

DBU students learn to help others through using business skills

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DALLAS—This fall, students in Ross O'Brien's social entrepreneurship course at [Dallas Baptist University](#) were introduced to a new side of Dallas and ideas about business practices they had not considered.

Students in Ross O'Brien's class tour community outreach facilities in Dallas through Buckner International's Community Transformation Center. (Photo by Carolyn Meier/DBU)

O'Brien, associate professor of management, said he designed the course to allow students "to engage in the community around them, to learn about challenges facing people within the community, and to participate in the creation of solutions to address a social problem."

During the week, students visited Buckner International's [Community Transformation Center](#) and [H.I.S. Bridge Builders](#).

H.I.S. Bridge Builders is an organization located in Bonton, an area in South Dallas marked by high crime rates and a median income of \$9,800 per year. The purpose of the organization is to advance urban transformation through education, health, economic and community development. The class met with staff members from these organizations as well as residents in the communities to discuss community needs and opportunities for business and ministry.

“These business leaders are ambitious and persistent, tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide-scale change,” DBU student Samuel Galicia said.

After visiting the two organizations, the students came back to class and created their own business models, devising creative ways they could impact the community.

One group worked with two men they met in Bonton. The men soon will start their own lawn-care business, so the DBU students gathered information about available resources and start-up costs to assist in creating a business plan for them. At the end of the week, three student teams presented their business plans, and the men visited the class to hear the proposed plan for their new business.

“Many start-ups are motivated by a singular drive to make money, but this was different because Darus and Cole really desire to make a difference in their community,” Galicia reflected. “Midway through the process, we realized that this new business can and will change the community. Darus’ dedication and love for the community is what will make the business successful.”

Some in the class were surprised that experiencing such practical application of business principles changed their minds about their future careers.

“This class revolutionized our idea of success,” student Ariel Palacios shared. “Life is not just about us, but about following God and caring for the needy, the broken, the poor, the weak in spirit. As business majors, we have been given this beautiful opportunity to impact lives through our profession.”