Luxottica Lending Support to Bocconi University

By LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN — Luxottica said Wednesday that it will become a partner and a supporter of Bocconi University for five years to finance a program of study grants.

The grants will offer financial assistance to undergraduate and postgraduate students and support their training. The company will also support three international study programs along with the Bocconi social mobility project titled “Una scelta possibile [A possible choice],” created to give students from difficult social and economic backgrounds the opportunity to attend Bocconi courses by reimbursing all of their education expenses.

The three international programs include The World Bachelor in Business, a four-year study program for young adults from all over the world held at Bocconi in Milan, as well as in Los Angeles, at the University of Southern California, and in Hong Kong, at the University of Science and Technology, and the Double Degree in International Management, a master’s course held entirely in English. The first year is spent at the Fudan University School of Management in Shanghai and the second year at Bocconi. The third program is a postgraduate in business at the Mumbai International School of Business Bocconi, the international business school opened by the Milan-based institution in 2012.

Luxottica declined to provide financial details.

“For the past six or seven years, we have been living in a new and positive, extraordinary period, in a new world where anything is possible, with bigger markets and complicated dynamics, and we must have a gigantic ability to adapt our business models to each country,” said Andrea Guerra, chief executive officer of Luxottica, during the presentation of the project at the Bocconi. He urged students to travel, open their views and return to Italy, becoming “citizens of the world.”

“If they asked me if I wanted a superstar like [soccer champion Lionel] Messi or someone who would work anywhere in the world, I would say the second,” Guerra remarked.

Asked via Twitter to provide a reason to return to Italy, crippled by a high rate of unemployment and a lackluster economy, Guerra responded: “Either you love this country or you don’t. Evidently, it’s been a difficult decade, but you can’t just close shop and leave, you must reason on the next decade.” He also urged a return to the entrepreneurial culture of the Sixties, when entrepreneurs were such “not just to make money, buy a Ferrari and invest in a newspaper.”

Guerra said that Luxottica is “one of 50 or 60 similar companies” that operate according to basic key rules, such as creating an open, clear and credible relationship with customers, as well as a managerial structure, opening their boards and going public. “And they have continued to test and do the same thing, without ever resting on their laurels,” he said. “Also, they must be leaders and engage people.” The giant Italian eyewear manufacturer, which owns brands including Ray-Ban, Oakley, Oliver Peoples and Persol, produces the license for top names including Giorgio Armani, Coach, Prada and Ralph Lauren.

Guerra touted Italy’s blend of creativity, technology, culture and humanism, through which the country can overcome its problems. “I hate the word alibi, everywhere you hear people use it, but each must be individually responsible, each with their own fundamental contribution. Too many shortcuts have been taken, looking for protection and lobbies, without ever taking risks,” he said.

Andrea Sironi, rector at the Bocconi, underscored the international competition and how universities must be actively present globally. “But nowadays a university cannot open itself up to the world and attract the best students and teachers without also promoting opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Luxottica has chosen to pursue the dual objective of promoting internationalization and social mobility with us.”