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For immediate release

Displaced by Katrina, Student Finds New Academic Home with Illinois MBA Program

Champaign, Ill., September 26, 2005 – Four states in one week. That’s the long and winding road that Chairath Sivapornpan has traveled to join the Illinois MBA program.

Sivapornpan started graduate school in July at Tulane University in New Orleans. In the days after Hurricane Katrina hit, he evacuated New Orleans and bunked with some friends of friends in Austin, TX, before heading to San Diego, CA. And, just a short time later, he was in Illinois as the newest member of the Class of 2007 in the Illinois MBA program.

Sivapornpan emailed several MBA programs from his temporary quarters seeking an academic home to continue his studies. Within a day of receiving Sivapornpan’s email, Mary Miller, associate dean for the Illinois MBA, admitted the Thailand native to the program. She also contacted the handful of first- and second-year MBA students from Thailand already enrolled in the Illinois MBA program, who connected with Sivapornpan as soon as he arrived in Urbana, offering their help with classes, projects, and settling into the community.

“The Illinois MBA is like a family, with new members joining each year. I knew our current students and the staff would do everything necessary to help Chairath get settled and to make him feel welcome,” said Associate Dean Miller.

Sivapornpan, who expects to complete his MBA at Illinois, says the faculty have been very supportive and helpful. He also praises the members of his study team who go out of their way to make sure he is catching up and not feeling overwhelmed. “My Taiwanese friend on my team, I call her ‘professor.’ She’s great.”

During his first week in Illinois, Sivapornpan visited offices all over campus, completing necessary paperwork. He also spent time looking for longer term housing while staying temporarily with one of his MBA classmates. “I just got an apartment,” said Sivapornpan. “So I’ll be settled in soon. I’m tired physically, but not mentally.”

“I really appreciate the American people. When someone suffers or is in a difficult situation, he isn’t ignored.”

–More –

New Home with Illinois MBA, continued

Although he only spent a few weeks in New Orleans and does not plan to return to Tulane University, Sivapornpan is saddened by what has happened to the Big Easy. “New Orleans is a unique city. I feel sad when I look at the news on television. New Orleans, in my mind, is not that city.”

Nationally recognized as one of the leading business schools, the College of Business at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has outstanding programs in accountancy, business administration, and finance. The College enrolls approximately 3,000 undergraduates and 850 graduate students in MBA, master’s, and doctoral programs.

The integrated MBA curriculum incorporates a core curriculum in accounting, finance, marketing, communication, economics, and quantitative analysis during the first year of the program. The second year directs students to concentrations in finance, marketing, information technology, operations, and general management. The professional concentrations provide students with depth and specificity of knowledge so they may focus on their career direction. Team case competitions, Illinois Business Consulting (a student-run organization), and the Center for Entrepreneurial Development complement the curriculum and provide Illinois MBA students with real world application of learning while enhancing the résumé of program graduates.

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