

April Gilbert

School of Human Ecology-1

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Come February, members of the Merchandising Association from the School of Human Ecology will be taking their yearly trip to Atlanta, Georgia for a two day adventure through the fashion industry.

You may think learning about the fashion industry means shopping for the latest trends, however for the Merchandising Association, this trip entails much more.

The first stop on the agenda is a tour of AmericasMart, one of four regional markets in the United States that provides potential customers with apparel, home furnishings, and gifts.

AmericasMart offers the members of the Merchandising Association a chance to talk to showroom personnel, explore new designers, be a part of seminars which cover techniques used to promote sales and information on upcoming designers, even watch a fashion show, and of course, shopping is always an option as well.

President of the Merchandising Association, Rachel Morgan who hopes to one day do visual merchandising displays, stated, "AmericasMart in Atlanta shows us a large variety of showrooms filled to the brim with professionally displayed items. Buyer departments of businesses come to the market to acquire their next season's merchandise. When we visit during market, we experience first-hand what it is like to be a retail buyer for a major company."

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The next stop in Atlanta is the Lenox Mall, which is considered an “upscale mall,” full of stores for highly successful designers. Here the students can examine the designers’ stores and creations and assess the displays using the knowledge they’ve gained as merchandising and design majors.

While the trip sounds like all work and no play, fun times are still to be had when not learning how the world of fashion works.

When asked what her favorite part of the whole experience was, Morgan replied, “Visiting the cash and carry sample sale floors to purchase unique, next season items at wholesale prices, 50 % off retail price, before anyone else can buy them!”

Although it may seem the opportunity to go to Atlanta is designated for only Merchandising and Design majors, the Merchandising Association welcomes all who are interested to join in on the experience. That includes anyone with a desire to learn exactly what goes on in the world of fashion, regardless of your major.

Morgan stated “It’s not only fashion, but interests in architecture, business, and journalism would benefit greatly from this experience. In past trips, we included some Child Development majors as well as Housing and Design majors.”

For less than a hundred dollars, you can join the fun! Anyone interested may contact Dr. Lizabeth Mullens in South Hall Room 117.

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