

Focus Group Notes  
July 23, 2002

Chinese MBA Students  
Summer 2002

Benjamin explained the focus group concept to the students and asked for honest feedback on Webster University.

Experience this summer

- ★ Writing experience is a great benefit – skills improved
- ★ Atmosphere in class is open – questioning – very good
- ★ Involvement in American culture was very limited – could increase interaction with Americans
- ★ Development of writing skills through more assignments – demanding writing.
- ★ Class atmosphere – interactive class environment
- ★ Immersion in American culture was not sufficient.

Academic Transition

- ★ Completely different – Professors' attitude more serious here than China
- ★ Individual hard work
- ★ China – more teamwork focus
- ★ High demand of quality
- ★ Exposure to biblical ethic spirit of Americans

Style of Final Exam

- ★ Like American way of testing
- ★ Americans teach students to understand content of course – Open book in China
- ★ Closed book final in US for MBA program
- ★ Closed book issue – Language barrier is serious issue – creates misunderstanding so wrong choices can be made on exams even when student knows correct answers.

Instruction in China

- ★ Educational quality better in US than China
- ★ Some good professors in China
- ★ Not all are very qualified professors
- ★ No choice of professors
- ★ Shanghai and Shenzhen vary greatly
- ★ Question of fairness
  - Prerequisite courses not available to Shenzhen students prior to core courses
  - Shanghai students completed prerequisites prior to core courses.

## Faculty

- ★ Original course scheduled for 8 weeks – this was reduced to six weeks
- ★ David Parish – excellent, Steven Philman – excellent – commented that these are the only two fully qualified professors in China.
- ★ Chinese faculty is only average – not good and not bad
  - Strong academic and theoretical knowledge but very limited corporate experience.
  - Demand better qualified faculty in China
- ★ Faculty from USA is too old
  - Knowledge is average
  - Limited physically, concern for health
  - Low speaking voice
  - Low energy
  - Knowledge is obsolete in many instances

## Miscellaneous

- ★ Attention is strongly focused due to being the first class in Shenzhen
- ★ What can students do with unqualified professors?
  - Complaints are not taken seriously
  - Student evaluations make no difference
- ★ 40-50 students per class in China
- ★ Largest problem is quality of faculty
- ★ Discussed the possibility of taking elective courses to meet other students while in St. Louis.
- ★ Would like to visit other sites, corporations, more lectures, more activities
- ★ Orientation should happen before they arrive in US so they can be accommodated
- ★ Even though pre-registered (May) they had to re-register again when they arrived – courses were not available
  - Possibly make registration in March for summer courses.
- ★ They cannot get their student ID number in china so they cannot gain access to University website for registration.
- ★ No access to University Library due to ID issue.
- ★ Nobody has taken online business courses. They want to know more about it.
- ★ MBA – only general MBA offered in China
  - Perhaps could offer areas of emphasis for MBA (e.g. Finance)
- ★ Webster University is competing with many schools from Europe, Australia, etc. that offer MBA, but are not “accredited” by the Chinese Ministry of Education.
- ★ Want classes with Americans, not just Chinese students
- ★ Need consistent information on upcoming graduation dates.