

# GRADUATE EDUCATION

## TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

By using New York City as a classroom, NYU grad students are gaining real-life perspective

By ERIKA PRAFDER

**W**HILE most MBA students acquire core business concepts inside a four-walled lecture hall, some colleges are using New York City itself as their classroom.

Last spring, New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business piloted its Operations in New York City course, with students gaining real-world experience through site visits to area businesses. Each trip explores a different aspect of operations management.

"New York City is one of the most amazing cities in the world.

It makes sense to learn about the dynamics of operations management in the context of real businesses," says Kristen Sosulski, clinical assistant professor of information, operations and management sciences, and director of the center for innovation in teaching and learning at NYU Stern.

Prior to each site visit, graduate



Scott Simon (third from left), an associate partner from Control Group, helps students learn technology and design by studying the MTA's electronic kiosks.

students are introduced to an operations concept. They study its theory and a site visit challenge is defined, which helps students formulate questions for the executives they will meet.

Last spring, students studying

supply chain management paid a visit to JetBlue Airways.

"They had a look at the docks of the largest container terminal in North America," says Sosulski. "The way flights are scheduled is another aspect of operations. The

field is so observable. It makes sense to leverage our location."

At the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission, "Students inquired about how TLC defines quality," says Professor Harry Chernoff, clinical professor of information, operations and management sciences at NYU Stern.

A stopover at the Metropolitan Opera will offer a behind-the-scenes look at a live performance — what it takes from a project management perspective.

"We'll inquire about how they price their tickets and plan for new types of productions, like high-definition live telecasting of opera, and how it's changing their business," says Chernoff.

For Aditya Basu, a second-year MBA student at NYU, the class proved to be eye-opening.

"We had an unparalleled level of access to the facilities visited and the executives," says Basu.

Students complete a final project, for which they identify a company on their own, along with two major challenges that the

business is facing.

"They present a solution and alternatives," says Sosulski.

The class has proved to have distinct advantages for the businesses that are visited, too. For Basu's final project, he and a group of fellow students visited Sylvester Manor Educational Farm on Shelter Island that had been running at a loss for over a year.

"We met with workers and asked their opinions. We discovered there was no full-time oversight on the financials of the company. We advised one of the folks working on the operational level to become full time on the financial side, as he understood the business better. If we hadn't gone there, we wouldn't have been able to give the recommendations," says Basu.

Premium networking is a built-in perk of the new class.

"We're leveraging our alumni," says Sosulski.

"When you take this course, you're joining a community of industry experts, which helps you to build a network," adds Chernoff.

Brian Zak/NY Post