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## A Post-Fulbright Reflection: How I Didn't Have My Focus Figured Out After All

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## A Post-Fulbright Reflection: How I Didn't Have My Focus Figured Out After All

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### Abstract

Regis University marketing professor Bobbi Ewelt reflects on the goals set in her Fulbright Project Plan for a semester at the Universidad del Pacifico in Lima, Peru. Ewelt lists the goals included in the plan and describes the actual outcome of each goal. Two of the three goals needed to be changed dramatically.

As a marketing professor at Regis University in Denver and a 2017–2018 Fulbright Scholar grant recipient, I went to the Universidad del Pacifico (Pacifico) in Lima, Peru, for the fall semester, August through December 2017.

Pacifico is a business and economics university that created an entrepreneur program called *Emprende UP* more than 15 years ago. *Emprende UP* offers a three-stage comprehensive program to guide entrepreneurs. Phase 1 is called preincubation (innovation), Phase 2 is acceleration (implementation), and Phase 3 focuses on angel investors (funding).

My Fulbright application included a project plan with three goals. Below is a description of the goals in this plan and actual implementation that occurred.

### Project Plan Goal #1

Team teach a synchronous, cross-cultural semester-long Consumer Behavior class with a Regis University peer during the August through December 2017 semester. Regis and Pacifico students would take the class at the same time using teleconferencing technology.

### Actual Outcome

The class in Denver had 12 students: 11 Americans and one exchange student from Hong Kong. Because the class was in English, in Lima it attracted exchange students: two Peruvians, three Germans, and two French. The class met twice a week for 1.15 hours each session. There was a

one-hour time difference from August through October (Lima was on Central Time and Denver is on Mountain Time), and a two-hour difference in November when clocks in Colorado changed from daylight saving to standard time and clocks in Peru did not change. In addition, the academic calendars were out of sync by two weeks. Students in Lima started class two weeks earlier than those in Denver. Therefore, I streamed with the professor in Denver to review basic marketing concepts because the class in Lima was an elective, and we were not sure what basic marketing knowledge the students in Peru possessed. The class in Denver had the basic marketing class as a prerequisite.

I teamed with Jennifer Whitton at Regis to teach the class. The Regis class took place in the Gronowski Incubator in the Innovation Center, which was new—only a year old at the time of our class. We streamed the class using Zoom software. In each location we had two cameras, one on the computer, focused on the professor, and a standalone camera that showed the class. Surprisingly, we had very few technology issues. We had to cancel only one class due to the internet not working correctly in the United States. One difficulty of this set up was the inability to see the students up close with the standalone camera. The students appeared too far away. The best place to see students and professors was when they were in front of the computer's camera.

The biggest technology challenge was being able to hear one other. Unless the speaker was in front of the computer, it was difficult to hear. To

remedy this situation, each location used hand-held microphones. It helped, but it was not ideal for learning because students had to wait to have the microphone passed to them to share their thoughts. As a result, freely flowing interactive conversations were nearly impossible.



*The author, Bobbi Ewelt, at Universidad del Pacifico, Lima, Peru*

Jennifer and I quickly got the hang of setting up the live stream. For the technology to work at Regis, the Zoom link had to initiate from the Incubator. So 30 minutes before the class started, Jennifer emailed the Zoom link to me and Pacifico IT. The Incubator microphone and link set up was self-service at Regis. At Pacifico, I had a designated IT person who came to every class and managed the technology. It would have been nice to have had IT assistance at Regis so Jennifer could focus only on preparing for the class and interacting with the students. With IT handling technology at Pacifico, I could greet the students at both locations as they entered the room and focus on getting mentally ready to teach the class without the distraction of setting up the technology.

We used the Regis WorldClass portal to house all of the documents for the class such as the readings list, syllabus, and handouts; to capture assignment submissions from students; and to post class announcements and offer students a view into their gradebook. This was easy to set up.

All the students in Lima needed to do was provide the Regis registrar with basic student information and their accounts were set up before the start of class. This was arranged via email. The Pacifico students had no issues adjusting to this set up because they use a similar program, BlackBoard, so technology is an integral part of their classes as well.

Jennifer and I switched off teaching the marketing topics during each class. In creating the class discussions and lectures, we were extremely sensitive to how the information would be received at the other location. Therefore, we focused on interactive elements that didn't put either location at a disadvantage. These elements included using PowerPoint and Prezi presentation software, videos, and other audio-friendly techniques like radio stories and podcast links. I paid special attention to my own vocal delivery. I am a fast talker, so I consciously spoke slowly and avoided colloquialisms. If I used words that were important to marketing or business that I thought the students might not be familiar with, I either defined the words or asked them if they knew the meaning. And if they were not familiar with the words, I would explain their meaning to students within the context of our discussion.

We needed to facilitate and encourage interaction between the classes much more than in a single-site classroom. For example, for discussions to take place, it was often easier to call on students to answer questions rather than wait for students to raise their hands to participate.

We also had guest speakers from two organizations who presented on different days. One was BoldLeaders, a non-profit based in Denver that included a team member in Omaha, Nebraska. The other non-profit, Igua, was based in Lima. In each location, the speaker came to campus, and we easily added the Omaha-based speaker to the stream for the day by sending him a link.

We set up the class for the students to work in teams after midterm exams. One mistake we made was in not creating opportunities for the students to work in their teams early in the class. Just as we needed to facilitate discussions during class time, we needed to facilitate group cohesion at the very

beginning of the class so that students in each location were motivated to get to know each other. We had anticipated that the students would get to know one other outside of class due to the excitement they expressed in working with students in another country, but this did not happen. Therefore, rather than adding assignments, we gave the students class time to use Skype to meet with one other.

Due to unforeseen circumstances associated with scheduling and technology issues, we needed to stop streaming the class for the last four weeks in November after the end of daylight saving time in Colorado. By this time the students were beginning to get to know each other, and they—as well as the professors—were disappointed that we stopped streaming. In the future, students signing up for the class will need to have 2.5 hours blocked off on their schedules, even though the class is only 1.15 hours long. After the time change in the United States, students had schedule conflicts because they were in other classes at the time our Consumer Behavior class was scheduled to meet.

In my project plan, I planned on team teaching with a colleague of mine with whom I had worked for over 10 years. Instead of teaching with my peer, the marketing lead at Regis assigned me to teach with Jennifer; not only had I not taught with Jennifer before, but I did not know her prior to this project. Rather than questioning the change in faculty, I went along with it, which proved to be a big mistake. Jennifer and I figured out the logistics of the class just fine, but we never clicked due to our extremely different teaching styles and our differences in the amount of time we could commit to the class. In addition to this class, Jennifer was teaching two other classes, had been away during the summer on maternity leave and wasn't involved in the early planning of this class, like my other colleague was. So, she wasn't

familiar with the overall goals of the class and the commitment required of creating a new teaching method.

In addition, our teaching styles were extremely different. I teach an experiential method of learning. I assign readings for the students to complete outside of class, then when we meet, I will select several marketing terms and concepts from their readings to discuss in relation to their client projects. My style is definitely more fluid and organic, responding to student questions and interests to guide the class discussion. I see the classroom as a working session, which requires that I integrate the topics identified for that day on the schedule into the topics and questions raised by the students. In addition, as a marketing consultant, I bring recent work examples to the classroom to discuss how the students can apply the same methods or lessons learned to their projects. Therefore, I frequently do not use notes in my class; instead, I use talking points and the client projects to keep me on topic.

Jennifer, on the other hand, creates Prezi's, lectures to the students from the presentations, and uses examples from her personal life to illustrate the marketing concepts. Our differences could have worked to our benefit as a complement to each other, but unfortunately, it did not work that way. Instead it felt like a struggle because we were not focused on achieving the same goals. From this lesson, I have learned the other instructor is equally as important as the content of the class. The dynamics of the professors is equally if not more important as the group dynamics of the class.

The [video Pacifico made while I was visiting](#) demonstrates the university's high level of professionalism and shows the students who took the class in Lima.



*UPDate Emprendimiento Social, Universidad del Pacifico, Lima, Peru*

## **Project Plan Goal #2**

Facilitate collaboration between students and businesses at the Regis Innovation Center and Pacifico Emprende UP.

## **Actual Outcome**

The goal changed slightly because of contextual realities. I learned that the structure of the two entities was extremely different, and doing collaboration at that time between the two entities would be too difficult. For example, the Innovation Center at Regis was in start-up mode. It had a director, an assistant director, and a recently hired program manager, in addition to administrative staff. It did not, however, have any programs set up as yet. On the other hand, Emprende UP was a long-established entity with seven program staff, a director, and a manager of the accelerator (the three-phase program). Therefore, it had several regular programs set up including its monthly webinar series called UPDates and special events.

Rather than joint programs or events between the two locations, I took advantage of the Fulbright and American Embassy programs in Lima and the knowledge of the Emprende UP staff to plan a live UPDate event in November. Although the Fulbright Commission in Lima tended to be very hands-off (which I appreciated), if I needed

assistance all I had to do was ask. Otherwise, I was able to implement my project independently.

Outside of class, the Commission planned cultural outings for all the Fulbright recipients in Peru. These events took place every couple of months, so we could meet each other. In addition, the Commission provided a list of the other Fulbright recipients and, on my own, I scheduled monthly meetups in which we convened for lunch or dinner to get to know each other and learn about one other's projects. Not all were scholars; Fulbright also awards grants to policy fellows and English language assistants. This is how I became familiar with the Fulbright recipients' projects to include them in the live UPDate event in November.

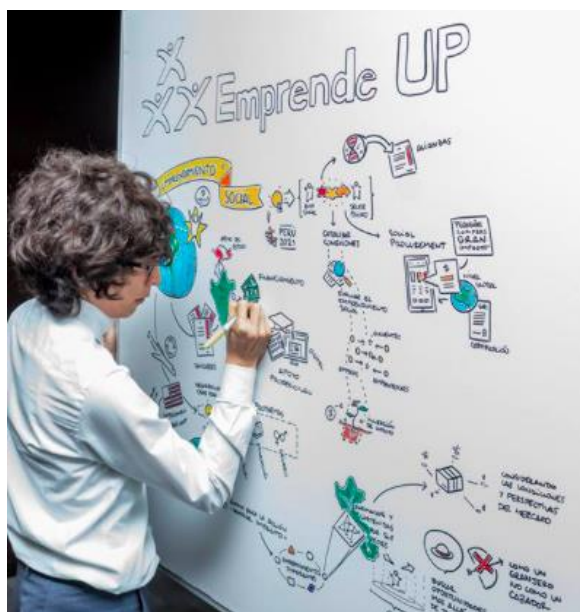
After learning about the other Fulbright projects at our monthly informal meet ups, I scheduled meetings with American Embassy officials and Fulbright recipients to learn what programs or projects the U.S. government was funding that were relevant to entrepreneurs in Peru. Through these meetings I learned that a Fulbright Public Policy fellow, Amber Seira, who had arrived in Lima a month after me, was there to implement a U.S. government-funded program through the Peruvian Ministry of Commerce to use public monies to assist small businesses. Corruption is an issue in Peru. Institutionalizing businesses through this government assistance program is an effort to



curtail it. In addition Sunshine Ison arrived in Lima two months after me, and one of her jobs as the U.S. Embassy's Cultural Attaché was to let Peruvian businesses know of a new grant program available to them from the U.S. government.

Therefore, I coordinated with UPDate manager Mariana Chipoco at Emprende UP, and together we planned a panel discussion with three entrepreneurs, Amber, and Sunshine; I acted as moderator. We called it UPDateEmprendimiento Social.

We kicked off the event by having Amber and Sunshine discuss the U.S. government programs, followed by each of the entrepreneurs talking about their businesses and the assistance they received from Emprende UP. Next, I moderated the discussion among panel members (in English) to show how audience members could benefit from the services available to them as well as discuss the successes, failures, and topics of most importance to entrepreneurs (such as funding and networking). Following the event, participants enjoyed refreshments and time for networking. The event was a success, with more than 100 people attending, and the networking continued for at least an hour after the event officially ended. In addition, we had a Doodler, another entrepreneur, draw the discussion that took place.



UPDate Emprendimiento Social, Universidad del Pacifico, Lima, Peru

### Project Plan Goal #3

Coach and mentor students in Emprende UP, the Entrepreneurship Center at UP.

### Actual Outcome

The actual outcome varied dramatically from the expected outcome. One of the last classes students take before graduating at Pacifico is entrepreneurship, in which the students write a business plan. The students met with a team of professors to plan and discuss their business ideas. These meetings were in Spanish and, because of my limited ability to speak Spanish, I wasn't able to participate as planned. Instead, I coached and mentored Regis students who visited Pacifico during Thanksgiving break. In May 2017 a competition open to all students in the Regis business school was held for an opportunity for two students to join me at Pacifico during Thanksgiving break for a cultural immersion experience. The Innovation Center would pay for two students to come to Lima and participate in activities with students, faculty, and businesses at Emprende UP, tour Lima, and receive a cultural introduction. In exchange we wanted students to present their experiences at the Global Engagement Colloquium in March 2018 in Denver and explain how this experience had helped them to achieve both their Jesuit and academic goals. In the end, only one student offered a proposal that met the criteria and received the grant.

The student, Bailey Gent, a dual major in the Peace and Justice and Business programs, signed up for the Consumer Behavior class. Two additional students joined Bailey at their own expense: Josie Traberg, a Norwegian student studying at Regis and fluent in Spanish, and Kenley Harrington, another student in the Consumer Behavior class.

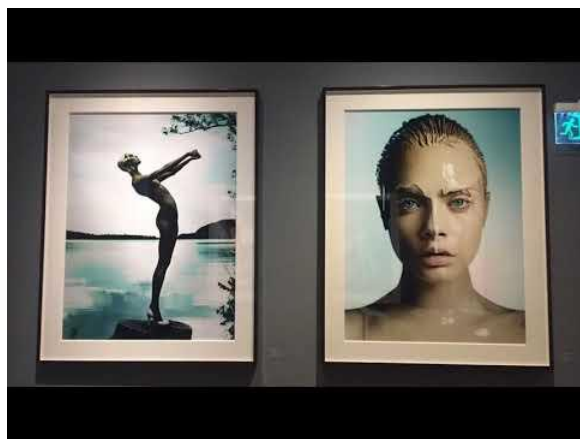
To begin planning for the students' visit, I met with Karen Weinberger, professor of entrepreneur classes and previous director of Emprende UP, to identify who the students should meet with to achieve their goals in learning about entrepreneurship in Peru. In addition, the Pacifico Marketing Lead, Carla Pennano, assisted in identifying activities the students could participate

in during their stay. The students and I held planning meetings via Zoom prior to their visit to discuss and prioritize their goals and schedule meetings.

In the end, the students participated in the following activities:

- Tours of the Pacifico campus and several Lima neighborhoods, which included taking local buses for transportation
- Meetings with four female entrepreneurs to learn what it's like to own a business in Peru
- A volunteer activity in which they accompanied high school girls and the wife of a previous member of Congress and Vice President candidate, to deliver supplies to Peruvians living in the slums
- An awards ceremony in which companies received recognition for their innovative business ideas (students accompanied U.S. Embassy staff)
- Thanksgiving lunch at the Fulbright Commission
- In-person classes at Pacifico
- Production of the UPDate Emprendimiento Social event
- Dinners to experience authentic Peruvian food

Upon Bailey's return, she created a video, "The Resilient Peruvian Woman" to present at the Regis Global Engagement Colloquium about her cultural immersion experience in Lima. Those interested can view her presentation at this link:



## Reflections and Conclusions

During my time in Lima, I was able to observe the differences in marketing not only as a professor, but also as a consumer. The lack of consumerism in Peru was obvious to me. In Lima the product selection was limited at every type of store. In the United States our promotions are focused on larger discounts when greater quantities are purchased (for example, buy five items and get \$5 off). In Lima, on the other hand, there was no such discount for buying larger quantities of items; instead, it was more expensive per unit or ounce to buy larger quantities, so I learned to purchase the smallest size not only for the savings but because I was there for only a short period of time and wanted to minimize waste. These Peruvian shopping habits reflect some of the cultural differences between Americans and Peruvians. In my opinion, Peruvians tend to live in the moment more than Americans.

My 14-year-old son Dugan went with me to Lima and studied abroad at Sacred Heart Sophianum, a local high school, because he is fluent in Spanish. He noted that the size of purchases compared to the United States was smaller and their frequency was less. For example, some students would buy one ice cream bar from a vendor outside of school rather than a quart of ice cream from the grocery store so they could then have ice cream at home.

My experience at Pacifico and the implementation of my Fulbright proposal exceeded my expectations. Pacifico was a welcoming setting for academic exploration and discovery and the Fulbright Commission was there to support my goals. Before I left for Lima, I thought I had my focus as an academic figured out. My primary area of expertise and interest was in experiential learning. I have worked on developing my teaching methodology and had been creating experiential learning best practices over the last fourteen years. I anticipated focusing on that topic upon my return to Denver.


Instead of my area of expertise and interest narrowing to only experiential learning, it broadened to include entrepreneurship due to my Fulbright experience. I did not expect that women and social entrepreneurship would grab my attention as they did. As a marketing consultant, I

have been a woman entrepreneur and social entrepreneur for over 25 years. I never gave myself a special title like woman entrepreneur. Instead, I saw myself as a business owner who had created her business out of necessity. At the beginning of my career, I worked for various employers in Washington, D.C. for six years. I worked from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m., with the occasional late meeting. That regimented schedule was not for me. I realized that what was most important to me was variety in the type and location of work I did, flexibility with my schedule, and the autonomy to select the type of projects I worked on and the people with whom I chose to work. The only way I could achieve those goals at that time was to work for myself.

Through this experience, I learned I could now label myself as a social entrepreneur. As such, I pay special attention to whom I work with and where I conduct my business. I seek other social entrepreneurs to partner with on projects. For example, I work with the Maris Group in Denver and, when we work on projects together, we give a portion of our profits to charity. I also frequent other local women entrepreneurs' businesses when I have lunch meetings or meet offsite for coffee. That way, I support my personal mission and their businesses, too.

I credit my new awareness and sensitivity to the significance and expectations that come with being a woman who is engaged in social entrepreneurship to my visiting students, the team at *Emprende UP*, and the professors at Pacifico who teach the entrepreneur classes. Upon

reflection, I appreciated learning about the various adaptations to the changing conditions of entrepreneurship, for example, the different types of categories for entrepreneurs, and different working patterns due to the gig economy or a dispersed workforce. In addition, I learned about different titles such as social entrepreneur. I loved getting caught up in the excitement of my students when we attended a social entrepreneurship awards ceremony. At the awards ceremony. In fact, we received an unexpected treat when one of the award winners was a woman who had been on the panel at our *UPDates* event. I also enjoyed seeing the awe in the students' expressions when we visited a co-work space owned by a woman entrepreneur upon her candidly sharing the challenges she had experienced of owning a business and having a demanding family. She described the important role her mother plays in helping her care for her daughter, husband, and house when she is at work.

I honestly have not decided how this experience will change my teaching practice now that I'm back in Denver. I just know it will be another element to be integrated into my experiential learning curricula. What I ultimately look forward to is having students I have taught this year return to my classroom in the future as guest speakers to talk about their experiences as women entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, or both. Only time will tell the outcome of my Fulbright experience on my academic career. I am comfortable being patient waiting to see what happens. 



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