

# GUST meets FIU in talks over new Masters Programs in Accounting and Finance

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GUST welcomed two professors from Florida International University (FIU) through a series of invigorating meetings for what is deemed to be the beginning of a strong, open relationship between the two universities to discuss a proposed Masters Programs in Accounting and Finance at GUST.

Dr. Joyce Elam, Executive Dean of the College of Business Administration (CBA) and Dr. Christos Koulamas, Senior Associate Dean of CBA arrived on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January for a 4-day stay. It was Dr. Elam's first time to Kuwait to which she said "it's great, so different than the other Gulf countries I've visited," and it Dr. Koulamas' second time to Kuwait and to GUST.

Dr. Elam is a recognized expert in the strategic use of information technology, the management of the information services function and the use of information technology to support both individual and group decision-making and learning while Dr. Koulamas is an expert on production and operations management.



With a full itinerary planned for them by GUST's own CBA, the professors started their trip with a day filled with a sea of new faces. The Dean of CBA at GUST, Dr. Lee Caldwell and the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Dr. Kameleddine Benameur took the liberty of introducing the FIU representatives to Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Muhailan, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Shuaib Shuaib, President of GUST and Dr. Jassim Abdulsalam, GUST Academic Consultant and member of the Board of Trustees as well as Dr. Robert Cook, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dr. Fahad Al-Zumai, Vice President for Academic and Finance Affairs.

All of who welcomed them warmly not only to the university, but to Kuwait and did not fail to express their enthusiasm and appreciation for the visit and the journey the universities are embarking on. Last but not least, the FIU Deans had the chance to meet GUST's CBA faculty where they learned more about the curriculum, the students and the mission of the college.

The next day was a more in-depth look into the proposed masters program and how to take the relationship a step further – first with a visit to the Private Universities Council (PUC) who will have a large role to play in the implementation of the new programs and second with a meeting with heads of the Accounting and Finance Departments where they discussed the programs, module systems, students evaluation system and additional ways of cooperation. Another important meeting was held with the students, both undergraduate students in Accounting and Finance and current MBA students where the FIU Deans explained the importance of attaining an MBA in today's business world. "In the U.S., getting your masters today is a way for people to ensure their promotion," Dr. Elam said.





To support all the discussions that occurred between Dr. Elam and Dr. Koulamas, the GUST CBA organized a meeting with the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) where Mr. Adel Hechme, General Manager and Head of the NBK Group Human Resources Department and the Assistant General Manager Mr. Emad Al-Ablanipresented to the team the perceived local market need for Masters in Accounting and Finance with support from general statistics and performance evaluation of GUST graduates' employed at NBK.

Of course, their trip was not all business; there is a country to see after all. Dr. Al-Zumai, Dr. Abdulsalam and Dr. Caldwell took the reins and showed the FIU professors around the city, pointing out various landmarks in Kuwait be it social, educational or cultural including the Kuwait Towers and a tour of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

The trip ended on a good note between the two universities with the potential of not only initiating a new Master's program in Accounting and Finance but also with the promise of future working relationships through research amongst the CBA faculty as well as a possible exchange program of students and faculty.