For the fifth consecutive year, the Weston Career Center sponsored an employer relations and fact-finding trip to Asia-Pacific. Weston Career Center represented Olin Business School on visits to Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and China. Also joining company visits in Shanghai was Larenda Mielke, Managing Director, Olin EMBA Program at Fudan University.

The criteria used to select companies this year included:

- St. Louis corporate recruiting partners
- Companies that recently hired Olin talent
- Companies viewed favorably by job seeking students
- China-based companies with EMBA alumni or current students

Throughout Asia-Pacific, the impact of China’s economic slowdown is evident on current manpower levels, especially financial services. Multi-national firms in Asia-Pacific are still seeking human capital, specifically mid-level managers, but the identification of talent pools and workplace competencies are shifting. The increasing number of graduates from Chinese MBA programs have altered recruiting and hiring strategies for graduates from outside China, including U.S. and European programs.

Even though hiring managers remain focused on finding U.S. educated, Chinese nationals with appropriate work and technical experience in all business functions, the number of opportunities in Asia, including Mainland China, is decreasing. All the firms visited this year seek “globally minded” candidates with strong core competencies, including fluency in native Mandarin or Cantonese, communication skills in English, critical thinking, teamwork, and a demonstrated commitment to organizational success. As one HR manager stated, “…we seek “glocal” candidates; as in global and local.

One positive advantage for U.S. educated, international students returning to a home country is the accelerated career path within a multi-national firm. An increasing number of firms identified steady advancement opportunities that offset initial domestic compensation packages and improve a student’s ROI over a shorter period of time. This “value-added” component of a returnee’s career is in contrast to the lateral career paths projected for foreign employees in the U.S.

Domestic qualifications, work experience, native language, cultural adaptability and understanding of and commitment to a career in Asia make U.S. educated graduates highly competitive. Securing a position and achieving success may depend on the returnees’ flexibility in accepting domestic, geographical assignments and eagerness to mature within the company.

Recent changes to foreign government employment policies (e.g. Singapore, Hong Kong) are estimated to decrease “non-resident” work authorizations and may impact recruiting and hiring of non-domestic job seekers, including U.S. educated graduates. To adapt to these immigration realities and to set apart oneself from the “domestic” pool, graduates can increase employability by early identification of workplace competencies and proactively seeking experiences that enhance personal qualifications.

Advising and preparing students on the success factors to work in Asia are a top priority of the WCC. The global employment realities are clear, U.S. educated, international students must leverage Olin’s regional multi-national employers to increase employability.

Being connected to Asia-Pacific hiring managers is a competitive advantage for all Olin Business School students, domestic and international, seeking a global career path.

To read the full Asia Outreach Trip Report go to:
MBA Document Library
BSBA/SMP Document Library