

For the International activity page on our department website

Recently Rob Godby visited Pforzheim University in southwestern Germany to teach a compressed course in Macroeconomics to our partner MBA program there. The two-week intensive class in macroeconomics covered topics including macroeconomic theory, and using that theory to consider prospects for economies around the world, the European financial union, and interpreting the financial crises in the United States and Europe over the past decade.

The following is an interview posted on Pforzheim University's website regarding his recent visit:

Interview with Dr. Robert Godby – Visiting Professor from the University of Wyoming, USA

About Dr. Godby

Dr. Robert Godby is an associate professor in the College of Business Department of Economics and Finance at the University of Wyoming, USA. Dr. Godby's research interests include environmental and natural resource economics and policy, industrial organization, macroeconomics, experimental economics, education, and finance.

At Pforzheim University, he is a visiting professor and teaches Foundations in Macroeconomics course to the MBA students. He was part of the committee that came to Pforzheim from The University of Wyoming in 2008 to set up an exchange program between the two universities which has now also led to the introduction of the dual degree MBA program.

Interview

Q1. *When you were researching about Pforzheim University and making the decision about setting up an exchange program, what did you find impressive about Pforzheim Business School that encouraged to make the final decision and start this decade long association?*

A1. Firstly, when we were looking to partner with a European university, it was important for us to find an international program where the credits would be comparable. This is where AACSB's international accreditation played a role in helping us make a decision as Pforzheim University was in the process of getting AACSB accredited. Back then, there were few European business schools which had this accreditation.

Secondly, we wanted to find an international program that was completely taught in English so students from both institutions could benefit from this exchange program. Pforzheim University is the only institution with which we have a joint program i.e. the dual MBA degree program. Therefore, a student can get an MBA degree from Pforzheim University as well as from University of Wyoming.

Q2. *Could you share with us some success stories of students who participated in the dual degree program and came to Pforzheim from Wyoming, and post the completion of the degree were able to enhance their career opportunities basis this special joint program?*

A2. Sure. We had two graduate students, Daniel Foreman and Kenneth Brenneman, come to Pforzheim University in 2016 as part of the dual MBA degree program. The most important success that they gained was exposure to a lot of new experiences – new culture, environment, ideas, institution, people, cultures

and values. Students who go on international exchange are often forced to adapt to new environments and hence come out of their comfort zones. This problem solving skill develops confidence and also creates a new maturity that makes them much more successful in the working world.

Kenneth had at least two job offers which he probably wouldn't have got had he not come to Pforzheim – one was with Goldman Sachs and the other was from Credit Suisse. He took the job with Goldman Sachs and so in his case, the exchange to Pforzheim led to a direct benefit. He was considered more competitive in investment banking because he had this international experience. The additional international experience makes you more appealing to a wider range of employers.

Q3. *This is the sixth consecutive year that you have visited Pforzheim to teach Foundations of Macroeconomics course to the MBA class. How would you describe the talent that you have observed in the MBA students that you have taught during this time? Do you find the profiles of the candidates diverse?*

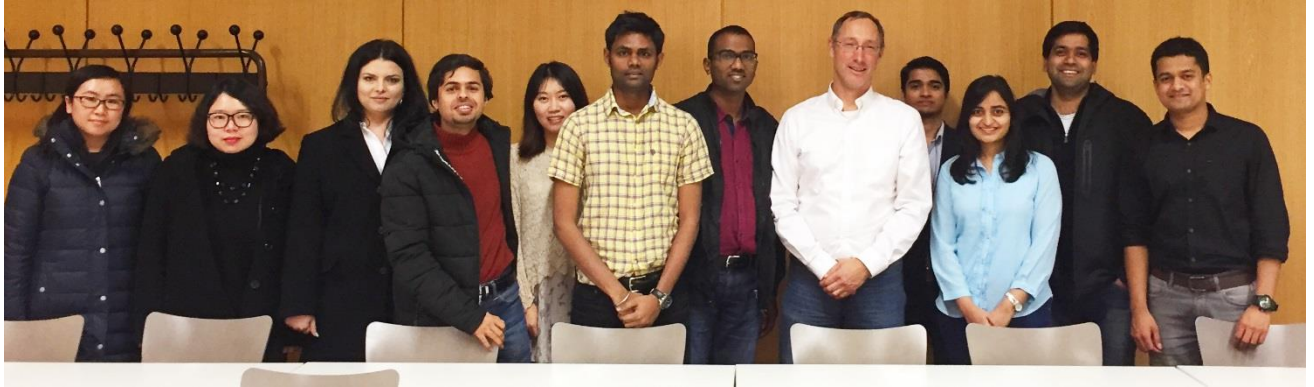
A3. Yes, it's quite different. In Wyoming we have fewer international students in our MBA program and so a big difference here is the diversity in the class profile. The other big thing is that the environment is different and it certainly is refreshing in some ways to go to a place where the cultural values and social norms are different. I didn't know much about European institutions till I came here and an international experience allows you to learn about new people and culture.

The students that I see at Pforzheim's MBA class are equally talented, just differently talented, owing to their different backgrounds, interests and life stories. They are good, driven students who bring a lot of diversity to the class profile. The task of teaching people who belong to different cultures challenges your teaching and in a way helps you become a better teacher. For me, it led to new research that I probably wouldn't have done otherwise.

Q4. *Being a Macroeconomist, what is your opinion of the German economy? Do you think Germany has a strong labor market that will continue to provide good employment opportunities to talented people such as MBA graduates?*

A4. Absolutely, the German economy is strong enough to create employment opportunities for skilled people. In strong economies there is always a shortage of able and talented people. That is why people are attracted to such economies. There is a certain attraction of Germany for students who are focused on certain preferences or strengths of the economy which they find interesting. But, it's not about not having enough positions rather about selling yourself to get the position you want. And certainly if you are driven enough, you can do that.

The opportunities in Germany are specific, and so if you want to get into manufacturing and export in a developed economy at a high-tech level, there are probably very few other economies that can compete with Germany. So, is Germany a good study destination for students? Certainly, if what their goals are align with what Germany does, as the German economy is certainly by far the strongest and the largest economy in Europe. It's a relatively open and diverse economy, with a high standard of living and high standard of education.



Rob (white shirt) and his MBA class at Pforzheim.