Sustainability Cases Attract Global Audience

Students at U-M and other top universities, including Northwestern University, University of Virginia and University of California, Berkeley, are benefiting from a substantial and growing catalog of Erb-branded case studies available through the William Davidson Institute’s GlobalLens publishing division. Two dozen educational institutions have adopted 16 Erb-branded case studies since GlobalLens began marketing them in 2012. A total of 33 Erb cases and one complete course are now available from the catalog.

Award Winners

Adopted by more than a dozen institutions including the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands and the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad, India, the award-winning study Coke in the Crosshairs: Water, India and the University of Michigan, was one of the first cases to be made available to other schools. Written by Sarah Howie, Erb ’12, under the supervision of Erb Director Andrew Hoffman, Coke in the Crosshairs won first place in the prestigious oikos Foundation International Case Competition in 2011. http://bit.ly/Rz4JSL

Another study, The Clorox Company Goes Green, http://bit.ly/U9NaLt won third place in the 2011 oikos competition. Written by Brian Moss, Erb ’12, Nathan Springer, Erb ’11, and classmates Craig Cammarata, Jennifer Gough and Ashley Nowygrod under the supervision of Andrew Hoffman and Arie Jongejan, Erb ’10, the case study has been adopted by 10 educational institutions.
Winners Announced in First Sustainability Case Competition

REI Rentals by Mary Fritz and Richard Grousset, both Erb ’13, won first prize of $1,500 in the Erb Institute’s first Erb Sustainability Case Competition. Ross School of Business Dean Alison Davis-Blake and School of Natural Resources and Environment Dean Marie Lynn Miranda announced April 15. http://bit.ly/12nXpQR

The competition, sponsored by the Institute’s Strategic Advisory Council, recognizes the best sustainable enterprise teaching cases published by GlobaLens. Erb alumni judged the competition. Damian Beil, associate professor of technology and operations, and Wallace Hopp, Ross School associate dean of faculty and research, supervised development of the Erb-branded REI Rentals, which emphasizes operations management principles and asks students to determine whether renting sporting equipment is more sustainable than selling it. http://bit.ly/10QchXE


The Erb-branded study leads students through an analysis of Patagonia’s decision to partner with eBay to launch the Common Threads Initiative, which promotes buying and selling secondhand Patagonia merchandise.

Constructing a Base-of-the-Pyramid Business in a Multinational Corporation: CEMEX’s Patrimonio Hoy Looks to Grow won third prize, $250. The Ross School-branded case about CEMEX’s efforts to meet the consumer needs of low-income families building cement homes was prepared by William
Davidson Institute Senior Research Fellow and Erb Faculty Affiliate, Ted London and Research Associates John L. Parker and Jenn Korona.

Five other Erb-branded case studies were part of the competition:

- A123 Systems Powering a Sustainable Future: Strategizing in the Advanced Battery Market
- Blueprint for Ford’s Future: From Personal Automobiles to Mobility
- Google Energy’s Shift into Renewables
- Jamba Juice and the Foam Cup
- SC Johnson and the Greenlist™ Backlash

Other 2013 entries included:

- Building a Scalable Business with Small-Holder Farmers in Kenya: Honey Care’s Beekeeping Model
- Building and Scaling a Cross-Sector Partnership: Oxfam America and Swiss Re Empower Farmers in Ethiopia
- Business Model Innovation at TutorVista: Personalization and Global Resource Leverage
- Movirtu’s Cloud Phone Service: Funding a Base-of-the-Pyramid Venture
- Note on Corporate Social Responsibility—A Debate

The sustainability case competition is limited to cases authored by at least one U-M faculty member or U-M student or alumnus who worked on the case while at the University. For the first competition, case studies published between Sept. 1, 2011 and Feb. 28, 2013 were considered. Future competitions will be limited to case studies published by GlobaLens during the previous 12 months.

**POPULAR ERB STRATEGY COURSE FILLS NICHE**


Developed by Andrew Hoffman, the course includes seven teaching modules and 25 case studies, incorporating such mainstream business concepts as regulatory risk, consumer demand, operational efficiency and cost of capital, and addressing critical issues at the intersection of business and sustainability.

GlobaLens Marketing and Communications Manager Sandra Draheim says the material is available both as a complete course and as individual modules in response to growing demand from schools seeking to incorporate knowledge about sustainability and corporate social responsibility into finance, marketing and other core business courses.
**Erb Students Partner with Ross Faculty on REI Rentals Case Study**

As the Erb Student Advisory Board’s VP for academic programming, Mary Fritz saw a need in core MBA classes for more sustainable-business case studies. Soon, she and co-author Rich Grousset, both Erb ’13, were creating their own case study working closely with Kirk Myers, REI’s manager of corporate social responsibility and former manager of one of two Utah stores featured in the case study. REI is the U.S. sales leader in outdoor recreational apparel and equipment.

Under the supervision of Damian Beil, Ross associate professor of technology and operations, and Wallace Hopp, Ross School associate dean of faculty and research, Fritz and Grousset created a case emphasizing operations and management principles while asking students to determine whether renting is more sustainable than selling.

“We looked at REI’s rental equipment business from a systems perspective and compared emissions from transporting rental equipment between two stores and customers picking up and returning equipment using their own vehicles, versus the environmental costs of producing new skis or snowshoes. We looked at all the assumptions. I hope the case study will help students learn about different inventory models and gain a better understanding of how carbon accounting works,” says Fritz.

**Case Study Publisher Partners with Erb Institute and Other U-M Units**

GlobalLens partners with the Ross School, the Erb Institute, the Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship, the Tauber Institute for Global Operations and the Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies to publish, market and distribute business case studies and other teaching materials to top-tier business schools worldwide.