



COLLEGE NEWS

Bradley business professor attends international economic conference

Germany scholar discusses European economy

By Tim Belter '13

European integration had seemed like a resounding success for globalization, but with the current economic crisis, its very survival is threatened. Germany has been thrust into a position of leadership, but has been hesitant to take up the mantle. A recent conference at Harvard University, “The German Angst of Leadership,” discussed the historical and modern contexts of German leadership and addressed ways to reduce Germany’s uncertainty.

Bradley University business professor William Toel was invited to join the conference alongside European political and economic leaders, including members of the European Parliament and current and former German government officials.

Toel was proud to represent Bradley among such distinguished officials and academics. He spoke about his research with scholars from around the world.

“It is a nice honor to be invited to a conference like this,” Toel said. “It gives Bradley exposure to a new group of people.”

Toel has spent much of the past three years living in Berlin, researching the European economic crisis and studying Germany’s capabilities and response. He says much of Germany’s reluctance as a world leader stems from European suspicion of Germany going back to World War II.

“Germany is in a position, for the first time since World War II, where they have the strength and need to take leadership, but they won’t do it,” said Toel.

Tensions and fears with roots in that devastating world conflict continue to impact the political situation today. Germany has been criticized for a perceived failure to live up to its obligations as a strong European economy, but its citizens are wary of being viewed as a powerful nation once more.

“They have a pathological fear of being held responsible, of being criticized and of being accused of being just like 1940s Germany,” Toel said. “However, if Europe is going to survive, and if the Euro is going to survive, then Germany must lead.”

The German economy has remained strong based on its manufacturing and exports. High-quality German products command a premium price throughout the world.

“Germany is much stronger than they are willing to admit. Everyone knows that they are an export powerhouse,” said Toel. “It is astonishing to witness a mature, intelligent and disciplined people continue to suffer under a complex that leaves them uncertain about accepting the natural responsibilities consistent with their strength.”