Students Visit the High Point Furniture Market

Amy Garrard

Seven faculty and staff members, including Dr. Cynthia West, Department Head, and thirty-two students from the Department of Forest Products (FP) and the College of Business and Industry (COBI) attended the High Point Furniture Market in High Point, North Carolina on April 20-22, 2001. The students who participated in this trip are currently majoring in either the Furniture Management Program or a furniture option in the Forest Products curriculum or are considering changing majors to one of these options. The trip provided an excellent opportunity to meet industry representatives and to see first-hand how furniture is marketed.

The students and staff posed for a photograph with Dr. West and Dr. Sara Freedman, Dean, College of Business and Industry Head, before loading onto a Mississippi State University bus rented from the Athletic Department. The group departed the MSU campus around noon on Friday, April 20.

The trip was organized by Dr. Dan Seale, Professor of Forest Products, and Mrs. Teressa Hooper, Admissions Coordinator, Business Academic Advising, College of Business and Industry. The market trip was a great opportunity for the Department of FP and COBI to work together. The students from the various furniture majors were able to get to know one another better and network with upper level furniture industry executives at the market.

The students spent two full days at the market and visited fifteen different furniture manufacturers, including several firms from Mississippi. These manufacturers represented a wide spectrum of products, styles, and price points.

At many showrooms the students were treated to lunch and/or refreshments and often met with merchandising managers, showroom consultants, and senior executives including vice presidents and CEO’s. At every showroom visited, the MSU students were treated with special consideration and the utmost respect. Students were given extensive tours of the showrooms and had very informative discussions about target markets, merchandising strategy, globalization of the market, and manufacturing considerations.
Furniture Discovery Center Reception

A highlight of the market trip was a reception given by the American Furniture Manufacturers’ Association (AFMA) for the student groups attending the market. Students attended from a number of technical and community colleges including Appalachian State University, High Point University, North Carolina State University, Virginia Tech and Mississippi State University (MSU). The reception was held Saturday, April 21 at the Furniture Discovery Center and was well attended by industry executives as well as AFMA members. The faculty, staff and students from MSU greatly appreciate the efforts of Mr. Larry Runyan, VP of Manufacturing Services, AFMA and Mrs. Nancy High, CEO, International Home Furnishings Marketing Association.

Pictured (l to r) Mr. Douglas Brackett, Executive VP, AFMA; Mr. Larry Runyan, VP of Manufacturing Services, AFMA; Mrs. Teressa Hooper, Admissions Coordinator, MSU College of Business and Industry; and Dr. Cynthia West, Department Head, MSU Department of Forest Products.

Mr. Grey Hunsucker (center), National Accounts VP, The Berkline Corporation speaks to students at the AFMA Reception.
Students Visit Market Showrooms

Students visited the following showrooms in the High Point area:
Action Industries; Ashley Furniture Industries, Inc.; Bassett Furniture
Industries, Inc.; Broyhill Furniture; Century Furniture; Franklin
Corporation; Furniture Brands International; Hooker Furniture;
Pearson Company; Pulaski Furniture Corporation; Stanley Furniture
Company, Inc.; Thomasville Furniture Industries; Vanguard Furniture
Company; Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Company; and Webb
Furniture.

Here’s what some of the students had to say....

“This experience opened my eyes to
career opportunities that I never
knew existed. It allowed me to see
aspects of the furniture industry
that I otherwise would have never
been able to see.” Jennifer
Hickman

“To me the High Point Furniture
Market filled all of my expecta-
tions. Every company we visited
treated us with the utmost
respect.” Charlie Hill

“I feel as though this experience
has given me knowledge about the
furniture industry that no other
teacher in any class atmosphere
can give me. .... I can’t possibly
write on one page how much
insight I have gained from this
awesome experience.” Todd Roof

“Meeting with furniture market
professionals in High Point
emphasized the relationship
between manufacturing and mar-
keting operations in today’s mar-
ketplace. The furniture market
also demonstrates first-hand the
importance of global market
opportunities in the industry.”
Matt Martin

“Going to High Point is the best
way to grasp an idea of what the
industry is all about.” Eric Ehlers

“This was a great opportunity to
meet people in industry on a trip
that explains the furniture indus-
try from design to showroom
floor.” David Hennington

A direct result of the Market Trip
was a Forest Products Furniture
Marketing Major, Demetrice
Evans heard about and applied
for one of the Young Home
Furnishings Executives
Internships sponsored by the
AFMA. Demetrice was success-
ful in becoming the recipient of
one of these summer internships.
Stops in Atlanta...

On the way to High Point, the group stopped in Atlanta and visited two large furniture retailers. Special thanks to Rooms-To-Go and La-Z-Boy Galleries, in Atlanta, GA for taking the time to show the students around. Store management and employees provided the students with an excellent tour of the stores and answered many questions. The retailer visits were a great way to provide background information before visiting the manufacturers’ market showrooms.