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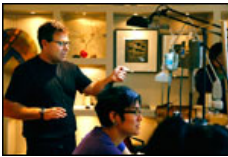
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UI partners with local business to give hands-on experience

BY **ARIANA WITT** | SEPTEMBER 09, 2010 7:20 AM

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Bess Siritanapivat admits she knows nothing about running a business.

But the University of Iowa graduate student in metals worked like an experienced jeweler Wednesday afternoon, creating a model for a ring and practicing for a future stone-setting assignment.

Her future career goals are still uncertain.

"I'm just not sure yet," she said, shrugging her shoulders.

But to help decide, she enrolled in the first practicum course created through a UI-business partnership this semester.

The UI School of Art and Art History has partnered with M.C. Ginsberg, a local jewelry business, to give students hands-on experience at real-world business.

"What we're trying to do is raise the awareness of what you need to look for to have a marketable skill in addition to an academic background," said Mark Ginsberg, the owner of M.C. Ginsberg Objects of Art, 110 E. Washington St.

It's the first such collaboration between the UI and a business, and it took months to arrange.

Professor Steve McGuire, the program coordinator for art education, said the process was somewhat daunting with respect to UI's risk and management concerns about students learning off campus. Officials worked with attorneys to determine who would be responsible for any injuries or property damage.

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The five students taking the course are covered by the standard UI student health-insurance fees, McGuire said.

Officials aren't considering any other such programs but said they wouldn't be opposed to the opportunity.

Ginsberg, along with UI art Professor Kee-ho Yuen, began negotiating to create the program in May. The result was Vertical Integration Business and Studio Art, a three-semester-hour course offered to graduate and undergraduate students with metals-course prerequisites.

While an actual for-credit course is new, UI students working with local businesses isn't. [The Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center](#) offers roughly 1,000 students hands-on work experiences with an option to earn class credit at approximately 50 companies per semester, said the program's executive director, David Hensley.

But those businesses aren't contracted by the university, as is MC Ginsberg.

"Starting a business young and having the drive is actually a really good idea," Hensley said. "We try to give students the right exposure to help them do so."

Yeun said students enrolled in the course have access to around \$300,000 worth of equipment they wouldn't have in a standard UI course, including an Induthrem MC15 Induction thermal casting machine.

There are no extra fees to enroll in the class.

"Academics can only teach you so much," said Ginsberg, who teaches the course and is considered a UI adjunct professor. "If we can help you round out your education by anticipating what you haven't been taught, I think it can make the educational process that much more fulfilling."

He said he would like to add more apprentice-style classes in the future to help aid students in the changing job market.

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