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Miller Global Business Center Offers International Business Education

After 30 years on the government end of international trade, Stanley K. Rees is taking those decades of experience to the front of the class.

As a teacher and a director in the Miller Global Business Center at Salt Lake Community College, Rees is equipping Utah businesses with the know-how to break into foreign markets.

“We look at it as being Utah’s international business education connection,” says Rees, the director of the Global Business Center who came to SLCC from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Export Assistance Center.

While the Miller Global Business Center offers one-on-one help and counseling to Utah companies looking to enter overseas markets, the biggest part of trade education comes via a global business course offered to students, entrepreneurs, staff and executives.

Those global-focused men and women take a 30-hour course at the SLCC Miller Business Innovation Center in Sandy learn the ins and outs of foreign trade. The Executive Certificate of Global Business Management covers topics ranging from trade finance to export readiness in a 10-week course. The course will offer its third semester this fall and is open to any company wanting to train employees or managers on international business practices.

Students in the course get a comprehensive overview of the global marketplace and how their business can benefit from world trade.

“To be really competitive, we really need to go international and be involved in global business,” Rees says. “One thing to realize is that our foreign competitors are going to be here taking a share of our market. They should be prepared and capable to go over there and take a share of that market. We want to prepare them for that.”

The course also brings in industry experts on finance, trade strategies, shipping, documentation and legal issues. One past student, for example, was able to save \$500,000 for his business in Canada by using a certificate of origin he hadn’t known about in the past. Another student reported that the class discussion on international marketing was exactly what his start-up company needed.

Students also delve into cultural issues that may impact their foreign market foray.

“In diverse markets, handshakes don’t always mean the same thing,” Rees says. “There’s always those little blunders because we as Americans think everybody understands things the way we do.”

In addition to the Executive program, the Miller Global Business Center also guides Utah companies into the international marketplace. Business leaders have access to expertise and logistical advice from the Center to develop an export strategy, create a market analysis and perform an export readiness assessment. “We (Utah companies) export over \$7 billion a year. We have a lot of good interest in international trade and it’s just a matter of doing it the right way,” Rees says. “Utah companies are doing quite well, we just want to say, ‘Here are all the resources,’ and help them get to the right people.”

The Global Business Center also works to bring foreign companies to Utah, offering a soft landing incubator program. Small international companies looking to relocate to the state can find a temporary base of operations through the program. After a year or two, those companies move out on their own.

“If they’re successful, they would hire Utah people to run their offices,” Rees says. “It offers employment growth for the state.”

The SLCC program also helps those foreign businesses navigate through the U.S. market with translation services, import/export laws and immigration assistance.