

# Learning economics in a worldly classroom

» More than 250 high school economics students attend summit at Mississippi College

**W**ELCOS, Devcos, Lescos ... oh my!  
I recently had the opportunity to meet trade ambassadors from South America, Africa and Asia. They came from countries such as Brazil, Ghana and Laos.

These ambassadors had the responsibility of importing and exporting goods and services for their countries.

While negotiating with ambassadors from other countries, they were also investing in long-term capital projects, giving and receiving foreign aid, and paying tariffs on goods and services bought from countries outside of their trade alliance.



Selena Swartzfager



Clinton High School, playing the role of Denmark, won of the recent International Economic Summit, sponsored by the Mississippi Economic Educational Council.

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### TRAINING

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While I observed these ambassadors during their negotiations, I was in awe of how they knew exactly how many exports they had to trade and how many imports they needed to meet the demand of the people in their country. The research this must have required!

In speaking with the ambassadors from Morocco, I learned they needed to import four units of food products.

Unfortunately, there was a worldwide shortage of food products which required them to trade four units of tourism plus one unit of raw materials plus one unit of financial services in exchange for four units of food products.

What will surprise you the most is that I observed all of this taking place right here in Mississippi.

And you know what else?

These trade ambassadors were actually middle and high school students participating in the Mississippi Council on Economic Education's International Economic Summit.

This annual event draws more than 250 students to Mississippi College where they have the opportunity to practice what they have learned in their classrooms.

MCEE provides two-day training to middle and high school teachers each summer so that they have the knowledge and curriculum to teach this complex subject to their students.

They leave the training and head back to their classrooms equipped to create classrooms of trade ambassadors.

The curriculum is in-depth, engaging, hands-on, real world and challenging. The program engages students with their left and right brains via research, debate, creativity and critical thinking.

Currency conversion is necessary as high income countries use "Welcos," middle income countries use "Devcos," and low income countries such as Morocco use "Lescos."

Dr. Becky Smith, economist and faculty member at Mississippi State University, says that a high school economics teacher can use this program to teach everything our students are required to know about economics.

She reminds me repeatedly that in high school economics we should be educating our students to "do what economists do." She continues to enlighten me as I work to guide MCEE in the direction where economics is fun and cool.

As a result of participation in the Mississippi Summit, several students from the Delta and southwest regions of our state have the opportunity to participate in a summit taking place in China this July.

They are currently working to raise half the funds this experience will cost with a commitment from a funder to pay

the remainder of the expenses.

Tell me that this wouldn't be life changing for these young people who are served by a program that is working to ensure they attend college.

Contact me if you would like to help them pursue this experience.

The next teacher training, which is required before a teacher can enroll his or her students to participate, will take place in June at Millsaps College.

Businesses wishing to sponsor a teacher for this training can do so for

\$500.

Student teams will come together again in December and need sponsors for the \$100 team fees.

For more information you can contact MCEE at 601-974-1325 or mscee@millsaps.edu.

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