



**Temple Center for International
Business Education and Research**

Global Business Project Links MBA's Around the World

When it comes to the global economy, there's a huge difference between reading about it and actually experiencing it. Thanks to Temple CIBER's leadership role in a new consortium called the Global Business Project (GBP), MBA students from the Fox School of Business have the opportunity to do the latter.

The GBP is an intercollegiate MBA course developed by seven Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBERs), including UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke, George Washington, Kansas, Maryland, Pittsburgh, and Temple. The project provides MBA students from premier business schools with the opportunity to work on real issues facing multinational or local companies in emerging markets.

"The GBP is different from other international MBA consulting projects because it combines student teams from a consortium of CIBER schools and a partner university in the destination country, requiring critical languages, virtual teaming and cross-cultural awareness," says Kimberly Cahill, Director of the Institute of Global Management Studies and Temple CIBER. "The final project will be presented to the company in the critical language of the host country, which is unique."

Adam Dotson is one of two Temple MBA students accepted into the GBP. In May, he traveled to Brazil to work with the largest privately held company in North America, Koch Industries. His four-person team – which he met in Washington, DC, during the Kick-Off weekend in March – collaborated virtually and is made up of MBA students from Duke, North Carolina and George Washington. One member is from Brazil, another is from Argentina, and a third has dual passports from the U.S. and Brazil. The team's topic – researching the value chain of ethanol production in Brazil.

"These are the types of consulting projects only senior consultants are allowed to pursue at brand-name firms, and I am being given the reins to do professional research and presentations as an MBA student," says Dotson. "For me, the Global Business Project offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity to blend my background in international and intercultural relations with my course work."

Temple's other GBP participant is Lei Zhang, whose team worked with a North Carolina lumber company to open a market in China. Her responsibilities included serving as the language expert, analyzing the Chinese lumber market, contacting potential consumers and planning the entire trip to China.

Both Dotson and Zhang worked on their projects in consultation with their participating companies using Centra – a virtual conferencing program – until mid-May, at which point they traveled overseas to the companies and completed their projects.

Temple professor Masaaki “Mike” Kotabe and Kansei Gakuin University professor Yoshinobu Sato are faculty advisors for the two GBP corporate projects in Japan, involving SAP Japan (a subsidiary of Europe’s largest IT/business applications software company) and Adachi Company, Ltd. (a high-end leather bag manufacturer).

Entry into the Global Business Project is competitive, and those accepted are matched with appropriate projects. The resulting four-person teams are collectively competent in the critical language of the target country and have experience there, the industry, and the functional areas in which the projects are based.

“I can’t overstate the benefits I’ll reap from this program,” says Dotson. “I’m being exposed to revolutionary techniques in distance teamwork, to the pressures of client engagement, and to the demands of rapid language acquisition. The GBP is without question the most rewarding experience I have had at Temple. And I haven’t even been to Brazil yet!”

Fifty-three MBA students are participating in nine different projects in Japan, China and Brazil. Collectively, the students speak 22 languages and represent 14 different nations.