets rather than developed economies, due to the latter's extensive regulations. Such insights, gained through direct interactions with top management, provide faculty with practical knowledge that may otherwise be difficult to obtain. We recognize that gaining access to senior executives in other countries can be chal-

lenging. To alleviate this issue for future program organizers and to share ideas for potential visits, we provide a list of organizations that are open for future collaborations.¹

CONCLUSION

While much of the extant research emphasizes firsthand overseas experience for students and the role of faculty in designing such experiences (e.g., Paik, 2020), this article shifts the focus to the educators themselves. As discussed, having firsthand experience in diverse IB contexts provides faculty with valuable opportunities for instructional, professional, personal, and career development. These benefits further extend to partnering organizations through international research collaborations, student exchanges, internships, and curriculum development opportunities. However, many educators lack firsthand experience in IB contexts, particularly in the US (Osakwe, 2017), partly because faculty development programs in the IB domain are limited in availability, are costly, or are narrowly focused on a single aspect.

To elevate the quality of international business education and research, this article introduces FDIB programs as opportunities for empowering IB faculty. FDIBs offer valuable opportunities to strengthen instructional effectiveness, foster global collaboration, and support professional growth. By providing actionable recommendations and a curated list of potential partner organizations, the article also serves as a resource for institutions and program organizers seeking to design future faculty development programs.

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¹ The list of organizations can be accessed at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gZdKy3fIAXced2zC-oy0w9KA2j-2IweEgMfyWBfYybbI/edit?usp=sharing>

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