International Faculty Fellows (IFFs) at the MIT Sloan School of Management are management faculty from universities outside the United States that have collaboration agreements with MIT Sloan to work together to strengthen graduate management education programs at their respective schools.
Now completing its tenth year, the International Faculty Fellows (IFFs) program at the MIT Sloan School of Management has brought more than 150 faculty members from universities in China, Korea, Mexico, and Ghana to Cambridge for semester-long training in teaching and course development and for opportunities to identify or continue long-term research projects. Thirteen more IFFs are enrolled for the Spring 2006 term.

Most IFFs come to MIT Sloan to learn how MIT faculty teach management and how students learn it. They then adapt these course materials and teaching methods for their own schools and environments. Most teach in English. Some IFFs also use their time at MIT Sloan to learn Western academic research methods, extend existing research interests, or identify research topics they can pursue at their own universities. The information they gain at MIT Sloan helps them and their universities focus more successfully on creating as well as disseminating knowledge.

The vision is to prepare graduate management students at non-US universities for management careers in the global arena by lifting MBA programs at those universities to world-class levels. The participating universities are four in China—Tsinghua University in Beijing, Fudan University in Shanghai, Lingnan (University) College, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, and Yunnan University in Kunming; Sungkyunkwan University Graduate School of Business (SKK GSB) in Seoul; and Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM) in Mexico. In addition, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) has sent several IFFs to MIT Sloan from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) in Ghana.

“The partnership fits perfectly with our mission,” David Salinas IFF (GIMPA) in Ghana.

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“The partnership fits perfectly with our mission,” David Salinas IFF Spring ’05 ITESM has said, his observation not too different from one made five years earlier by Zhang Xiaorong IFF Fall ’00 Fudan: “Our way to teach is greatly influenced by the MIT Sloan School. “

In Cambridge, the IFFs attend MBA core courses and electives, and consult with faculty advisors on ways to adapt these course materials to their own classrooms. They also attend intense, interactive teaching workshops designed to enhance their performance in the classroom. Throughout their stay they become part of the MIT Sloan community. They contribute comments and cases to classroom discussions, participate in team-based class assignments, attend MBA parties and join MBA clubs. Some encounters are as educational as going to class. “We had lunch with [Dean Emeritus] Bill Pounds. He said you should have a colorful life, a balance,” said Zhao Youzhen IFF Spring ‘05 Fudan.

The vision that describes the IFF program includes participation by other university groups as well. For example:

• MIT Sloan MBA students visit the Chinese campuses every Spring Break to help management students there learn about important dimensions of the workplace—resume writing, interviewing, teamwork, leadership, networking—that are not usually included in their curricula. “This is a way of building an MBA community between the two programs. It’s a powerful experience,” said Jonathan Lehrich MBA ‘05, a leader of the Spring Break visit in Spring 2005. ITESM students studied at MIT Sloan in May and June 2005. This Spring, twelve second-year SKK GSB MBA students are spending their last term taking courses at MIT Sloan.

• In May 2005 for the first time, administrative staff came to Cambridge for training. This group—directors and deans from the four Chinese universities, SKK GSB, ITESM, and GIMPA—learned how MIT Sloan administrators manage important functions such as marketing and communications, admissions, career development, alumni relations, resource development, finances, and technology services. Dean Richard Schmalensee spoke to them about his role as dean, and Dean Emeritus William Pounds about “the business of business schools.” “We learned so much. It’s impossible to take it all back,” said Wu Shuyuan, Director of Personnel at Tsinghua. “We must prioritize. From now on we will use MIT Sloan as our benchmark.”

To date, virtually every faculty member in each of the three IMBA programs at Tsinghua, Fudan, and Lingnan, and in the fourth, internationally-oriented MBA class at Yunnan, has been an IFF (and some have returned to MIT Sloan for second, even third, shorter periods of study). The first SKK GSB IFF came to MIT Sloan for the Spring and Summer 2004 terms, and since then five more have come, including one for the Spring 2006 term. ITESM’s participation began with two faculty enrolled in the Fall 2004 term; a total of nine came for the Spring and Fall terms of 2005. The first GIMPA IFF came to MIT Sloan for the Fall 2004 term, a second followed for the Spring 2005 term, and a third for the Fall 2005 term.

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“Before MIT Sloan I only thought about the knowledge I taught, not about how to teach it.”
Xie Wei, IFF Fall ’00, Tsinghua University

“My visit to MIT Sloan enabled me to teach MBA students at international standards. MIT Sloan pushes Chinese MBA education to its highest level.”
Wang Wei, IFF Spring ’98, Fudan University
We are very proud of this productive relationship with MIT Sloan. Over the years we worked together in designing a world standard curriculum for this program and putting it into practice. Now we are confident to say that this program is one of the best International MBA programs both in China and in Asia.

Dean Zhao Chunjun, School of Economics and Management, Tsinghua University, welcoming IMBA students at the beginning of the 2004-2005 academic year.
The IFF program at MIT Sloan originated with the MIT-China Management Education Project, established in 1996 to strengthen graduate management education programs at selected Chinese schools. Initially the Project supported International MBA (IMBA) programs at two distinguished universities—Tsinghua University in Beijing and Fudan University in Shanghai. Lingnan (University) College, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, joined the Project in 1999. For several years MIT Sloan has also provided support for an internationally-oriented MBA class at Yunnan University in Kunming. The Project has worked so well that its initial time frame of five years was extended to ten, and discussions are underway about ways to extend aspects of the Project beyond that.

In 2003, MIT Sloan and the Sungkyunkwan University Graduate School of Business (SKK GSB) in Seoul signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together for eight years to develop a new, world-class MBA program at SKK GSB. In 2004, MIT Sloan and Sistema Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM) in Mexico began a five-year Agreement to enhance the culture and performance of ITESM faculty and launch a premier MBA program with a focus on innovation and globalization. IFFs from the Graduate School of Business, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) are sponsored by the International Finance Corporation, which sees the IFF program as a model for an IFF-like program it plans to establish in Africa and as a tool in the development of its Global Business School Network.