

WHEN CAREER & CALLING CONVERGE ... GO FOR IT! (Winter 2006)



How would you like to make your career a platform for service? Your career and stewardship as a global citizen can converge with your calling to serve a world in need. But proper training is essential. Universities around the country are awakening to the importance of international experience in their undergraduate training to foster cross-cultural competence, even for engineers!

Recently, MIT released a report on how to prepare their students for careers and global leadership in the 21st century (<http://web.mit.edu/committees/edcommons>). Besides innovations in the science and engineering curriculum and an emphasis on teaching culture and society, the study makes the following observations:

- The increasingly global character of economy and culture is one of the most compelling developments in the world today. The ability to understand and work with people from diverse cultures is an indispensable skill that will characterize successful leaders in the coming century.
- Upon leaving campus, graduates will quickly be working with teams of colleagues, many of whom are neither raised nor educated in the U.S. These teams are often engaged in projects that will be valued for their transportability to multiple cultural settings.
- This new context is true not only for graduates working overseas, but even for those whose careers are in the U.S.

These are the realities of our time. International experience for students is not a luxury. Rather, it is a necessary component of every student's education regardless of major.

Some people look at our world, and worry about the global spread of terrorism. Others see the economic threat of outsourcing, and the loss of jobs at home. In this age of globalization, do you see crisis or opportunity for outreach?

The U.S. and China are important players in the 21st century world community. Whether you are training to be in business, education or the non-profit sector, a career that bridges these two countries offers exciting options. But where can you start? Our China Intercultural Studies Program (CISP) and Summer Exchange Program are designed with you in mind.

Meanwhile, the world of Islam is in our headlines every day. This is a reminder that Muslims make up one fifth of this global village. Too often our view of Muslims is influenced by news of violence in the media. How can we go beyond these stereotypes and begin to relate to Muslims as neighbors? We can start right here in America, home to an estimated six million Muslims. Consider spending an afternoon at your neighborhood mosque to hear from fellow Americans who practice the Islamic faith. If you have 2-3 weeks to travel abroad, you can meet Muslims school

teachers in China, or young people in Kyrgyzstan, a friendly Muslim country in Central Asia. This is the time to think globally and step out.