When Diversity Meets the Global Market: Forging a New Generation of Business Leaders

A project of the Doyle Building Tolerance Initiative
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Faculty Co-Advisors
Graduate Fellow
Undergraduate Fellows
BERKLEY CENTER FOR RELIGION, PEACE, AND WORLD AFFAIRS

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University, created within the Office of the President in March 2006, is dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of religion and the promotion of interreligious understanding. Through research, teaching, and service, the Center examines religion as it relates to global challenges of international diplomacy, democracy and human rights, and economic and social development. Two premises guide the Center’s work: that deeper knowledge of religion’s global role is critical to address these challenges, and that the open engagement of religious traditions with one another and with the wider society can promote peace. Thomas Banchoff, associate professor in the Department of Government and the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, is the Center’s founding director.

THE UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS PROGRAM

The Undergraduate Fellows Program gives a select group of students the resources to conduct original research and formulate policy recommendations around an issue at the intersection of religion, culture, society, and politics. In collaboration with a faculty expert, students begin work in the fall semester and finish the following spring with a substantial publication of their findings. The two themes for 2009–10 are Bridging Babel: New Social Media and Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding and When Diversity Meets the Global Market: Forging a New Generation of Business Leaders. Previous topics covered include Interreligious Marriage in America (2008), Religious Lobbies in US Politics (2007), and Religion and Global Development (2006).
Introduction

A variety of forces within the last two decades—among them the fall of the Soviet bloc, the streamlining of communications systems, and the rapid flow of global trade and investment—have transformed our world of insulated nations into a swiftly globalizing complex. Countries, cultures, and environments are no longer shielded or isolated; we exist in an unbounded terrain in which a multiplicity of transnational actors and corporations are constantly engaged with each other. In this new environment, the interconnections between distinct cultures and religions and multinational businesses are becoming ever more tightly woven as American citizens—company executives and university students alike—rise to meet the challenges and embrace the benefits of becoming global citizens.

Pressing questions arise in this dynamic, fluid, and compressed global environment: what is the role of intercultural and interreligious knowledge in the emerging global market? What is the nature of the relationship between cultural and religious diversity and international business? What skills does a professional and a citizen of the world require to succeed in this rapidly internationalizing environment?

This study attempts to address these questions through a relatively narrow lens. Our report examines the significance of cultural and religious diversity in global business, focusing on some ways in which universities can better prepare students for their transition into positions of leadership in an increasingly globalized world. Our method is humble. We interviewed business leaders for their insights about the challenges and opportunities of conducting business in diverse global markets. We then analyzed these interviews for common themes about respective successes and difficulties as well as strategies for success. We heard common insights about the role of intercultural and interreligious understanding as a core characteristic of a successful business leader. We surveyed our fellow students and found that they had high expectations for the role that intercultural and interreligious understanding would play in potential business success. We surveyed business and university practices for any programs that aimed to develop these skills and characteristics and found surprisingly few.

Structure and Purpose

Current studies acknowledge the rising importance of intercultural relations in business, which is con-
firmed by leading executives in the business world. While scholars and business leaders overwhelmingly emphasize the need to respond to, and engage with, a rapidly changing global marketplace, concrete solutions for effective engagement remain under-theorized and infrequently practiced. The overarching purpose of our study is to begin to fill this void. More directly, we seek to spur conversation that might lead to more robust preparation for students enabling them to succeed in a diverse and pluralistic environment upon entering the workforce.

The first part of this study examines the existing empirical and theoretical research on the subject of diversity within the global market. Regarding interpersonal relations: what is the relationship between cultural diversity and business? How do successful business leaders not only overcome the challenges of interacting in unfamiliar cultural environments, but capitalize on and benefit from such situations? Regarding university curricula: have universities recognized the importance of integrating programs that develop intercultural understanding into the academic environment? How do they approach this issue? Are there existing programs that address this matter and serve as successful paradigms for other academic institutions?

The second section takes stock of student attitudes regarding the relevance of diversity for future professional goals and examines the students’ evaluations of Georgetown University’s success in addressing these issues: To what extent do students think diversity is important? To what extent do students believe that an understanding of cultural differences is necessary to succeed professionally? Finally, how well do students feel Georgetown University is preparing them for the diverse world they will face upon graduation?

In the third section, the study examines the perspectives of current business executives working in a global environment: Is cultural awareness necessary for success? How does one prepare for such diverse markets? To what extent can one acquire the skills to build intercultural relationships in a classroom or are these abilities simply innate? How does the evolution of technology play a role in this discussion? Does the increase of technology aid or deter intercultural relationships in the international business world?

Lastly, the study synthesizes the survey and interview analyses in order to paint a more accurate picture of the gap between student perceptions of the global market, university practices, and the reality of business leaders’ experiences. We formulate a set of policy recommendations in order to aid universities in preparing students to become successful leaders in the globalized sphere.
Part I
Globalization in the Business World and Universities

Trade is one of the most fundamental relationships between nations, and one of the most studied. Resource conflicts and material exchange are at the heart of many global issues. Though trade between nations fluctuates due to business cycles, external shocks, politics, and national disasters, it is certain that world trade has increased in volume since the end of the Second World War. The increase in the international flow of goods and services has led many scholars to term this trend “globalization.”

The UN Economic and Social Commission on Western Asia defines globalization in an economic context as “the reduction and removal of barriers between national borders in order to facilitate the flow of goods, capital, services and labour.” Sound international trade policy became a central point of focus after the Second World War and the associated global financial collapse. The establishment of the Bretton Woods Institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and later, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), set up a framework for an integrated world economy and lowered trade barriers.

The sheer volume of trade between the US and its partners is staggering—in 2009, the US trade balance with Canada was $52,888,800,000, while its trade balance with China was $230,420,600,000. Furthermore, trade agreements all over the world have decreased tariffs and other trade barriers, making it easier for countries to exchange goods and services, fostering foreign direct investment, and letting multinational enterprise thrive.

Figure 1 on page 6 shows the annual percentage change in the volume of global exports from 1950 to 2008, which vividly illustrates this point.

Though the rate of growth decreases at certain points, given exogenous factors, one can see a trend of positive growth rates in the volume of global merchandise trade. Figure 2 on page 7 shows the percentage change in the volume of commercial services by region between 1990 and 1995. Figure 2 also reveals a trend of positive growth in the volume of world commercial service exports, further showing that globalization has increased the integration of different world markets.

International business only reached prominence as a distinct field in the late 1970s and 1980s. Oil prices wreaked havoc on the international markets. US firms were beginning to start operations in emerging markets, taking advantage of abundant resource endowments, a relatively cheap labor supply, and fewer restrictions on business conduct. While still a budding field, international business fills a niche that traditional business analysis is less equipped to study. International business incorporates significant differences in culture, language, legal structures, and methods of conducting business between nations in a firm’s profit maximizing strategy; traditional business models which do not transcend borders can exclude such considerations, because there are scant differences between firms in these dimensions.

International business is necessarily interdisciplinary—not only do its disciples study traditional management strategies, and gain basic technical skills necessary in the business world, but concepts such as intercultural understanding and language skills are emphasized as well. While many laud the study of international business as integral to cultural understanding and better business relationships, critics of the field point out that the majority of scholarship is written by North American authors, which is not representative of the firms and other actors involved in international business.
Some also argue that international business is not a unique field, but simply another business strategy used by firms to generate profits. While these concerns are valid, they do not deny that successfully conducting business on an international scale requires unique specific knowledge and a particular skill set to maximize the benefits of the unique relationship between firms from different nations. Specifically, nations differ from each other in terms of culture, language, governmental institutions, and religion.

In this project, we aim to investigate the role of each of these elements on how business is conducted between nations and how relationships are fostered between people from different cultures by interviewing international businesspeople. The interview format allows us to interact personally with multiple business leaders from unique fields and analyze their intercultural encounters for similarities and differences, while using their advice to formulate the best practices for the future of international business. The anecdotes our business leaders provide us essentially reconstruct the meaning of culture—as we document the unique experiences of prominent international businesspeople, we see how they perceive the social roles of each party in business negotiations, and how their perceptions change as a consequence of their experiences. These paradigm shifts show us that navigating cultural differences is a key part of international business, and that studying cultural interactions in a business setting is a viable method to build meaningful relationships.

Culture is one of the many ways nations differ from one another. Individuals are conditioned by the unique institutions and practices of their social environment. Though many assume that cultural convergence will eventually occur through increased globalization, studies prove that this is not the case. Culture is expressed by individuals; modifying cultural beliefs requires an individual to change modes of behavior which are ingrained in them. Individuals are often reluctant to compromise behaviors that they consider essential or fundamental parts of their identities; hence, trying to change a culture on a national scale is even harder.

Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaar, among other scholars, identify basic elements of culture which differ between unique national identities. Analysis of culture and business relies heavily on the work of these two scholars, who are among the most widely published and offer the most comprehensive analyses of cultural dimensions.

According to Hofstede, a prominent sociologist, national culture has practical, symbolic and psychologi-

![FIGURE 1](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/its2009_e/its09_charts_e.htm)
tends towards masculinity or femininity; and 5) if the
culture is oriented towards the short or long term. Figure 3 on page 8 shows the Hofstede scores of the top 15 US trading partners in 2007 and select other countries. The data shows that US trading partners exhibit a wide variety of attitudes in the 5 key areas Hofstede identified, a fact reflected in the interviews we conducted.

In business interactions, the paradigms that Hofstede identified can change relationships significantly. For example, incentive structures for employees are often determined by how much the organizational culture values individualism, and how much it values collaboration. Cultures that value the individual and her ideas can foster a competitive business environment that does not take advantage of the synergy associated with collaboration. For example, “in the United States, equity is meant to closely tie pay to performance. However, in collectivist cultures, especially the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, employees expect rewards to reflect their individual needs as well as their performance…employees exhibited an entitlement attitude—that is, they expected outcomes to be greater than their inputs.” Power distance, or how stratified

The distinctions identified by these authors are applicable to the components of international business interactions, and provide a strong foundation from which to further explore the particulars of international business. According to Hofstede, there are five cultural dimensions, which are: 1) the culture’s emphasis on the individual versus the collective; 2) the power distance associated with the culture; 3) the level of uncertainty avoidance associated with the culture; 4) if the culture

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**FIGURE 2**

Growth of Commercial Services Exports by Category and by Region, 1990–2008

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>World</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>South and Central America</th>
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<td><strong>OTHER COMMERCIAL SERVICES</strong> (growth in %)</td>
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Understanding if another culture is risk averse, loving, or neutral also influences business relationships. In a 1998 study, Elke U. Weber and Christopher Hsee found that different risk perceptions between individuals were due to different cultural backgrounds rather than income level. Respondents were asked to consider several different investment options with different probabilities and payoffs, and decide how much they would pay for a chance at each investment option. They found that “Chinese respondents, however, were closer to risk neutrality than the other three groups; they accept and expects differences in authority.”

![FIGURE 3](Image of Hofstede Scores of Select Countries)

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![FIGURE 3](Image of Hofstede Scores of Select Countries)
offered to pay a significantly larger amount than the Polish respondents who, in turn, offered to pay more than the American and German respondents.”

This result is consistent with the results of Hsee and Weber (1998) who found Chinese respondents to be less risk-averse (in the expected-utility sense of the word) than Americans in their choices between risky options and certainty equivalents. Risk judgments also differed significantly among the four groups, with Chinese perceiving the riskiness of the investment options to be the lowest, Americans the highest, and Germans and Poles in between.” Therefore, a simple thing such as a cultural conditioned difference in risk perception can have real implications in international business negotiations. A culture’s masculinity, or the extent to which it emphasizes traditional gender roles, can have serious implications in international business, especially when it comes to business ethics. Studies show that individuals who place a stronger emphasis on traditional gender roles are less likely to perceive unethical behavior as wrong; different perceptions of ethical behavior can also lead to personal friction and legal trouble. Lastly, temporal orientation can affect the speed at which business negotiations take place, and the types of projects taken on. Studies show that Egyptian managers make decisions more slowly than their American counterparts due to Egypt’s looser temporal orientation. Awareness of conflicts that can arise due to differences in these key areas can make or break business deals and profits.

Many of Fons Trompenaar’s findings are the same, but he includes analysis of how cultures differ with respect to emphasis on body language and clues, and the meaning given to these symbols in their environment. Body language and clues vary among cultures, and can often lead to misunderstandings in intercultural interactions. Especially in the business world, where interpersonal interaction is both particular and necessary, differences in cultures can lead to misunderstandings that might escalate into conflicts and in some cases the loss of contracts and profits. Hand gestures, concepts of “personal space” vary widely between cultures and nations, and their misinterpretation can lead to friction. For example, while the “A-Okay” sign “is just a friendly sign for ‘all right!’ or ‘good going!’, in Australia and some Islamic countries, it is equivalent to what generations of American high school students know as ‘flipping the bird.’” Understanding physical cues and using them properly is necessary in order to facilitate and strengthen intercultural business relationships.

While culture definitely has an impact on international business, the relationship between international business and government is one that requires equal attention. The state can only generate wealth if the firms that operate within it are also generating profits; thus many governments welcome foreign firms within their borders. Scholars theorize that the emphasis states put on economic growth could lead foreign policy to take a backseat to economic policy. However, firms must make strategic choices within their particular cultural environments in order to generate profits, which include strategically dealing with foreign governments.

In this sense, firms often act as diplomats and deal not only with the culture of their bureaucratic counterparts, but the government structure and culture, which can make operations difficult. Firms working in the international arena require a whole new level of cultural competency that includes knowledge of local politics and governance, and how to take advantage of political structures. Regardless of the degree of economic liberalization and democratization, firms should be acutely sensitive of the climate in which they operate, especially in developing countries, which often have volatile governments and markets. By fostering economic growth,
firms can also provide an apolitical point of cooperation for countries in conflict; firms are essentially economic diplomats. On the other hand, firms can exacerbate conflict situations by trading with rebel factions that control resources, essentially funding guerilla armies. Tina Rosenberg of the New York Times writes, “Throughout Africa and in parts of Asia and Latin America, guerrillas finance their armies through the illegal export of commodities: timber, diamonds, oil and coca. Angola’s guerrilla war lasted for decades because the rebels held diamond mines—in fact, the war raged on in part over control of this treasure. In Cambodia, the group helped end a timber-smuggling scheme that had brought the Khmer Rouge guerrilla force between $10 million and $20 million a month. After their timber sales to Thailand collapsed, the Khmer Rouge effectively surrendered.”

International firms that conduct business in states engaged in civil war exert some level of influence over the outcome of the conflict. Thus, an analysis of the multinational enterprise as an economic, political, and cultural diplomatic force is necessary in today’s political climate.

Globalization has managed to bridge vast physical distances through trade and communications. However, rather than see distinct cultures become more similar to one another, nations have managed to retain and promote their cultural uniqueness despite higher volumes of trade and foreign direct investment. Increased trade has allowed firms from different nations to become more integrated. Bridging the gap between different organizational and management styles in international business requires an understanding of cultural differences, and different governmental and political structures. Incorporating culture and diplomacy is necessary to strengthen the quality of the increasing number intercultural business interactions that take place in today’s globalized world.

University Best Practices
Given the recent progress in promoting cultural awareness by leaders of multinational corporations, this project hopes to determine whether this trend is reflected in current university curricula for preparing students for success in the international business arena. Upon reviewing a recent survey compiled by Georgetown University students of best practices in diversity training among a sample of American universities, it seems that few schools actually integrate diversity training into their curriculums, despite the increasingly urgent call for greater cultural and religious tolerance. The survey only reflects isolated examples of universities promoting greater diversity awareness among faculty and the student body through a formal course or train-
Program offered, during an interview, the example of an assignment that requires a business student to pitch a marketing idea to a Chinese company. In order to complete this assignment successfully, the student must not only familiarize himself with Chinese marketing strategies, but he should also research the most effective way to approach a Chinese company to conduct business. Through this assignment, the student learns how to apply marketing theories in a specific cultural context, and at the same time, gains insight on Chinese business etiquette.

Though long considered one of the most internationally-minded universities and home of one of the nation’s best international business programs, Georgetown University surprisingly has only one formal diversity training session for incoming freshmen and faculty members. Part of Georgetown University’s New Student Orientation, the Pluralism in Action program introduces freshmen to the diversity of their classmates by reading excerpts from different college application essays and engaging students in dialogue with their peers. Similarly, Georgetown faculty can attend the Seminar on Inclusive Teaching and Learning, a training course that addresses how elements such as race, culture or religion can affect a professor’s teaching style. A survey conducted by our Fellows Group and discussed in Part II details student reactions to the diversity initiatives on campus. The large majority of the university’s most popular diversity awareness programs are student-led initiatives. For example, a cultural showcase sponsored by Georgetown’s South Asian Society and a beloved tradition among the Georgetown community, Rangila welcomes non-South Asian students to participate and attracts audience members from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds.

Though the university actively supports these student-led efforts to promote diversity, the current curriculum does not require students to take a course on diversity awareness as part of their Georgetown education. There is a common belief held by some that education on cultural awareness is already interwoven into the structures of most courses in all disciplines, thereby rendering formal diversity training de trop. To illustrate this point, a professor of Georgetown’s MBA Business
The following courses represent some paradigmatic courses offered by undergraduate business schools that prepare students for negotiating cultural diversity in global business practice.

**Carnegie Mellon University**
**Tepper School of Business**

**70-100: Global Business: Principles and Functions**
This course provides an overview of the functional areas of business and how they contribute to the management of a firm. It places business within the broader context of business history, business ethics and the role of business in various world cultures.

**70-332: Business, Society & Ethics**
The course examines the political, social and legal environment of the firm, within and outside the United States. Topics include restrictive trade practices, laws and directors’ responsibilities and liabilities, manufacturers’ responsibilities and liabilities, securities regulation, environmental protection, intellectual property, labor unions, trade associations, employee rights and duties, the attorney-client relationship, advertising and the media, the role of regulatory agencies, multinational operations, basic ethical theories (Utilitarian, Kantian, Aristotelian), dealing with bribery and corruption, values in a business society, social responsibility.

**70-342: Managing Across Cultures**
This course is designed for students who expect to do business in other countries or work with people from other cultures. It provides an intellectual framework for understanding other cultures (and eventually one’s own), as well as detailed studies of particular countries. It discusses how culture defines organizations, contracts, personal relationships, attitudes toward authority, time and space, ethics, wealth, and subcultures, and how these affect business. Student teams study a culture of their choice and make presentations, based on interviews and literature research.

**Georgetown University**
**McDonough School of Business**

**MGMT-205: Intercultural Communication**
As the marketplace becomes more “global,” smart managers will be the ones who understand the role of culture in getting work done. Culture challenges us by assaulting some of our most basic assumptions about working, that is to say, how we communicate with each other to complete work successfully. Anyone interested in working internationally—or even those just interested in better understanding their communication with international friends—would benefit from the course. Each student is asked to do an in-depth study on communication in one culture while learning the principles of intercultural communication. The course explores the rules that govern communication in other cultures, how people in different cultures give feedback, plan and make decisions.

**MGMT-296: International Operations**
The goal of this course is to give you tools, examples of best practices, and a structured understanding of how to set up and manage operations across national boundaries. This course is designed for students interested in a career involving international projects. It builds on what you have learned in Operations Management and other functional modules—but always in an international context. Cases are used in almost every session. Key topics include: a) management of international expansion projects, b) managing a service internationally and managing an international service (for local customers), c) working with suppliers and strategic partners in the company’s global supply chain, d) managing a global network of operations, and e) critical skills for operations managers in various positions in the global network.

**MGMT-380 International Business Ethics**
Beginning with a brief overview of several ethical systems, this course studies the application of ethics to contemporary issues of international business operating in different economic, political and cultural
Study Abroad Programs

Because of its cultural and language immersion aspects, the majority of students polled in our survey agreed that overseas study is an effective way to gain an in-depth understanding of a different culture.

In addition to serving as an excellent educational opportunity, a semester abroad may help to distinguish an applicant in the competition for a job or internship. Study abroad programs are a compelling item on a résumé and serve as a great ice-breaker during interviews. Employers encourage applicants to talk about their overseas studies, suggesting that they may be interested in the applicant’s ability to adapt to different environments and cultures. Professor Richard America from the Georgetown University McDonough School of Business teaches a graduate course that represents this emphasis on overseas experience. As part of their coursework on promoting better business ethics in corporations in developing countries, Professor America’s students must travel to South Africa and work directly with local companies to develop policies reflecting greater social responsibility. Professor America’s students have the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to the real world, and to gain significant work experience through this hands-on approach to education.

Yet, overseas work or study often poses many challenges to students who find it difficult to assimilate to a different environment, cuisine, customs and perhaps most importantly, language. Though long considered as an important skill by employers, the ability to speak a foreign language continues to be a subject of debate and deliberation. Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service requires all of its students to pass a proficiency test in a foreign language in order to graduate. The only exemption to this rule is that students may choose to study abroad instead, and even then, certain language programs may still ask students to pass the proficiency test. According to a coordinator of the School of Foreign Service’s International Business Diplomacy program, the acquisition of a second language is truly important and is particularly useful in incorporating oneself in a foreign culture. She explains studying a foreign language brands a student as global and increases her cultural awareness more than a student that only speaks English. Last but not least, multilingual students also reflect positively on
the SFS as an institution with an international-minded community. In our survey, though students with an international background tend to place a stronger emphasis on the importance of learning a foreign language, the large majority of Georgetown students are in favor of promoting the study of foreign languages.

On the other hand, there are those who acknowledge the importance of foreign languages but do not believe that they are essential for a career in international business. Speaking from his own experience of successfully conducting business with multinational corporations in Asia, the CEO of a major consulting firm noted that he does not always rely on a common language for connecting with business partners, but rather he seeks to discover what is important to them and what speaks most to their interests. In short, this international business leader places more importance in developing interpersonal skills as a universal common denominator rather than learning a foreign language for each region where he conducts business. A recent roundtable conference of several high-profile business leaders revealed similar sentiments. When asked about the qualities they look for in hiring employees, several participants mentioned personal traits, such as the ability to listen, and humility instead of listing technical skills refined from a rigorous business program. One participant at the roundtable criticized business schools for placing too much emphasis on the mechanics of economics and finances, while neglecting to develop personal traits that make for a successful businessman or businesswoman, such as the ability to establish trust with a business partner. Many of the business leaders agreed that interpersonal skills are just as important as familiarity with the theories behind conducting business.

Therefore, upon hearing such opinions from some of the leading figures of the international business arena, one can question whether university programs are directly providing opportunities to gain the same characteristics that are sought by these high-profile employers.

Special Focus: International Business Education

International business (IB) education is taught today in many accredited business schools across the country. Experts say that “IB education is increasingly viewed as an integral, if not central, part of business programs” and that “most, if not all, business academic associa-

In the earliest history of the United States, business education was taught as a vocation, at high schools and private vocational colleges. In 1881, however, business shifted from a vocational pursuit to an academic field of study, when Joseph Wharton founded a school of commerce and finance at the University of Philadelphia. Other universities opened their own business schools and began to offer business courses as well. However, there was a “universal ignoring of international business management education” during this time, which did not change until the 1950s.

Before World War II, Americans saw themselves as separate from the rest of the world; they “relished their isolation behind two great oceans and rarely sought overseas markets or products.” However, American involvement in the war and its effects on American business changed this mindset irreversibly. According to Toyne and Nigh, “IB inquiry in the United States sprang from a desire to educate future U.S. international business practitioners. Shortly after World War II, when U.S. business aggressively expanded internationally, a handful of U.S. educators, sensitive to, and knowledgeable about the sociocultural and politico-legal differences existing among nation-states, saw a need to address the issues and problems encountered when crossing national borders in order to conduct business.”

The American Graduate School of International Management, now known as the Thunderbird School of Global Management, was established in 1946 to provide a tripartite education in languages, international studies, and business management for American business leaders.

Nonetheless, Thunderbird and other innovative programs were the exception. Until 1980, there was almost a “complete dearth of international emphasis” in the course offerings of universities schools of business. The critical stimulus came in 1974 when the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSBA
changed their accreditation standards and “essentially mandated the internationalization of curriculum”—this act “arguably caused more internationalization than all others.”

William Voris writes, “After the words ‘and worldwide’ were inserted in the AACSB standards of accreditation, international business education began to permeate the offerings of American business schools.”

In 1974, 64 percent of U.S. business schools offered IB courses; in 1980, that number rose to 81 percent, and by 1986 it had reached 98 percent, or nearly all business schools in the country.

The programs and courses that were created in the ‘50s and then in the ‘80s, however, were very different from the IB education that is taught today. According to Toyne and Nigh, “Initially, it was assumed that business is business regardless of where practiced, and thus IB was viewed merely as an extension of domestic business… [then] during the 1980s, as an increasing number of companies of various nationality became established world competitors, IB was viewed as a more complex, yet still parochial phenomenon,” and the “extension of domestic business” view was replaced with a “cross-border management” approach. Today, however, Toyne and Nigh argue that the prevailing view of business is best characterized as “evolving interactions of socially-embedded business processes.” They write that “as companies of various nationalities continue the arduous task of evolving into truly global organizations that seek to bring together sociocultural differences rather than isolate those differences, IB is seen by some as a socially-embedded, evolving, multilevel, hierarchal system of interactions.”

William R. Folks also maintains that modern IB education must reconsider attitudes and approaches of the past; he says that the University of South Carolina business school (where he is a professor) operates on the assumption that “the globalization of business activity is such a significant change in the managerial environment that preexisting activities by business schools, whether in the research, teaching or service area, must be altered significantly to remain relevant.”

Toyne and Nigh write that while “yesterday’s IB scholars were challenged to persuade an already established and well entrenched assembly of functional specialists to incorporate a worldview into the training of future business graduates… today… because of their ‘worldview,’ their acceptance of the humanities and social sciences, and an anthropology of business, they can be expected to be called upon to lead and transform yesterday’s
business training into tomorrow's business education." They argue that IB has become a study of “the global management of human-created diversities” and that this new perspective on IB “requires fundamental changes in the way business is viewed, examined and thus taught”. This paradigm characterizes business as having not only economic and political implications, but also cultural and social effects; it necessitates interdisciplinary teaching that incorporates the humanities and social sciences into traditional business education. Voris writes that the modern global business person must have a wealth of knowledge not only in the traditional business fields of finance, marketing, management, etc. but also in “history, political science, psychology, philosophy, and sociology.” Business leaders have long recommended the inclusion of such courses; in 1987, sixty-five leaders in business, labor, academia and government submitted a report to the AACSB recommending increased internationalization of the “entire course of study” at business schools, “including comparative business practices and foreign languages and the analysis of other countries and cultures.”

This interdisciplinary approach characterizes the curricula of many modern universities. The Haas School of Business at The University of California, Berkeley states that its “coursework is fully integrated with the University's liberal arts curriculum, resulting in graduates who are able to draw upon their knowledge of the arts and sciences as well as business in their endeavors.” Many schools offer international business courses, usually electives, which include an ethical and cultural perspective; a class entitled International Business Ethics at Wharton, for example, is described as “a multidisciplinary, interactive study of business ethics within a global economy” that takes into account foreign traditions and practices. Similarly, the University of North Carolina’s Kenan-Flagler Business School offers an elective course called Sustainable Business and Social Entrepreneurship which “draws from anthropology, ethics, international development, and traditional and non-traditional business practices.”

Many schools also offer specialized international business majors, minors or certificate programs, as well as entirely separate internationally-focused degrees in which students take additional language and area studies courses. At Haas, in addition to a B.S. in Business Administration, students can pursue a Global Management Concentration, which requires four international business courses, three years of language study, and three area studies courses as well as at least one semester abroad. Wharton offers a Bachelors of Science in Economics with 21 possible concentrations, including Global Analysis, Legal Studies & Business Ethics and Social Impact and Responsibility, as well as
writes that international experiences “provide students with an empathetic appreciation of the variety of perspectives that govern people’s behaviour throughout the world” which “is critical to develop effective cross-cultural understanding and maintain good communication.” New York University’s Stern Undergraduate College recognizes that “for business leaders in a globalized world, cross-cultural awareness and an international perspective are essentials,” and boasts of having 9 foreign campuses and 18 exchange partner schools, and at The University of Notre Dame’s Mendoza School of Business, “about half” of the students spend at least one semester or summer studying abroad. Many schools, such as Kenan-Flagler and Wharton, also offer short-term international trips over winter and spring break. These programs are widespread; in 2000, 49.0 percent of U.S. business schools offered overseas internship placements to their students.

American University’s Kogod School of Business exemplifies this trend. Kogod students choose between a B.S. in Business Administration and a B.S. in Business, Language and Culture Studies (BLC), a degree program which is “designed for students with a passion for business and a complementary enthusiasm for a foreign language.” BLC students choose one of four language “tracks,” and spend a semester abroad in which all courses are taught in this language. Kogod says, “Students with a solid academic foundation in business and a strong proficiency in a foreign language will be highly competitive in the global marketplace.” However, students who do not choose the BLC program are not required to study a foreign language. All Kogod students must fulfill a foreign experience requirement, but Business Administration majors can do so through language studies, “an approved international or cross-cultural course” or study abroad experience.

That is not to say that study abroad is not also worthwhile. International experience is thought by many to be a critical component of IB education, and most American business schools do offer undergraduate internships and study programs abroad. Jaime Ortiz writes that international experiences “provide students with an empathetic appreciation of the variety of perspectives that govern people’s behaviour throughout the world” which “is critical to develop effective cross-cultural understanding and maintain good communication.” New York University’s Stern Undergraduate College recognizes that “for business leaders in a globalized world, cross-cultural awareness and an international perspective are essentials,” and boasts of having 9 foreign campuses and 18 exchange partner schools, and at The University of Notre Dame’s Mendoza School of Business, “about half” of the students spend at least one semester or summer studying abroad. Many schools, such as Kenan-Flagler and Wharton, also offer short-term international trips over winter and spring break. These programs are widespread; in 2000, 49.0 percent of U.S. business schools offered overseas internship placements to their students.

More and more, interdisciplinary curricula, language study and international placement programs are becoming commonplace at U.S. business schools. Richard Moxon writes, “Virtually all of us [IB educators] are putting increased emphasis on foreign language ability and on opportunities for international experiences through exchange programs and internships.” Voris identifies these progressive programs as critical to successful undergraduate business education now and in the future. He says, “All persons educated or trained for management must be given the opportunity to expose themselves to another culture foreign to their native culture,” and then concludes, “The requirements for cultural awareness, foreign languages, area studies, and political science must become a part of international business offerings before true globalization of curriculum can be accomplished.” A continuing increase of interdisciplinary studies into all business programs and additional language requirements would be welcome changes to IB education.
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【异族】 yìzú different race or riages

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【译本】 yīběn translation: "The Story of the translation of The Story of the quality of reads so"
Introduction and Survey Design

In the transition to the 21st century, universities worldwide are confronted with formidable external pressures to adapt to the increasingly globalized environment, in which technological, socio-political and economic forces are in constant flux. This environment, characterized by a rapid flow of information, virtually instantaneous communication systems, and unparalleled interchange between transnational corporations, has created a compelling need for universities to provide students with the relevant skills and abilities to work in a diverse job market. Scholars and experts have increasingly vocalized the need for institutions of higher learning to actively develop and commit to a process of integration with the increasingly globalized external environment—to embrace and incorporate these outside pressures—in order to adequately prepare students to transition smoothly into this new world.

Since intercultural interaction is a core component of most students' future professional activity, we administered a survey to Georgetown students to acquire insight into their perspectives and opinions on the significance of intercultural understanding and its effects on the global market. We sought to determine whether students value intercultural understanding as an important component of their education, whether students feel they are being prepared to successfully navigate the global market, and what new initiatives students would like implemented to better prepare them for their transition into the global market. This survey of 45 questions was administered in classrooms and online and solicited 243 responses.

Of the survey respondents, 51.5% were female, 48.5% were male. As the above chart shows, approximately one-fifth of the students were racial minorities. One-third of respondents (33.6%) had lived abroad (66.4% had not), 37.1% had traveled abroad extensively, 55.0% had traveled abroad on a few occasions, and only 7.9% had not traveled abroad. 51% of survey respondents said they were proficient in one language, while 40.2% were bilingual, 6.2% trilingual, 2.1% quadrilingual, and 0.4% were proficient in five languages. 42% of those surveyed said they were learning a foreign language at the time, and 58% were not.

The sample of 243 student respondents provides a representative cross-section of the campus community and also represents a wide variety of majors from mathematics to physical sciences. 161 students (66.6%) were enrolled in the McDonough School of Business.
(MSB), 54 students (22.3%) were from Georgetown College (COL), 25 students (10.3%) were from the School of Foreign Service (SFS) and 2 students (0.8%) were from the School of Nursing and Health Studies (NHS). Of the non-business students, a total of 55.9% were or planned to be social science majors; 16.9% were humanities majors; 11.9% were foreign language majors, and 10.2% were majors in mathematics, natural, physical or biological sciences.

While an overwhelming majority of students in the McDonough School of Business plan to seek a career in the business and industry sectors upon graduation (79.4%), those across the College, the School of Foreign Service and the School of Nursing and Health Studies present a more heterogeneous portrait of professional pursuits (see chart below). 44% of all students said they expect to work on an international level, while 36.5% said national, 3.3% said local and 16.2% were unsure.

**Analysis**

There are multiple ways of analyzing our survey results, and our analysis was influenced by our status as current students at Georgetown University. As such, we have experiences and perspectives that are different than professors, statisticians, and business professionals who may see our results in a different light. Our findings are summarized through several grouped themes, discussed in turn below.

**Finding #1: Students value diversity and intercultural understanding and find it relevant for their future careers.**

Students value diversity and feel it is an important issue to discuss. An overwhelming majority, 86.9%, of students agreed that “diversity is an important and beneficial aspect of the classroom and workplace.” More than half of the students agreed that “discussing intercultural and religious understanding is a valuable use of class time.” In addition, a majority of students (62.2%) think that intercultural or religious understanding will have a “significant” impact on their future career while a third of the students polled thought it is “somewhat important” for their futures.

Students believe it is important to have a diverse school and workplace, although they think that diversity in school is more important than in a work environment. Over 80% said having a diverse school was important or very important and only one out of ten said it is neither important nor unimportant to have a diverse school. About 70% said it was important or very important to have a diverse workplace, while 25% said it is not important to have a diverse workplace.

From this emphasis on the importance of diversity within the school environment—in contrast to the workplace—we draw several conclusions. First, our respondents place emphasis on the university as the optimal setting for interacting with culturally and religiously diverse individuals. This has significant implications for the potential development of cross-cultural engagement on campus because students favor and value the presence of diversity which affects how the university develops and enhances this capacity for diversity education.

However, the notion that, on average, more Georgetown University students think diversity within the university context is more important than diversity in the workplace is notable. This finding implicates that, while students value the function of the university for the development of cross-cultural competence, they do not yet grasp how applicable their diversity educa-
man in the School of Foreign Service who had lived abroad said, “More than class discussions, however, talking with other students has been the most rewarding.” Another student wrote, “Study abroad taught me more about another culture more than any class or training session could.”

**Students indicated that mandatory diversity training is an ineffective means of education.** Almost half the students polled noted that *Pluralism in Action*, the mandatory diversity training program, was ineffective in raising cultural awareness. Almost 30% also found “diversity training for an on-campus job or extracurricular activity,” to be an ineffective method of learning about diversity, while only 10% found “classroom discussions” could improve intercultural sensitivities.

**Students learn about other cultures and religions through informal means rather than academic structures.** Georgetown students reported using informal methods such as conversations and movie-watching to learn about other cultures more often than participating in formal or academic programs (see graph on page 22, lower left).

**Finding #2: Students agree that Georgetown has increased their level of intercultural understanding; however, they value extracurricular activities more than academic and structured diversity training programs.**

Students generally agree that Georgetown has increased their level of intercultural understanding. A large majority of the students polled said Georgetown had a positive impact on increasing their level of intercultural or interreligious understanding. Only one out of six were either neutral or said their education had had no impact or negative impact on their intercultural understanding. Two out of three students agreed with the statement “My academic experience at Georgetown has helped me gain a better understanding of other religions and cultures,” and four out of five students agreed that “Living and socializing at Georgetown has helped me gain a better understanding of other religions and cultures.” One student exemplified this position by writing: “I don’t feel like my ‘education’ on these issues was explicitly taught by the university; rather it was my interactions with my peers.” When asked to indicate which activities were effective in educating them on issues of intercultural and interreligious diversity, students indicated a somewhat positive view of academic instruction, but said that diversity training was largely ineffective.

**Students that said Georgetown has increased their level of intercultural understanding indicated that both extracurricular and academic experiences have contributed to this success.** Georgetown students who agreed that the university has increased their cultural competency rated the following social activities as the most effective (see graph at right).

Students wrote that the most effective activities for intercultural education were “Student groups, student interaction,” “socializing” and “life.” One female fresh-
Georgetown students feel strongly that these informal methods of learning are the best ways to become educated about other cultures. The similarity between what Georgetown students are doing and the ways which they think are most effective suggest that they feel confident about their personal methods of engagement with other cultures (see graph below right).

When asked to choose between “academic instruction,” “diversity training” and “personal experience,” the vast majority (83.2%) of students said that “personal experience” would best improve their interactions with individuals of cultural and/or religions different from their own. “Academic instruction” and “diversity training” received very few top-choice selections, but tied for second best (with 49.8% and 43.1%, respectively).

Anecdotal student responses reinforced the view that extracurricular and social experiences were far more helpful than academic instruction or formal training in increasing cultural competence. One student said that Georgetown has not educated her on issues of intercultural and interreligious diversity because “the best way to learn about other cultures is to interact with a diverse group of peers. Georgetown offers little diversity in its student body. They do make a superficial attempt at addressing the issues, but learning in a classroom is no substitute for real-world experience.” This student also said that “classroom readings and lectures” and “classroom discussions” were particularly ineffective because “Class readings/lectures/discussions usually reflect the personal beliefs of the professor; discussions are not necessarily helpful, since without a diverse student body, many issues do not get addressed at all.”

One student who has lived abroad and traveled extensively said that Georgetown has not increased her level of intercultural or interreligious understanding because, “Georgetown is predominantly white upper middle class students, and those from other cultural/social backgrounds are still elite.” Another said that trainings were ineffective because “workshops and training are almost always a waste of time, trite and full of ‘duh!’ moments.”

WAYS IN WHICH GEORGETOWN STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT OTHER CULTURES

WAYS THAT GEORGETOWN STUDENTS THINK ARE MOST EFFECTIVE TO LEARN ABOUT OTHER CULTURES
Another student who believes Georgetown is homogeneous and who would like an increase in diversity said that it is “always more effective to engage on a social/personal level in these discussions rather than being instructed.”

Finding #3: Students believe that they and their professors are culturally competent, but have doubts about their peers.

Georgetown students report that they are comfortable engaging with other cultures. A majority of Georgetown students (76.6%) said they are comfortable working or studying abroad in a foreign culture. The same number of students said they are comfortable being themselves in an environment that is culturally different from their own.

Students are likely to participate in discussions of religious and cultural diversity. In an academic setting, more than half of the students (56.7%) said they were likely or very likely to participate in religious and cultural discussions while less than 10% said they were unlikely or very unlikely to contribute. In a social setting, such as in dorms or during community events, almost 70% said they were likely to participate in intercultural discussions while less than 6% said they were unlikely or very unlikely to speak up.

Students feel that their peers are not interested in learning more about other cultures. Less than 4% of students described the level of intercultural understanding as “excellent” among their peers (44.4% said “good” and 43.9% said “fair”).

Students believe their professors to have higher levels of intercultural understanding than their peers. 81.6% of Georgetown students described their professors’ levels of intercultural understanding as good or excellent. When asked about their professors’ attitudes toward intercultural understanding, 87.1% said they felt that their professors valued or highly valued cross-cultural intelligence.
Students think language skills are critical to both intercultural understanding and success in business, yet a significant number are not working towards acquisition of greater language skills.

The overwhelming majority of students value linguistic abilities. Half of the students polled said learning the local language is “very important” for success in business or career interactions. Three-fifths of students indicated that learning languages is one of the best ways to learn about other religions and cultures. At the same time, half of survey respondents said they are only proficient in one language, and three-fifths of respondents said they were not learning a foreign language when surveyed.

*Is language important, and should we be concerned that not all students strive to be multi-lingual?*

Students proficient in more languages are more likely to feel comfortable in an environment that is culturally different from their own, and much more likely to feel comfortable living, working or studying abroad in a foreign culture.

**How comfortable are you being yourself in an environment that is culturally different from your own?**

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**How comfortable would you feel living, working or studying abroad in a foreign culture?**

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As one student responded in the survey, “History, Government, foreign language courses have taught me about different cultures and religions.”

When asked what is effective in educating them on other cultures, one respondent wrote “only my language classes.”

**How often do you participate in cultural and religious events on campus?**

**How often do you work with (e.g. group projects) people of different faiths and cultures?**
Our survey results indicate that international experience has a significant effect on students’ perceptions of intercultural and interreligious relations. Students who had lived or traveled abroad saw a stronger correlation between cultural competence and their future success in the work place. They were more likely to support discussions of these issues in school and diversity in the work place, and they placed a higher importance on intercultural or interreligious understanding.

Almost all students said that intercultural or religious understanding will have an impact on their future career. However, those who had lived abroad were more likely to characterize this impact as “significant” (69.1%) than those who had not (43.8%). Those who had lived abroad were more likely to strongly agree (30.0%) or agree (58.8%) that “Discussing intercultural and religious understanding is a valuable use of class time”; of those who had not lived abroad, 21.3% strongly agreed and 53.1% agreed with the statement. Those who had lived abroad were also more likely to agree with the statement that “Diversity is an important and beneficial aspect of the classroom and workplace” (95.1% versus 82.7% of those who had not lived abroad). Students who had lived or traveled abroad were more likely to say that having a diverse school and a diverse workplace was important or very important.

Students with travel experience were far more likely to value intercultural or interreligious understanding. Less than a third (31.6%) of students who had not traveled said that intercultural or interreligious understanding was very important, 42.1% of these students said it was “important” and 26.3% were neutral. Almost half (48.5%) of students who had traveled on a few occasions, however, said it was very important, 44.7% said it was important and just 5.3% were neutral. Of students who had traveled extensively, a majority (57.3%) said it was very important, 36% said it was important and 5.6% were neutral.

Students with international experience are more likely to understand that cultural competency is critical and that intercultural relations must be developed and discussed. It seems that contact with foreign cultures instills in students a greater appreciation for the benefits of diversity, and international experience reveals the importance of intercultural or interreligious understanding to their lives and careers. Therefore, study abroad programs and international opportunities should be expanded and made available to more students, for their educational benefits and their ability to make the importance of intercultural or interreligious understanding real and tangible.

What Changes do Students Want to See?

Our survey findings reveal that Georgetown students value intercultural understanding, and they believe that Georgetown has helped prepare them to work in the globalized world. Students see a need for intercultural interactions; however, they do not see a pressing need for additional courses and programs to promote diversity, and are critical of the effectiveness of some existing programs.

Instead of mandatory training programs such as *Pluralism in Action*, which are seen as overwhelmingly ineffective, students consider informal interactions to more effectively increase their levels of intercultural understanding. But these opportunities should not come in the form of official university events, which students are less likely to attend. Therefore, Georgetown’s challenge is to create an environment in which students can organically learn from one another without the university’s sanction and formal control. Instead of imposing diversity requirements, the university could provide robust opportunities for students to voluntarily educate themselves in these issues that they value. As one student said, “Georgetown often... tries to send [the] message that it’s diverse…rather than teaching about diversity.” It is our hope that our survey findings will encourage a more open and reflexive dialogue between students and the university, not only because these groups must come together to discuss and formulate a strategy to increase cultural competence, but also because this kind of open communication will form the basis of this strategy.
Part III

Business Leader Interview Analysis

Introduction: An Imperative for Understanding

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, today’s business market presents unique challenges from the specific perspective of the business leader. Taking into account the underpinning of the literature and education pertaining to globalization and international business, insights about the importance of interreligious and intercultural understanding lie in the experiences of international business leaders.

One core element of this study is to research the multiple perspectives of international business leaders about their cultural and religious experiences while conducting business transactions across international borders. With experiences and extensive travel literally spanning the globe, this group provided broad insights into how business professionals engage diversity, celebrate the success, and overcome the challenges they encounter. Drawing upon the ideas and encounters of people from diverse backgrounds, assorted industries, and different levels of global travel, this project expounds the views of actual business professionals about the role of interreligious and intercultural diversity in the global market and the skills necessary for success in this dynamic environment.

Based upon the testimony of these business leaders, religion and business, cultural practices, gender, language, technology, experience, and building skills with diversity, as well as preparation and education are at the top of the list of necessary areas of competency, skills, and attitudes required for successfully navigating the global marketplace. An examination of these topics, as detailed in the following sections on global business engagement revealed the skills required to work with intercultural diversity in today’s global market and the correlation of training to levels of success in the modern economic world.

A note on method: To ensure candid conversations, our interviews were conducted anonymously. We sought to inquire of a diverse range of professionals working across many business sectors, including principals of Fortune 500 companies, law partners at top firms, global investors, and top officials of various government agencies. Our access to these busy leaders was made possible through the generous assistance and support of a team of University Regents who asked members of their professional networks to meet with us. We thank them for their time, advice, and wisdom.

Finding #1: Respect and Trust: Twin Tools for Engaging Cultural Difference while Aiming for Profit

Business leaders noted that most of all an attitude that reflects respect and willingness to learn will get one far in a culturally diverse business environment. For example, one business leader found that even small gestures, such as bowing to present one’s business card when working in Japan, can demonstrate humility and set a positive tone for business dealings. As this story depicts, showing that you are ready to adapt to the norms of your host country can demonstrate respect and build trust between people and companies. A commitment to these two ideals, respect and trust, are more important than knowing every nuance of a different culture.

On the whole, business leaders across various fields and locations agreed that business is mostly about making money. This was asserted in various forms by our interviewees, with differing implications. One leader, who operates primarily in the United States, stated that “a lot of cultural differences are blurred by the common search for profit and money.” Using the example of the New York Stock Exchange, he noted that in regard to, “cultural sensibilities on Wall Street...there are quote-
or understanding other cultures was minimal. Instead, respecting other cultures and valuing the differences of his business partners was a key to building trust in a business relationship and, ultimately, success. For example, one might not travel to Indonesia and totally immerse oneself in the local cuisine and dress, and yet one can still respect the norms, mores, and values and the distinctions their culture brings to the business relationship.

Other business leaders who spent the majority of their time abroad narrated stories where a lack of cultural understanding could cost them profits, arguing that to “deny the importance of culture is detrimental to business.” Telling stories of deal-breaking cultural faux pas and how language barriers create miscommunication that cost money, some business leaders heralded cultural understanding as one of the most important feature of successful business interactions.

One of the most common challenges cited by business leaders was adapting to the social nuances of a new business culture. For example, several business leaders referred to the initial challenges they faced while mastering the social etiquette of dining in Japan. One business leader related how he mistakenly committed the faux pas of touching his chop sticks to someone else’s during a meal. The chopsticks were dashed from his fingertips as he looked on, clueless. Much to his surprise, he later learned this is only done at funerals. This experience taught him about the potential difficulties that could arise from a lack of knowledge about social etiquette in a foreign culture. Although in this specific instance, his guests were accommodating enough to

Brian Rafferty, COL ’79, Founder and Senior Advisor, Taylor-Rafferty and member of the Executive Committee, Board of Regents of Georgetown University

Having grown up abroad as a diplomat’s son—and having spent my entire 30 year career in the cross border capital markets arena—I am keenly aware of the practical need for GU students to be well prepared to deal adroitly with the challenges and opportunities presented by inter-cultural interactions. While the existing approach of a Georgetown education provides an excellent foundation for success in today’s world, I am convinced that there are ways to transform current approaches in teaching and learning to better advance successful intercultural collaborations of all kinds.

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unquote Roman Catholic firms and Jewish firms, but that’s a bunch of crap, really, because people are commonly united in the goal of making money, and some are good at working tougher but others are stabbing each other in the back, crawling all over each other trying to make a buck.”

With this blunt assertion, this leader also noted that “the concepts of people skills and being able to handle different situations with finesse” is what is truly important in his field. He elaborated that in his experience, the need for deliberate, time-consuming efforts at assimilating
laugh at his mistake, he realized that in another situation he could have caused serious offence because of his lack of knowledge of simple dining etiquette.

In another example about social etiquette in a foreign culture, one business associate found that the business and social drinking culture in China is quite distinct from Western nations. This particular business woman was warned by her co-worker to be careful when drinking alcohol in China because her Chinese business associates might be too polite to let her stop. The traditional business culture combined with a strict adherence to etiquette means that Chinese hosts, in general, would prefer to let you indulge yourself rather than take the chance of offending you if it seemed that you were enjoying yourself. What this story illustrates is that the social practices one would expect in one’s own culture are sometimes challenged in a foreign environment. Therefore, it is helpful to know something about the social mores of another culture before one can engage in business and social relationships overseas.

It is important to consider cultural differences when one is hosting business leaders from abroad. For example, most Americans would not necessarily think twice before arranging dinner for their guests at a “typical New York steakhouse.” However, one business leader related an interesting example of hosting Indian business partners for dinner. He found he had to pay closer attention to concerns such as dietary restrictions which were never really an issue when entertaining most Americans. This is because for some devout Indian Muslims, their religious ideology prevents them from eating foods that are not prepared in a particular way as these methods of food preparation are considered impure. In addition, some Indian Hindus are unable to eat at certain restaurants because of religious commitments to vegetarianism while others though not vegetarian may still feel uncomfortable at such a restaurant. Therefore, when organizing social engagements for foreign guests, one should take the time to investigate the particulars about their cultural sensitivities in order to ensure that they feel comfortable in their host environment.

In a similar fashion, international companies should pay attention to the cultural traditions of their employees and business partners. For example, one business leader noted that while running an internally diverse company in the Middle East, her company took care to observe the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Sabbath days and used these as guidelines for when to schedule meetings.

In another interview, one lawyer who works in the international sector noted that cultural norms about when to speak and give your point of view differ from the US and parts of Asia, such as the Philippines and Singapore. Because some cultures have different intonations of sound and silence, one can walk away from the table thinking that the other party is rude in their quietness, while another party might be considered rude for talking too much. This imposes inefficiencies in the business process. As one business leader noted while working in Japan, although his American partners felt they were progressing well, the Japanese were simply being polite by not outwardly showing disagreement. As this example reveals, without some knowledge of culture subtleties, these types of miscommunications could lead to the failure of new business ventures. In an interesting counter-point, one business leader said that in Japan, an over-cautious attempt at cultural sensitivity is actually used as an

Business leaders emphasize that in today’s globalized world, information about cultural differences is more accessible than ever before. One businesswoman, an executive at a multinational corporation, was recommended Do’s and Taboos Around the World for Women in Business by another female colleague and always consults it before engaging in business abroad. She describes that reading it ahead of time, allows her to anticipate cultural differences, particularly pertaining to the roles of women in different societies before she encounters them. She credits the book for helping her mitigate potential misunderstandings that might arise while conducting business in a foreign society.
advantage by Japanese counterparts who try to sway the terms of negotiations in their favor.

As these examples illustrate, the potential discomfort caused by cultural ignorance can compromise the relationship of trust needed for successful business interactions. To some extent, business leaders claimed that it is quite easy to foster such an understanding. Some of the business leaders we interviewed had the good fortune to have traveled extensively and have met people from all over the world. These leaders first encountered cultural differences through personal experience and were able to engage in a learn-as-you-go-process. However, for others that might be traveling overseas for the first time, seeking out knowledge about cultural differences can be a valuable addition to their business preparations. On that point, many noted that information about cultural practices is readily available, for instance, through books published about intercultural issues or through consulting with other people.

**Finding #2: Cultural Similarities and Differences: A Platform for Trust**

One business leader stated that “the single most important ability is to empathize with someone else’s situation and view that situation from their perspective.” The ability to empathize with different business colleagues in order to understand their points of view was addressed by nearly every business leader we interviewed. One ready-made vehicle for relating to another person in a business transaction is similarities in religious or cultural backgrounds. One Catholic businessman recalled that during a business trip to London, he was purposely sent out to dinner with a fellow Catholic because the associates felt that the similarity of their religious beliefs might be an effective way to build trust between the two gentlemen and hence, the two companies. In another case, an Israeli businessman whose mother is German noted that when working in Germany, he quickly established a rapport with the local business partners on the basis of their perceived shared heritage. Another business leader indicated that there are situations where one might be wary of their business associates’ intentions or principles, and if this is the case, similar religious beliefs are a good way to bridge these gaps.

Another trend that our interviewees mentioned was that what may appear as extreme cultural differences can also provide an opportunity to establish a functional business relationship. Some interviewees noted that one way to encounter a major cultural challenge is to engage in dialogue about the differences, thereby creating a platform for a deeper relationship to ensue. For example, while doing business in China, one businesswoman met with a Buddhist colleague whose spiritual practices were a prevalent part of his daily life. This overtly religious expression within the business context made the American business leader inquire further about his faith commitments. Her unfamiliarity with these Buddhist practices therefore became an important aspect of their personal connection and, rather than cause difficulties, actually helped them successfully negotiate a profitable contract.

In another instance, business leaders also indicated that major religious or cultural differences can serve as a backdrop to highlight the things you have in common. For example, one business leader noted a point of commonality between the individuals doing business in the international arena: “we [all] have families, we have spouses, we have children and so all of that is the same…the things we care about are similar. There are cultural differences, but they are interesting; I want to learn about them.” This statement reveals that there are multiple ways to build trust between people from seemingly different cultures and that there are many points of commonality that can serve as viable methods to further relationships; most important is having an attitude to learn and engage.
Many leaders noted that intercultural interactions enriched one’s appreciation and understanding of one’s own culture, and were experiences with value both within and beyond the business arena, as one noted: “[Cultural difference] makes people better listeners to other points of view and broadens people’s horizons relative to other perspectives… Embracing cultural difference as a good thing and learning how to adapt, understand and accept helps you generally in life. Even with people who have different personalities and styles, the more exposed you are to diversity the more you’ll learn to be less judgmental of people for those types of differences.” Overall, the business leaders we interviewed combined the ability to find similarities and to use differences in dialogical ways to build trust. This mindset creates the possibility of “achieving a great level of alignment and communication” that contributes to successful business endeavors.

**Finding #3: Religious Affiliations Do Not Create Significant Divisions**

When discussing how religion influences business interactions, the overwhelming consensus was that religious differences between colleagues do not carry significant weight; instead, the emphasis of the relationship is about finding the optimal ways to make a profit. One interviewee described business as a “neutral focus” away from differences—religious, ethnic or cultural—which provides grounds for cooperation in making good decisions and maximizing returns. Our interviewees revealed that if most people they work with do not allow their religious differences and preferences to become the focal point of a conversation, then conflicts stemming from faith-based issues are unlikely to arise.

Overall, business leaders had very few experiences where religious differences hindered business proceedings. One American Irish Catholic was attending a business dinner in Russia with people from multiple ethnicities, nationalities, and religions. In a conversation remarking the diversity of the group, one attendee asked this gentleman if he had chosen his seat because it was under a Star of David. Although this might have been said in humor, it resulted in the business leader feeling conscious about his particular faith commitment. Therefore, in this social setting, what is considered a harmless joke by one party according to the standards of their particular culture can be misinterpreted as a slight for another person and has the potential to create rifts. In his long experience in the business world, this was the only instance in which religious tension became an issue. Overall, the business leaders emphasized that religious sentiments have the tendency to be divisive and for that reason are almost always avoided in conversation.

It should be noted that a minority view was that in some regions of the world culture or religion can often play a more prominent role. Some business leaders that we interviewed suggested that there are a few major considerations when sending their employees overseas. Among these are safety, cultural adaptability, and appropriate skills; religion is not usually a determining factor. One attorney noted, though, that when doing business in some parts of the Middle East, his firm may choose not to send Jewish representatives to close a business deal. This is because disagreements over many historical religio-political differences in these regions are feared as potentially creating unnecessary tensions and lead to
ineffective relationship-building between the two companies. Hence, the decision is not based on religious beliefs, per se, but on strategic means to accomplish a business negotiation. The goal of business then, as most of our interviewees noted, is building effective relationships and finalizing profitable deals.

Finding #4: Religion Presents Cultural and Political Differences That Matter

Religious practices, customs, and traditions on an international level tend to play a more active and significant role in business negotiations than personal religious beliefs. Whereas the personal dealings between business leaders allow mutual interest for profit to outweigh the potential for conflict, the circumstances change regarding the role of religion in the marketability and profitability of international business in certain areas of the world.

Understanding the effects of religious traditions and religious cultural identity is essential to successfully navigating business in particular regions of the world. For example, businesses looking to pursue foreign investment by marketing particular products in Muslim-majority nations should have sensitivity to regulations of legal or social prohibitions on alcohol or non-halal foods. Thus, in this context, sensitivity to the cultural aspect of religious practices is required to make products marketable in the local Islamic economy. In McDonald’s locations in Malaysia and Indonesia, the company obtained special halal certification to demonstrate to their Muslim customers that no pork products are used in their restaurants there; in India, the company offers a mutton version of the “Big Mac” to account for the religious dietary restrictions of Indians, Muslims, and Hindus, as well as vegetarian options for Jains and others who abstain from meat entirely. Similarly, to accord with local religio-cultural practices, McDonald’s and other US fast food locations in Saudi Arabia provide separate entrances and seating areas for men and women.

One business leader who was responsible for adapting a popular American children’s TV show for Palestinian and Israeli audiences described the delicate balance between religion and politics in that region. In this situation, she found it extremely challenging and important to use terminology correctly to describe events and people within the context of the show so as not to offend or misrepresent the multiple cultural or religious identities. The religious and cultural tensions in the region strongly affected how the company was able to market their product. Even though the company had originally planned to produce just one show and strived to avoid polarizing religious references within its content, even the language used by the characters became controversial; Palestinian stations were hesitant to air the show when it used a mix of Hebrew-Arabic, and the team was forced to re-evaluate the structure of the show. At one point, the political situation in the region escalated to the point that some Israeli and Palestinian viewers no longer found it acceptable that the Israeli and Palestinian characters on the show interacted within the plot. In the end, the company decided to produce two shows to accommodate the tense religio-cultural symbolism surrounding political conflicts in the Middle East.

This situation demonstrates how political tensions can play a role when cultural and religious differences pervade business decisions. While the show wished to promote religious tolerance in its educational programming, it faced three pressures: appealing to a local audience, fulfilling the show’s mission of early childhood education and also serving the interests of the US-based parent company. Businesses operating abroad must not only anticipate local religious and cultural norms in order for acceptance and success within that economy, but find a way to navigate those differences of values within the content of their product and the scope of their mission. Determining a business plan which successfully brings all those interests together to make a profit parallels the dialectic of experience that individual business leaders face in negotiating their interests and differences to establish relationships of trust.

Business leaders also emphasized that other business cultures do not have the same sensibilities as American business leaders in regards to religion. One business leader noted that in Australia, individuals are much less concerned about political correctness regarding religion. Hence, in Australia, in her experience, she witnessed a colleague tease another worker about his religious beliefs. This really surprised her considering such behavior would not be normal or accepted in America. However, in this culture, both parties understood the comments as a joke. This experience served her as a platform for discussion and she engaged her Australian colleagues about the
differences in political correctness about religion in their two cultures. She claimed that dialogue about these differences enhanced her understanding of, and relationship with, her foreign co-workers.

**Finding #5: Roles of Women in Domestic Business Practices: A Mostly Level Playing Field**

The claim that there is a gender disparity in the workplace remains undisputed by business leaders. This disparity was evident in a recent report released by the World Economic Forum which, according to experts at Marsh Risk Management, “revealed a consistent gender gap…despite increasing awareness of gender disparities in the workplace.” However, the most important finding is that when it comes down to the basics of business—performance and profitability—business leaders perceive that gender does not matter in determining who can achieve success.

When discussing the current experience and demographic of women in the workforce, business leaders held a very positive outlook. The vast majority of business leaders referenced the progress over the past twenty to thirty years, and noted that they are excited to continue the trend of having more women occupying senior positions. Everyone embraced the increased presence of women in the workforce and there was no reported discrimination against women in the hiring process. However, perspectives on hiring women differed from business to business.

While certain company leaders we interviewed said their companies made a point of hiring more women, others focused on remaining gender blind in the hiring process, both of which are positive changes in the business arena. The minority of leaders that reported to have actively focused on hiring more women did so from the perspective that a disproportionately represented workforce was neither right nor ideal. One leader from an actively diversity-minded company reported that the senior executives “felt that women made up only a small portion of the company at a time and decided to bring more women talent into the community. There is the same number of women now, because of the concerted effort to make the workplace a nice place for them.”

However, while everyone embraced the increased presence of women at the senior level, the vast majority of leaders rejected any conscious attempts to hire more women. For them gender, along with race, ethnicity, and religion, should not play any explicit role in the hiring process. The only trait of importance was the applicant’s ability to contribute to the company and increase profitability. As one successful venture capitalist put it: “I’m all about finding the best athlete. Black, white, man, woman, it doesn’t matter to me. I care about performance.” This focus on diversity and identity primarily in reference to profitability also applied to the reasoning and methods behind the increased presence of women in the business world.

In addition to evolving social attitudes, the study found two predominant motives underlying the increased number of women hired for senior positions. The first attributes the change to the morally-based decisions of executives within a company, alluding to a need for equality in the workplace. The second, while seldom reported, provides a much more plausible explanation...
behind the widespread change, and applies to all leaders regardless of moral stances.

The latter perspective points to self-interest as the invisible hand behind the change in the demographic of business leaders. As society places an increasing emphasis on diversity and equality, a diverse staff enables increased profitability. For instance, two managing partners from a top firm noted that a diverse staff is one of the top five factors companies look for when hiring law firms, and plays a significant role in the ranking of top law firms. Additionally, a number of independent organizations release public assessments of companies’ gender equality based on “several criteria, including rate of female representation, whether benefits such as paid family leave were offered, and whether plans for gender balance in pay or promotion were in place.”

In addition to public pressure on companies to provide a diverse staff, there exists an expectation of diversity within the business world. Alluding to the importance of company image, a number of business leaders noted that, while quite standard a number of years ago, it is now looked down upon to maintain an office solely comprised of white middle-aged males. This widely accepted moral view has become embedded into the system, providing incentives for business executives to respond accordingly.

The final source of pressure motivating companies to ensure equality and diversity is the legal system, which has continuously responded to this newfound focus on gender disparity in the workplace. A number of bills have been passed in the last few years that enforce legal punishments for those who discriminate in both pay and employment. According to Marsh’s Employment Practices Liability Practice Leader “companies have become more susceptible to litigation involving discriminatory compensation and promotion decisions.”

While a diverse staff with equal opportunities has the ability increase profits, a lack of such diversity and opportunity can result in serious damage to one’s company. As one leader in corporate law put it: “[diversity] is not simply a good thing; it is actually critical to your business success in America today.”

Finding #6: The More Complicated Role of Gender in the International Marketplace

Although business leaders view the role of women in the American business place in an extremely positive light, things become more complicated when working abroad. When questioned about the status of women in the business sector in the United States and abroad, all of the business leaders reported a disparity. One business leader with extensive experience abroad noted that “America has come a huge way in the past thirty years with gender… But other places are still dealing with that [glass] ceiling.”
The lag in the development of the role of women within societies outside the United States has caused a large dilemma for business leaders sending employees abroad. Although no business leaders have refrained from sending women abroad, many have altered the roles women hold. The previously quoted leader expanded on the issue while sharing his strategy on sending women to Asia:

“I would let her negotiate, and even put her in the spotlight, but with other people there to balance out the cultural issues. I would send in a woman if she had a special skill set pertinent to the deal, or if I thought she could overcome the obstacles she would face. Other times it could be a negotiation tactic and play in our advantage, it could throw them off. But I wouldn’t send her alone and I wouldn’t send her just to make a point. Listen, do I agree with all this? No, but I am a businessman; I am not out to change the world.”

The reaction of the business leaders and consequent alterations to the roles of female employees is dependent on the region. While there was very little difference reported regarding European countries, Asian, Middle Eastern, and South American countries all have relatively restrictive norms regarding women.

Asia was the region discussed most often, with a general consensus regarding the socially inferior position of women. The reported challenges for women in parts of Asia stemmed from the region’s patriarchal system, which does not often include women in positions of power. One highly successful female leader who had a great deal of experience in China noted that people with whom she worked did not believe that she had the authority to make important decisions on behalf of her company: “they’re always looking for the male boss.” Qualified women are still sent to Asia but have to work harder and often alter their role within the company to earn respect, because women do not often occupy senior positions in these cultures. This reflects the focus on profitability above all else.

The other major region reported to pose a problem for female employees are parts of the Middle East. While religion, tradition, social norms, and expectations play a role in this, the main issues stem from cultural differences. One business executive with experience in the region noted that in some traditional Middle Eastern countries, most business leaders are not comfortable with women as a “symbol of power” and this can be a major obstacle in negotiating and building relationships. In addition, the culturally accepted separation between men and women in some Middle Eastern societies makes it more difficult for a non-Middle Eastern female to build a trusting relationship with a business associate from a traditional background.

Although gender inequality is a sensitive subject, no business leaders reported discrimination towards women within their company when deciding whom to send abroad. A large reason behind this is that, generally speaking, gender is not discussed for moral and social reasons. At the end of the day a business leader is focused on making a profit, and while there are challenges with women in certain cultures, as long as the woman can overcome this, there is no reason not to send her to those regions of the world if she is the right person in the company for the job.

Throughout the interviews many business leaders referred to business as a changing atmosphere. The role of gender, along with the other issues discussed in this study, is constantly evolving. There was a general consensus that there is a great example set by the United States and that other countries are following suit. If this holds true, then one can expect to find that issues regarding gender decrease as the visibility of women in the business world abroad increase.

This conclusion, that gender will pose less of an issue in the future, is concurrent with the general findings of this study. As business leaders adapt to an increasingly globalized world, they are progressively capitalizing on the benefits of diversity, while overcoming the challenges it can bring. Although the diversity of an intercultural and interreligious marketplace requires preparation and thought, with proper preparation it allows for an abundance of opportunities. Playing less of a challenge, and more of an asset, diversity appears to have become the new status quo.

Finding #7: Language Matters: Unnecessary or Essential for Cultural Competence?
Business leaders expressed remarkably different perspectives regarding the need to know a foreign language in
past were, difficult places to operate in without having significant linguistic training. This fact was commonly attributed to the wide gap in culture between the East and the West. Thus predominantly in parts of Asia such as China and Malaysia certain interviewees contested that language was essential to the full development of an intercultural, empathetic relationship that could lead to better understanding between the two business parties. Such a mindset acknowledges the immense differences in Eastern and Western practices and provides leeway in negotiations, and often more time, to account for these differences. For example, the role that dinner negotiations play in developing business relationships in Asia is very different than in the US. The meal in most parts of Asia is highly ritualistic and experientially based whereas in America dinner is imbued with far less traditional and cultural significance.

In other instances, business leaders cited the proliferation of English as the main reason why learning other languages is not very important to international business success. In an interesting paradox to earlier assertions, many leaders expounded the fact that even in places like China, with languages different from English, people are “expected from a young age to just learn English.” In a poignant example, one leader of an international business shared that “after ten years of learning German, most of the Germans I encountered were desperate to speak English with me.” These examples reveal that the business leaders’ effort and time might be better spent developing other cross-cultural skills instead of learning a foreign language if English is so commonly used overseas.

Other business people took a less positive approach to this phenomenon of the increasing proliferation of English. One said: “most people understand that Americans only speak English” which they described as “embarrassing.” This example demonstrates that some cultures may take offense to the fact that Americans do not speak their language and may interpret this as rude or as a lack of effort. Nevertheless, in some industries and jobs, English is the lingua franca. Local language skill is not always essential to the success of a business transaction due to the current state of the global market and the widespread use of English.

What business leaders did agree was essential was “making an effort.” In their vocabulary, “making an
effort” entailed showing tangible evidence to people in other cultures that they were making strides towards understanding and, to some extent, assimilating to their host culture. For example, even learning a few simple phrases or as one business leader put it, “at least twenty words” can make the difference between your business colleague from another culture considering you ignorant and lazy or, alternately, interested in their country. A simple step like this, defined as “making an effort,” could have serious implications for the success of a business transaction. In other accounts, leaders told stories of people having to spend large amounts of time in a specific place. Business leaders stated that if your work requires living or constant travel to an area of the world, especially to China and other parts of Asia, then language proficiency might be a necessary tool to show that your company is making the effort to communicate fully with international colleagues.

Finally, on the topic of language, some business leaders qualified that excellence in other skills are both necessary and possible replacements for linguistic knowledge. One business leader said that “while language can be a great facilitator, it is not an equalizer.” This means that the development of linguistic skills facilitates learning something new or relevant about another culture, which is useful in making cross-cultural deals. This said, language alone does not guarantee successful cross-cultural encounters. In fact, attributes such as great charisma, genuine interest, and the ability to read people and “align objectives” often prove to be more important in intercultural communication. While leaders admitted that language could facilitate these relationships, some did not believe that the time required to become proficient in multiple languages was worth the cultural understanding they could gain from less time consuming means, such as studying cultural customs and norms.

Having examined the perspectives from businessmen and women, one rule regarding language rises to the forefront: in no situation does linguistic knowledge hurt a business leader’s ability to facilitate cross-cultural communication. While the importance of linguistic capabilities is debated as either extremely useful or merely helpful, linguistic capacity does represent a clear advantage in building relationships across cultures.

Finding #8: Technology: Virtual Meetings Cannot Replace Personal Interactions

The growth of communication technology and social media such as video-conferencing and e-mail has increased the productivity and efficiency of many global business transactions. Business that once had to be conducted in person is now manageable from thousands of miles away. However, advancements in technology also pose challenges to carrying out business successfully: “The level of error goes way up with email and telephone, and even video,” one businessman said. “What efficiency is really maximized when we have to correct all the mistakes that get misinterpreted through email and telephone communication? When you can’t see the person you have no idea how they are gesturing over the phone.”

The importance of balancing face-to-face interactions with other communication technology is largely dependent on the sector in which one works. For example, one trader described individuals with whom he has conducted business for 10 years with a deep level of trust; yet, he has never met these individuals in person and carries out their business solely through digital means. On the other hand, in other business settings, technology is not a sufficient means of communication; as one businesswoman described, large business meetings are much more effective when carried out in-person, because otherwise it is difficult to make a meaningful connection with those present.

Many business leaders interviewed asserted that in-person interaction is an essential element of building a successful business relationship. For example, one business leader noted that when she coordinates the finances of a multinational enterprise, making sure that she and her subordinates are using the same terms for the same items is of the utmost importance. However, establishing the kind of clear communication necessary to
clarify these terms can be challenging, especially when the foreign employee’s first language is not English; for example, being sure words denoting certain items within their accounts refer to the same set of items. To make this process as smooth as possible, she and her co-workers travel to their offshore locations several times a year to develop a rapport that can foster a more conducive process of clarification through email and phone communications.

In this way, a business relationship cultivated in-person provides a good foundation for communication via telephone or email, where the nuances of in-person interaction are not as readily apparent. Much of the intimacy presented by meeting face-to-face—body language, inquiring about people’s families, and other subtle elements that facilitate a personal connection—are lost in email, phone and video-conferencing communication. Business leaders emphasize personal interaction as a prerequisite to any successful business relationship. For example, one business leader noted that email and phone communication works very well when multinational business affairs are running smoothly. However, when there are problems that need solving and things start going wrong, the precedent of the business relationship is more important in dealing with the challenges at hand: “If you haven’t been sitting across the table from that person previously, it can be very challenging because you don’t understand the personalities.” Though technology can supplement communication by increasing its speed and rate, face-to-face relationship building is irreplaceable.

### Finding #9: Personal Experience: An Essential Ingredient for Intercultural Interactions

In general, direct immersion experience was asserted as the most valuable and irreplaceable aspect of learning cross-cultural empathy and respect. Every business leader with whom we spoke had acquired intercultural understanding via their own unique path. Some business leaders, like one son of a Foreign Service member living abroad, grew up in a diverse culture, while others first traveled overseas in their college years. Another business leader came of age working behind the Iron Curtain, and still another did not have his first international experience until after he grew up in a Catholic family, in a largely Catholic neighborhood and attended a Catholic university.

Yet, in every single one of the business leader’s lives, they could point to experiences and encounters, such as living arrangements, classes, or jobs which pushed them out of their comfort zones and forced them to adapt. At the core of all cross-cultural dealings, so many business leaders argued, was the fact that “you need to be put in situations which challenge you.” Adding cultural sensitivity to the skill set of an international businessperson can yield significant results. For example, for one businessman working in Japan, “cultural sensitivity” was “not sufficient, and actual experience” was “needed” in his work. He related how he was once giving a presentation to some Japanese businesspeople, proposing a new business venture, and they replied to his presentation

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“Technology has been helpful in certain regards, but I have found the “error rate” in interpretation from certain communication seems to have gone up. I video-conference four or five times a week at night with our Japanese counterparts or our senior team in Hong Kong and Singapore, and I find often we are correcting many mistaken interpretations from email communication and telephone. There is very much that gets lost when you don’t communicate face to face—while video conferencing isn’t as ideal as face to face, it is certainly better. When you can’t see the person, you have no idea how they’re gesturing, and the level of error goes way up.

The other reality in terms of the personal communication when you’re communicating with someone over email is: how often are you asking about somebody’s family, about their kids, about how their holiday went? Even over the phone or on video, that “small talk” brings you such great personal connection that is tremendous added value in your ability to get business done with many individuals who DO NOT jump straight into discussions of business. Cross-culturally I think this is a universal truth—I find most people appreciate that personal interest.”

saying constantly “that’s fine.” He later found out that this affirmation was just a polite way to hide an actual dislike of his thoughts.

This businessman contended that only through having this experience did he learn these subtle intricacies of Japanese culture. Thus, this business leader shared that the next time he went into a situation dealing with Japanese culture; he knew to not take every response at a presentation at face value. Instead, based on his prior experience, he believed he knew how to read Japanese businesspeople better and when to check and make sure they truly supported his ideas. A mere case study on this aspect of Japanese culture would have proved insufficient for him to learn how to deal with this culture. Business leaders stressed through similar stories how some realizations about cultural understanding grew through experience in the field.

Additionally, business leaders shared stories to illustrate that cultural experience in the region is expected in order to operate in certain parts of the global market. Particularly in countries where wisdom is attributed to age, inexperience is not highly regarded. One leader shared stories from Japan and Germany, where they were the Junior Associates on a business transaction and their relationships with senior officials were not as strong as they perceived or desired. The senior officials were expecting to deal with other senior officials whereas holding a position of power at a relatively young age in the US commands respect and admiration. As young people with less worldly experience, due to the culture they were working in, their efforts were counted considerably less. In these cultures, age and experience were necessary to obtain the respect of the local people which is not as stringent a trend in the US.

Business leaders also asserted that a diverse personal background is not as important as relevant experience. Business leaders noted that people who are considered “diverse” can bring a unique range of experiences and ideas to a company. A diversified workforce can create an environment where people of talent and various backgrounds feel comfortable and perform at the highest level. For example, one financial trader mentioned that his company hired people with multiple linguistic abilities because he did a lot of business in the Middle East. Therefore, it enhanced the profits of his company to have people on hand that were able to speak a variety of Middle Eastern dialects to enable clear and rapid communication with people on the ground in the local areas.

As this example reveals, a diversity of backgrounds and abilities in the workforce can improve a company’s flexibility and skill set and thereby increase the chances of success. One business leader elaborated on the fact that a diverse workforce makes a business “more pluralistic…and maybe even not as judgmental.” She implied that having diverse perspectives in her business, internally, enabled her company to better conduct business with people of different cultures. A variety of cultural differences at the same conference table enhances discussions. Hence, a person from within a culture can speak more clearly when there are points of contention or risk involved in a business venture because they can
professional noted that his undergraduate education provided him with “a basic understanding of company financials, but [he] lacked the exposure to real-world application of these reports.”

Business professionals are constantly presenting and selling their ideas to clients and colleagues and need to achieve the right balance of appearing knowledgeable, personable, and persuasive. Many people can access information and construct a well-organized and factual power point; the ability to take this information to the next level and portray it in an appealing and convincing way is what distinguishes a businessman from a business leader. A marketing expert at a multinational corporation communicated that “business schools get too immersed in commerce—there should be more of a multidisciplinary approach” that includes these aspects of presentation and persuasion.

Finding #10: The Importance of Teaching Best Practices in a Business Environment

Being successful in the business world involves much more than simply understanding company financials; it involves understanding how to operate and interact successfully in a business environment. According to the business leaders that were surveyed, most undergraduate business schools have excellent programs in accounting and finance, with courses that provide students with a basic and essential knowledge base of the mathematical structure of a business. However, this understanding is not sufficient unless a student is also taught how to pitch these ideas to a colleague and/or client, how to operate under pressure while maintaining composure, and how to get the job done while still being able to establish trusting relationships. One professional noted that his undergraduate education provided him with “a basic understanding of company financials, but [he] lacked the exposure to real-world application of these reports.”

At the core of emerging with difference and pluralism is the need for a polished empathy and respect for culture. The aptitude for “cultural awareness” is fostered by time and experience in the field and through encounters which are challenging. Indeed, many accomplished business leaders contend that “experience is the key to training in cultural diversity” and true engagement with intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the global market cannot take place without some, preferably extensive, degree of experiential learning.

Learning how to build relationships and bridge gaps between different personalities and different cultures can help to build lasting relationships of trust and generate rapport with others. “A lot of people have the IQ to understand, but if they don’t have the EQ [emotional quotient] to deploy that and connect with people than they won’t be very successful.” In today’s extremely competitive business world, intelligence and financial aptitude are only the starting points to achieving success. The talent of being able to identify, assess, manage, and control the emotions of one’s self, of others, and of groups is crucial to successful negotiations.
Many professionals shared the idea that “business schools could work on presentation skills so that students can practice interacting while being under pressure” and master their “public speaking skills.” Most of the business leaders surveyed believed that their educational experience lacked the necessary exposure to the pressures of the real-world business environment and wished that they had spent more class time working on debates and case studies that could help them to master these essential skills. The ability to understand an audience and pitch a proposal in a way that demonstrates a clear appreciation for their interests and needs is crucial to success in the business environment. “Adapting, understanding, and accepting the objectives of others” is necessary when conducting business meetings in a local office and conferencing with international companies who operate in a completely different language and culture.

The ability to connect with people, align objectives and adapt to and flourish in a constantly changing environment is critical to emerging as a business leader. Working well with others involves understanding and participating in the professional, social, and personal aspects of a group setting. These skills are encouraged both in university education and business training programs. Managing professionals of a top law firm noted that the highlight of their law firm’s training program is a conference room scenario where employees observe and analyze the differences in the ways in which women/minorities and white males approached the team. By teaching the employees how to notice and deal with these micro-inequities, they heighten their ability to interact in diverse teams and foreign situations. Programs such as these enhance the openness and ability to navigate cultural differences by “building their awareness and making people aware of how they impact other people.”

Finding #11: Understanding Others’ Backgrounds, Goals, and Motivations is Crucial to Establishing Mutually Beneficial Business Relationships

The business professionals surveyed found that the training programs that put more emphasis on the importance of developing advanced listening skills and taking the time to understand and appreciate the perspectives and motivations of others were more effective than those that did not. It is helpful to know various historical, cultural, and linguistic facts about a certain country, but more important is to approach the negotiations with an innate respect for the person that you are working with. “Denial of the importance of culture is detrimental” to business negotiations, and training programs that build on this idea were found to be more helpful and effective. A partner at a prominent law firm noted that “being an American is not always a good thing when entering business negotiations” and that taking the time to “do your homework and create a different, more informed impression” will separate yourself and lead to the establishment of lasting and mutually beneficial relationships.

One professional mentioned the importance of encouraging staff to take advantage of the opportunity to travel when they go on business trips, because “understanding the people and their culture is an important part of building relationships with their foreign employees.” This idea of treating a business trip as an opportunity to learn and bond instead of merely a transaction was consistently mentioned as crucial to creating and maintaining business ties. Business is an exchange not only of capital, but of personal and cultural information. Professionals stress that success comes from discovering the significance of developing and presenting both of these entities well.

Understanding the cultural background of a business partner also allows one to more successfully interpret and appreciate his/her business needs. A partner at a New York law firm stated the importance of “figuring out what everyone needs to be successful” and that this knowledge will “help you to get what you want” out of the negotiations. Identifying the context of a partner can help to comprehend and anticipate needs and lead to more successful and positive business interactions.
Student Expectations and Global Market Realities: Bridging the Gap

Our research has revealed several key findings about the nature of the relationship between diversity and the global market and the ways in which Georgetown University students understand and value diversity today.

Georgetown students not only value diversity and intercultural understanding, but they also feel that it will significantly impact them as they transition from the campus to the workplace. Furthermore, students generally indicate that the Georgetown University experience has triggered an increase in their own levels of cross-cultural competence. However, students hold somewhat negative views towards formal programs which focus on diversity education; instead, they value and seek informal, personal experiences through conversations with their peers, study abroad experiences, and extra-curricular activities as a way to attain a greater understanding of diversity. In this way, students consider Pluralism in Action as a training program to be ineffective precisely because of its formal and mandatory nature.

Foreign language fluency, considered by some business leaders as a constructive tool in the world of day-to-day business negotiations, is a skill that Georgetown students also believe to be a critical component of professional success; however, they are not all acquiring it. In effect, students’ indications that language acquisition increases their levels of comfort when interacting with other cultures corroborates the fact that foreign language acquisition is one way to trigger an increased awareness of diversity issues—an awareness that conditions students to seek further engagement with diverse groups as a means of enhancing cross-cultural intelligence.

Ultimately, while many university students looking to make the transition from the campus to the global market place a high degree of importance on cultural intelligence, a large number underestimate the impact of cultural diversity within the global workforce. Our statistical findings, that a significantly larger amount of students feel that diversity is much more important in the university environment than in the workplace, are a direct testament to that reality. At the same time, students do grasp the significant role that immersion into cultures other than their own and personal interaction with people from different backgrounds may potentially play a role in preparing them to transcend the challenges of working in the global market. In effect, as our project confirms, it is precisely these face-to-face cross-cultural experiences that condition student levels of understanding of the business-culture relationship. For students, personal experience offers the most promise of transforming them from national to global citizens.

The business executives who we interviewed unanimously confirmed the importance of being able to navigate cultural and religious diversity in the global market. One investor relations specialist emphasized that “the single most important ability is the ability to empathize with someone else’s situation and view that situation from their perspective.” Through these interviews, we have gleaned that empathy, respect, cultural curiosity, and a willingness to learn are among the key personal attributes that serve as determining factors for the failure or success of a business deal.

Cultural diversity was reported to play a more significant role than religion, but both were relevant in respect to conducting successful negotiations and maintaining an efficient workplace. Religious differences dictate morals, spirituality, and concrete differences such as
dietary needs and holidays. However, cultural values create different expectations of the most basic social norms. From how to greet people and eat a meal, to how one treats superiors and conducts negotiations, cultural differences can render a respectful action in one person’s cultural perspective to be completely backwards and rude to someone from another culture. Religious and cultural differences alter the norms and expectations of relationship building and workplace etiquette, and ignorance of such differences can prevent one from succeeding in both of these arenas.

Building a trusting relationship was reported as being a major key to successfully negotiating a business deal. However, within different cultures there exist different expectations as to how this should occur. For instance, in the United States business leaders tend to conduct deals as quickly and efficiently as possible, and can expect to take a handshake to the bank. Meanwhile, in Asia, some leaders place much more importance on building a personal relationship, and multiple meetings and handshakes are likely to occur before a deal is sealed. One does not need to be a regional expert to succeed in conducting business; however, one does need an attitudinal openness to building a sufficient understanding of the other business parties in order to manage the difference in norms and expectations and build successful, trusting relationships.

There also exists a gap in expectations about workplace protocol. For example, the United States embraces a more casual relationship between employees and their superiors, with open conversations and exchange of ideas. Meanwhile Asia functions with more strict boundaries and separation between employees and superiors. It is important to acknowledge these differences and set clear expectations of workplace etiquette that all employees can function within.

Finally, business leaders not only emphasized that heightened cross-cultural competence will enable budding executives to conduct business with more efficiency and success, but also pointed to the reality that real-life experiences serve as the unique doorway to the critical development of intercultural sensitivity and intelligence. Only through direct immersion experiences—living abroad and taking classes and jobs—that drive individuals past the limits of their comfort zone can they learn to adapt, understand, and empathize with cultures fundamentally different from their own.

Cultural distinctions among business partners is the new global reality. The capacity for acknowledging cross-cultural differences in business interactions is therefore paramount. In spite of the increasing interconnections between cultures and peoples and the blurring of national boundaries that globalization has created, the new hyper-globalized landscape will be a place where cultural differences are brought together and intensified, rather than dissolved. Thus, for business executives from fundamentally distinct cultures, the challenge will lie not necessarily in their ability to eliminate differences but to effectively understand them.
University Strategies for Increasing Students’ Levels of Cultural Competence

Universities and institutions of higher learning possess the unique capacity for developing and preparing students for a successful transition into the globalized business environment. As rapidly internationalizing institutions, universities should embrace their unparalleled potential for cultivating their students’ cultural intelligence without delay. We synthesize the insights gleaned from our interview and survey findings to make the following general policy recommendations.

1. Formal diversity training programs appear to be less effective methods for improving student levels of cultural competence. Students report that formal training programs yield much less impact on their attitudes toward diversity than arises through increased personal interaction and immersion. Academic courses are viewed as somewhat more effective opportunities to build cross-cultural competence. Yet interacting with diverse others, especially in extracurricular events and study abroad, students gain an increased understanding of the culture-market relationship. In effect, personal exchanges among a diverse group of peers serve as an informal yet extremely effective means of cross-cultural competence education. Thus, informal dialogue, rather than formal, rigid academic requirements, are reported to be more effective in developing students into individuals highly capable of negotiating cultural boundaries in the global market. As one student noted in our survey, “training is not the same as [experiences in] the real world.”

2. University programs which train business leaders should continue to internationalize their curricula through the incorporation of cultural and area studies, humanities, and the social sciences, as well as increase discussion of the challenges endemic to international business into existing business coursework. It is our belief that international business is not a separate field and should not be segregated from traditional business study, but an effective education in today’s global environment does require that the cultural and social aspects of business as well as the political and economic forces are taken into account.

3. Universities should encourage the development of more informal and extracurricular programs and events that focus on diversity. They should also actively strategize to bring in and integrate students across all racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups into these settings. An event or club which brings in one, homogeneous ethnic group of students to engage and interact with those who share their identity is certainly important for the development of a sense of collective identity and community on campus. However, this homogeneous setting may not trigger an increase in cross-cultural sensitivity throughout the student body. The attainment of intercultural understanding comes from direct engagement and interaction with peers thus, exposure to heterogeneity is a key trigger and starting point for the development of cross-cultural intelligence.

4. University students should have an incentive to learn a foreign language. Our survey revealed that the majority of students had solely personal, rather than professional, motivations for learning a foreign language. However, our interviews suggest that there is a link between language learning and professional success in the international world. Foreign language acquisition conditions individuals to become more attuned to the subtle and nuanced differences that exist across cultures. Thus, language learning in the university environment is significant for students, who plan to work in the international field.

5. Georgetown University is well above the national average in terms of sending students abroad. According to the Open Doors 2009 Report on International Educational Exchange by the Institute of International Education, Georgetown University ranked 29th in a survey of the national doctorate institutions with the highest percentage of study abroad students in the 2007–2008 academic year. However, there is room for improvement at all universities. If cultural immersion experiences can help students gain awareness of the importance of cultural diversity in the new global world order—and our findings strongly indicate that they can and do—the university should vigorously promote the study abroad experience. Through direct immersion into foreign cultures and settings, students have more awareness about diversity, and this new awareness may trigger them to improve their levels of cultural competence.
The Value of Heightened Cultural Intelligence in the Global Market

Our interviews with business executives reaffirmed our initial hypothesis that cultural intelligence lies at the core of effective and successful interaction among individuals working in the global market. Furthermore, responses from Georgetown University students strongly confirmed the fact that students looking to work on the international level are often insufficiently prepared to transition into the world of international business. While many students acknowledge that possession of cross-cultural intelligence is critical to global market success, students have yet to embrace these attitudes in practice.

Another key skill business leaders gain from exposure to, and understanding of, different cultures is adaptability. When one professional joined a prominent global financial institution without a formal business education, he was told by his manager that “you can have all the information in the world at your disposal, but without the tools you can’t succeed.” Many of those surveyed shared this belief that business schools should focus more on teaching analytical and information processing skills instead of strict financial data. The business world is constantly changing, and so is the information that is relevant and important to a successful business leader. Those who are able to succeed in the business world have a solid knowledge base of both their market and how to adapt to changes in this market.

This set of business tools extends beyond managing numbers or the skill to handle pressure in a conference room; also essential are the ability to listen well, empathize and connect with others, and express a sincere interest in the motivations and goals of the people with whom you work. A partner at a prominent real estate firm noted that as “the level of interpersonal connection and small talk increases, there is more value added to the business deal as you are more likely to secure future deals and build lasting and profitable relationships.” A professional at a consulting firm also added that an important aspect of success in the business world is learning how to “take a step back from being a sales person and truly understand the needs of the client.” Learning how to approach negotiations in a personal, interested way will increase both the profitability and satisfaction of business interactions.

By functioning in environments that are so fundamentally different than one is used to, one is then able to act as a cultural chameleon, functioning efficiently regardless of situational changes. The business market is constantly changing, and as one leader noted, the key to long-term success is not merely the mastery of current conditions, but the ability to evolve with the market as it changes. This makes cross-cultural training even more significant for those planning a career in the business sector. Investments in such training, while possibly time-consuming in the short run, lead to great benefits in the long run.

Attention to detail and the ability to connect with people and adapt to changing environments are examples of essential business tools that many business professionals believe can be developed more effectively through experience than in a classroom. Shadowing senior executives and building relationships with mentors was consistently stressed as more useful than training programs in cultivating these tools for success. Many professionals agreed that “business skills can be taught, but over a lifetime—not in a classroom.” The potential benefits of a company training program or university curriculum can be maximized once people have realized the importance of developing and utilizing these basic business tools.

In drawing a clear connection between the culture-business relationship and seeking practical applications for the development of this understanding among university students, we hope that our work can serve as a gateway for greater research and awareness about the role of intercultural understanding in the global market. While we recognize that the nature of the connection between business and diversity is in the process of constant evolution, the significance of cultural sensitivity to global market success is no longer disputed. In this way, our research, though raising more questions than providing definitive answers, hopes to open the doorway to an increased interest in understanding and making sense of the new global market reality. By shaping the world into an open terrain where the interactions between myriad and diverse individuals and multinational corporations are instantaneous, globalization has created a set of challenges and possibilities for the future generation of business leaders. We hope that our report compels universities to address the need to develop students into individuals who will be able to confidently and efficiently conduct business in this new world.
Endnotes


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**People**

**FACULTY CO-ADVISORS**

**Dr. Michael Kessler** is Assistant Director of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University and a Visiting Assistant Professor of Government. His current work is on legal and political notions of fundamental rights, particularly about individual moral liberties and religious freedom. Kessler received his Ph.D. in Religion and Moral and Political Theory from the University of Chicago, where he was a William Rainey Harper Fellow and held a Henry Luce Dissertation Fellowship. Kessler received a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center. He graduated with a BA with honors in Theology, a second major in Philosophy, and a Classics minor, from Valparaiso University.

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**GRADUATE FELLOW**

**Sara Singha**, originally from Karachi, Pakistan is a doctoral candidate in the Theology Department. She does comparative work between Christianity and Islam, and she is writing her dissertation on religion and politics in South Asia. In addition, her interests include minority religious movements in South Asia, such as Christian Subalterns and Dalits in modern India, as well as the Ahmadiyya sect of Islam in Pakistan. At the Berkley Center, she works on the Undergraduate and Interreligious Understanding Project and engages students in discussions about their intercultural and interreligious experiences on campus.

**UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS**

**Katherine “Kitt” Wolfenden** was born in Southampton, NY and raised in Chapel Hill, NC. At fifteen, she graduated high school and took a gap year before college, in which she travelled to Nicaragua and Portugal and worked as a teacher’s assistant and a deputy field organizer for President Obama’s campaign. She attended Northeastern University in Boston for her freshman year of college, where she worked as a research assistant for Professor Bruce Wallin, wrote for the Huntington News and coordinated an after-school program for the student organization Social Change through Peace Games. She is now a transfer sophomore in Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service majoring in Culture and Politics. Currently she works as a research assistant for the Center for Research on Children in the United States, copy editor for The Hoya, researcher for the College Democrats and Student Group Liaison for the International Relations Club. She hopes to continue researching intercultural relations in the future.
Melissa Bell, from San Juan Capistrano, California, is a junior majoring in Government in the Georgetown College. Melissa is interested in the intersections of business and personal religious and cultural traditions. Over the summer of 2009, she interned at an employment law firm in Los Angeles where she worked on cases of discrimination in the workplace. On campus, she is a Loan Officer at the Georgetown University Student and Alumni Federal Credit Union. Also, Melissa is the president of Prison Outreach, a volunteer organization through the Center for Social Justice that seeks to improve the rehabilitative aim of incarceration by tutoring inmates in GED subjects. She finds it rewarding to tutor inmates to help them pass the GED, so that they will have a better chance of succeeding in society. In her free time, Melissa enjoys training for marathon and half marathon races.

Diana Kolar is a sophomore in the McDonough School of Business who hails from Katonah, New York. An International Business major and Spanish minor, she is fascinated by the dynamics of the global marketplace. Diana interned in the Investment Bank of JPMorganChase last summer and is eager to apply this real-world financial experience to her research endeavors this year. At Georgetown Diana serves as the Business Manager of her a cappella group, the GraceNotes, and she leads advocacy awareness for Georgetown’s branch of UNICEF. She is also an MSB Peer Advisor and expresses her love for the Hilltop as a Tour Guide in Georgetown’s Blue & Gray.

Charly Jaffe is a freshman in the School of Foreign Service hailing from San Diego, California. After graduating from the San Diego Jewish Academy in 2008, she spent a year volunteering in different parts of Israel as an EMT and an English teacher, in addition to working with the Jewish communities in Portugal, Uganda, South Africa, and India. Charly is also a script writer and Director of Research for the Berkley Center’s interview series ‘Faith Complex’ which is a show about the collision of religion, politics, and art. In her free time, Charly enjoys heated yoga, plays rugby for Georgetown, and indulges in the occasional bungee jump and skydive to get her adrenaline fix.

Anusuya Sivaram hails from Saratoga, California, where she graduated from Lynbrook High School in 2008. A sophomore in the Walsh School of Foreign Service, Anusuya is pursuing a major in International Economics with a concentration in Growth, Transition, and Development. Aside from her work at the Berkley Center, she is an ESCAPE retreat leader, a tutor at the Academic Resource Center, and a volunteer tutor with the DC Schools Project. Anusuya hopes to spend her junior year abroad in the UK, and eventually pursue an advanced degree in international economics. Her hobbies include running, dance, and reading.

Robert “R.J.” Barthelmes is a Christian, military child with origins in Maryland, Massachusetts, and Texas. As a sophomore in the college, he is majoring in American Studies with a minor in Government and History. He has previously interned for the Department of Defense, Department of the Navy, and Converse Inc. subsidiary of Nike Inc. During the summer of 2009, he participated in a program on interreligious and intercultural dialogue in southern China for five weeks. Outside of school he enjoys teaching his Saturday school students at the KIPP DC: WILL Academy charter school and engaging in intramural athletics. On campus, he sits as the treasurer on the Center for Social Justice’s Advisory Board for Student Organizations, is a Tocqueville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy Undergraduate Fellow, devotes time to leading the First Year Orientation to Community Involvement, is involved with the ESCAPE Program, and serves as a leader in his InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. In his free time, R.J. enjoys traveling with Christian organizations, being a sports fan, reading, visiting historical sites, and spending time with his family.
**Natalie Punchak**, currently a junior in the College, is a B.A. candidate for majors in English, Spanish and Government. While at Georgetown, Natalie has worked in the Criminal Investigations Division at the Public Defender Service of DC and with NBC Nightly News at the NBC News Network’s Washington Bureau. Natalie has a passion for on-campus leadership, and serves as Chair of the Residential Judicial Council, working with the GU Office of Residence Life to adjudicate violations of the Student Code of Conduct. She is also a Student Fellow in the Government Department’s Alexis de Tocqueville Forum for the Roots of American Democracy and is actively involved in the largest entirely student-owned and run corporation in the world, The Students of Georgetown, Inc.

**Sara Goodman**, originally from Reno, Nevada, is a junior in the School of Foreign Service. She is a Doyle Undergraduate Fellow working on the research project “When Religious and Cultural Diversity Meet the Global Market.” She is pursuing an International Politics major with a concentration in International Law and also studies French and German. She has previously interned for Senator Harry Reid and the open access journal *Frontiers in Neuroscience*. In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, traveling and playing tennis.

**Cynthia Jian** is a sophomore in the School of Foreign Service, where she is a Regional Studies major with a focus on Asia and hopes to also pursue a certificate in international development as well. On campus, she is the Alumnae Relations/PR Chair of Delta Phi Epsilon, the professional Foreign Service sorority and is also an active member of the Honor Council and the Georgetown Scholars Program. A bona fide glossophile, Cynthia speaks Mandarin and Cantonese, as well as French, and hopes to add more languages to her linguistic repertoire in the future.

**Ji “Julian” Won Yang** is currently a double major in Finance and International Business in the McDonough School of Business, class of 2011. He is a member of the Georgetown University Student Investment Fund, specializing in alternative energy stocks. He is also part of the Carroll Fellows Initiative, Georgetown University’s flagship fellowship program for talented and ambitious students. Julian is also a member of the Overseas Studies Student Board, acting as a liaison between the staff and returnees, current abroad students, and potential overseas students. He is also the treasurer of the OSSB. Julian is a transfer student from Hawaii Pacific University, in which he was involved in the Parliamentary debate team and Students in Free Enterprise. He enjoys playing basketball in his free time.