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ASU business students learn from local leaders

The timeless adage that knowledge is power only seems to carry weight when the knowledge is succeeded with application.

Students in the Business Policy course at Albany State University had a chance to apply the knowledge they have received in the classroom during their downtown Albany tour of local businesses on March 19.

James Lindsey, part-time faculty member in the College of Business and instructor for the course, meets once a week with his class to discuss the values of cooperative strategies and work through text book case studies about past events concerning various companies.

“As an instructor, there is nothing quite as exciting as witnessing the explosion of young minds as they make the connections between classroom and real world,” said Lindsey, who serves as regional human resources manager for Regions Bank. “The energy of imagination is a powerful thing. Although classrooms are important, the value of stepping outside of the classroom and off campus adds an entirely new dimension to the college experience.”

The deviation from the normal course of action allowed the students to put the “knowledge is power with application” theory to test by evaluating two different organizations to determine if a feasible cooperative relationship was possible. The class toured the facilities of the Flint River Aquarium and the Thronateeska Heritage Center courtesy of CEOs Scott Loehr and Tommy Gregors, respectively. The students were asked to determine if there is enough commonality between these two institutions to pursue such a strategy.

As the discussion continued, the original topic was expanded to include the possibility of a cooperative relationship that would not only include these two non-profits, but also Albany State since all three organizations share in the mission to promote education. Students had to deliberate whether working together could help the three entities better achieve their mission and if the move would benefit the community.

Later the class went to the Government Center where they met City Manager Alfred Lott and Downtown Manager Don Buie. After viewing a presentation on downtown development, the students participated in a discussion with Buie regarding what it will take for ASU students to invest in the downtown businesses. Buie also discussed the value of working together for the improvement of the downtown area, and the impact it could have on the city of Albany.

Shantia Jones, a senior accounting major, mentioned how downtown Albany has more to offer than people, namely students, may realize. She said the strategic efforts in place to bring businesses together and increase student interest is a smart decision.

“Downtown Albany has a lot of potential and just needs a greater attraction of people,” she said.

For many students, the opportunity to be at a setting outside the classroom proved to be quite a learning experience.

“The experience was an eye-opener because I learned a lot about what downtown Albany is trying to do in the future,” Ashley Mount said. “It is good to see that Albany is trying to grow and cater to college students. Students are always looking for something to do, so we can definitely bring [downtown] business.”

Dr. Michael Rogers, interim dean of the College of Business, commented that experiences like this are just what students need in their learning development.

“All of our adjunct faculty in the College of Business must hold an advanced degree plus be employed in a managerial or professional position in the business world,” Rogers stated. “Our students really appreciate adjuncts such as Mr. Lindsey because he not only brings real-world business experience into the classroom, he also exposes students to other business professionals in the community. This helps our students build important networks that may often lead to internships and employment offers.”



Photo caption: Adjunct instructor James Lindsey talks with students in his Business Policy course.