

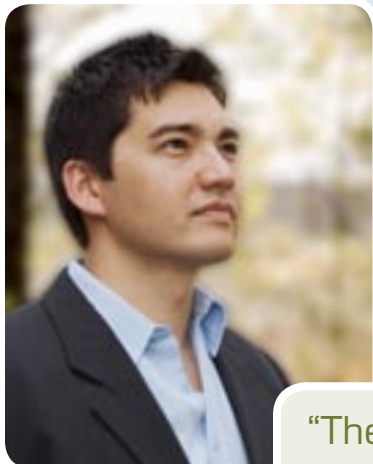




WINDOWS TO THE WORLD

THE FRANK HAWKINS
KENAN INSTITUTE
OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

By Matthew Burns



“The tsunami recovery project is the type of **development work** I hope to do **as a career.**”

Tom Beamon (MBA '07)

FUELED BY ENERGY DRINKS and a drive to rebuild their tsunami-ravaged country, Thai construction crews often work through the night to erect new hotels, restaurants and other tourist attractions. But restoring a tourism-based economy after a devastating natural disaster isn't simply a case of “If you build it, they will come.”

So Tom Beamon (MBA '07) and other student consultants last summer began helping several locally owned hotels in Khao Lak, a resort area in southwestern Thailand, develop a marketing plan to bring tourists back. The effort is part of the three-year Tsunami Recovery Action Initiative run by the business school's Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise and its sister organization Kenan Institute Asia (KIASia). After putting together

brochures and upgrading Web sites last year, Beamon plans to return to Khao Lak this summer to work on long-term regional strategies, such as ecotourism and target marketing. “I was never interested in doing a corporate internship,” he says. “The tsunami recovery project is the type of development work I hope to do as a career.”

Beamon latched onto the project through his position as an MBA Liaison for the Kenan Institute. Founded 22 years ago as part of UNC Kenan-Flagler, the Kenan Institute goes beyond the traditional think tank model to serve as a “think-and-do tank.” Through a worldwide network of partnerships, it assists companies, governmental agencies and other organizations to assess and manage local and global economic changes. The Kenan Institute launched the MBA Liaisons program

in the late 1990s to bridge the gap between the Institute's busy program directors and MBA students keeping up with demanding schedules. Two to four first-year UNC Kenan-Flagler students are selected through an annual application process to be liaisons. Throughout their second year, they conduct seminars, roundtable discussions and other activities to educate other students about the Institute's work and ensure they know about the opportunities the Institute offers all students.

After the Kenan Institute completed the first-ever study of the economic impact of North Carolina's burgeoning Hispanic population last year, for example, liaison Leo Okneanski (MBA '07) assisted with a discussion of the study's findings for fellow students. Meanwhile, liaison Xander Kameny (MBA '07) organized a March seminar to inform students



Kenan Center

and area executives about business opportunities in China, a growing area of interest for the Institute through its partnership with Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Liaisons need to be enthusiastic communicators, says Kenan Institute Associate Director Lingmei Howell, who serves as a facilitator for the liaisons and other students, linking skills, talents and ambitions to opportunities. “They need to have commitment, a real



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Leo Okneanski (MBA '07)

desire to connect their peers to our projects,” Howell says, adding that the volunteer positions also require the dedication to take on extra responsibilities in addition to MBA coursework.

Students also can demonstrate leadership, entrepreneurial and problem-solving talents through their work, she says. The long leash

THE MISSION OF THE KENAN INSTITUTE

The Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise was founded at the business school in 1985 with the ambitious goal of leveraging private-sector resources and expertise to serve the public interest. The Institute brings together commercial and nonprofit organizations, public policy makers, and international and community leaders to work on problems in both the private and public sectors.

Frank Hawkins Kenan (BSCOM '35), chief executive officer of Kenan Transport Co. and a trustee of the William R. Kenan Jr. Charitable Trust, created the Kenan Institute to promote collaboration among the traditionally separated communities of business, government and academia.

Kenan, who died in 1996, said of his passion for the Institute’s goals, “I believe that all the freedoms we enjoy are related to free enterprise. If you neglect that, we’ll lose the others.”

The Kenan Institute’s mission — a unique one in the world of business education, according to John D. Kasarda, director of the Kenan Institute — is to apply business research to address challenges in society. The Kenan Institute works collaboratively with the business school to put faculty research into practice. In fact, says Kasarda, UNC Kenan-Flagler is among the handful of top-20 business schools where application of the latest research to real world challenges shapes the student experience.

Kenan’s goal for the Institute was for it to be connected to, but still independent from the business school, according to Kenan’s son Thomas

S. Kenan III (BA '59). “He was particularly interested in innovative ideas that could be incubated in the school and then brought to fruition by the Institute,” said Kenan of his father. “He wanted to raise the prominence of the school with bright new ideas that met the mission of the Institute.”

The Kenan Institute works in three interrelated areas of economic competitiveness: entrepreneurship, economic development and global strategies. For example, one of the Kenan Institute’s new programs promotes economic development in North Carolina’s economically lagging counties. The Institute is also leading the Carolina Entrepreneurial Initiative — an \$11-million cross-campus entrepreneurship program at UNC.

The Kenan Institute Asia, a sister organization launched by the Kenan Institute in 1996, with a staff of 70 people and offices in Bangkok, has established strong ties in the region that result in projects like the Tsunami Recovery Action Initiative.

work, for example, let him stretch in ways most classes don't. "We do so many team-based activities in MBA school," he says. "It was nice to have ownership of a project." In return for their outreach work, the liaisons can tap into the Kenan Institute for business contacts — they often meet with decision-makers at Institute-sponsored dinners and receptions — and work on projects like the tsunami-recovery effort or Beijing Olympics preparations.

Kameny helped stage an emergency management conference in Beijing

last fall to help Olympic organizers get ready for the 2008 Summer Games. He recruited speakers from technology and communications firms for the conference, which grew out of the Institute's joint program in logistics and operations management with Tsinghua University. He had dreamed of working on the Olympics for years, having previously helped get Special Olympics off the ground in China, and he says the Beijing experience will be invaluable in his future job with Anheuser-Busch, where he eventually will work in the brewer's operation in Shanghai,

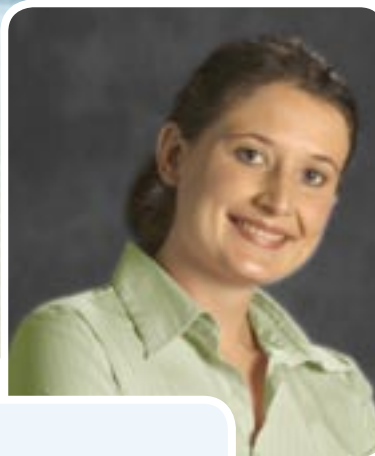
China. "I could possibly work on a sponsorship at the Games," he says. "I know how a venue operates, how to work with government and sports officials."

Other MBA students similarly beef up their resumes by participating in applied research projects for the Institute's clients. "A number of Wall Street recruiters over the years have told students that the special experience they had working on institute-linked programs domestically and abroad is what made the difference in a Kenan-Flagler MBA receiving a job offer over equally qualified MBAs at top competitor schools," Institute Director John D. Kasarda says. More importantly, he adds, the experiences will make them better managers over the long term because of the skills they developed.

Liaison Elena Miller (MBA '07) says McKinsey & Co., where she will work as a consultant after graduation, "was particularly interested in the independence and decision-making rights that the Kenan Institute gave us with our assigned initiatives." Miller's summer internship — set up in conjunction with KIAAsia — involved trying to streamline the Thai logistics industry and the country's cross-border trading system with its neighbors. She said the experience validated her pursuit of a career based on sustainable business practices. After previous stints as a counselor at an environmental camp and an environmental systems consultant, she says, the work showed her the social benefits of sustainability and showed her future employer she had the requisite project and team management skills. "I showed I could work in a foreign environment and bridge the gap between business and communities," she says.

"The MBA Liaisons play a crucial role in completing our projects because of their skills and enthusiasm," says Noel Greis, director of the Institute's Center for Logistics and Global Strategy. "They also are tremendously

Thailand



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Kenan Institute Asia bridges the gap between business and communities for Thailand and its neighbors — strengthening economies, the environment and the quality of life.

effective at building bridges between the business school and the Kenan Institute.” Greis, who worked with both Kameny and Miller on their respective projects in China and Thailand, says such work gives the liaisons a global perspective sought after by employers. “Any time you can link North Carolina — or anyplace in the United States, for that matter — with the world, that’s critical to business,” she says. “You can’t put a price tag on that. Companies really value that type of experience.”

Some students come in with that global perspective. Kameny lived in China for several years before pursuing his MBA, while Okneanski is a native of the former Soviet republic of Moldova and Beamon was born in Vietnam and spent much of his childhood in the Middle East and

Southeast Asia. Kasarda says an international background isn’t a prerequisite for working with the Institute. Still, it certainly doesn’t

hurt, considering the Institute has placed more than 130 UNC Kenan-Flagler students in summer internships in Asia over the years.



Okneanski, who plans a career in financial services, says his experience with the Kenan Institute only adds to students’ skill sets. “It’s enriching to me as an individual because every bit of knowledge I gain expands my horizons,” he says. “I think all of the students feel the same way.”

“The Beijing **experience** will be **invaluable** in my **future job** with Anheuser-Busch and the brewer’s operation in Shanghai, China.”

Xander Kameny (MBA '07)

CENTERS OF THE KENAN INSTITUTE

The centers that comprise the Kenan Institute are all characterized by a sustainable global approach, entrepreneurial solutions and the promotion of economic development through entrepreneurial ventures.

- Air Commerce
- Competitive Economies
- Entrepreneurial Studies
- International Business Education and Research
- Logistics and Digital Strategy
- Real Estate Development
- Sustainable Enterprise
- Urban Investment Strategies