

A first step to college: Latin Builders Association Academy Charter High School students visit FIU Business.

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Students from the Latin Builders Association Academy Charter High School paid their first visit to FIU's College of Business on November 26, 2013 with open minds and dozens of questions. Many had never been on a college campus before and didn't know what to expect.

Starting with a photo op and greeting from Dean David Klock, they packed a full agenda into a four-hour visit. Led by Academy principal Gyovania Marante, they heard about career paths and courses and held dialogues over lunch. They toured the college and the FIU campus, posed with Roary, and gained new insights into college life.

And while the students from the two-year-old school were only sophomores, they began to set their sights on a college education, and what it would mean to them.

Bringing students to the campus of a business college was a natural move for an organization that stresses preparation for opportunities in business and construction, association officials said. **Accompanying the students were Bernie Navarro, LBA Executive Board immediate past President, Guillermo Fernandez, LBA Executive Board president and Ernie Diaz, LBA Executive Board member and chairman of the Dean's Council.**

Students meet and learn from university faculty and staff.

Amelia Maguire, executive director for management development at the college and a board member of the builders association, welcomed the students and told them about the day to come. In the midst of touring campus, they enjoyed the FIU ritual of posing for photos with Roary.

The group of students heard about the college experience firsthand from student members of the college's Executive Business Leadership Board, Stephanie Castillo, Lilian Guzman, Litong Chen, and Christina Lerouge.

At a roundtable lunch, they had the opportunity to speak with members of the FIU Business staff, including Margie Leonard of Undergraduate Advising and Jairo Ledesma of Career Management Services, about opportunities at the college and how to pursue them. They also heard from faculty members representing three tracks of studies: Nancy Rauseo, marketing professor, entrepreneurship professor Seema Pissaris and David Wernick of the Management and International Business faculty.

The relationship between the high school and FIU will be ongoing, Klock said, with plans in the works to bring courses directly to students at the academy through the university's Dual Enrollment programs.