

TUCKToday

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The Consulting Quest: Tuck Students in Korea for Genzyme

by Mark McCrackin

A treasure waits in a quiet corner of Seoul's Samsung Medical Center, in the somber office of Dr. Jin Hwan Ahn.

Outside this oasis of calm, people spill through the building with purposeful energy, and seating areas teem with patients waiting for appointments. A dozen or more elevators—even floors in one bank, odd in another—propel crowds of patients and staff throughout the modern high-rise. But this is not chaos. This is the polite, everyday throng of modern Korean healthcare.

Dr. Ahn, a surgeon and professor of orthopedic surgery, is sharing an hour of his valuable time with two young visitors. He, like virtually every other Korean seen in public, is well dressed but slightly rumpled from the daily grind. His shoes are polished, his tie in place. The room is gray, black, and icy blue. The blinds are closed, but at least there is a window and the status it confers.

Ju-Yeon Park and Kestas Sereiva, both Tuck second-years, lean earnestly toward Ahn in a manner that simultaneously expresses deference and a genuine interest in the subject of conversation. Such nuance is important here. As Park and Sereiva move through a long questionnaire, Ahn pays particular attention to each detail, taking time to check his answers against his computer records. ("I am very conservative," he says.) A clinician with more than 30 years' experience, Dr. Ahn is a knee specialist who has performed (precisely) 448 surgical procedures in the past year. When he isn't reading his computer, he looks his visitors squarely in the eye—a man carefully looking for honesty. The conversation is in English, although it is not the native language of any of the three.

More particularly, the interview is technical and detailed. The Tuck students know their medicine but are modest in their demeanor. Their knowledge is obviously an imprimatur for Ahn, who becomes expansive on matters of Korean health insurance and the demographics of knee failure. The group shares a small laugh, and the Tuck students can see their objective materialize. They have come for one thing, and they will leave with it. What they came for could only be gotten this way: person to

person, face to face, in detail, asked for with a business-inflected curiosity.

The treasure they seek is information.

A COURSE WITHOUT A NET

Park and Sereiva are taking a Tuck course—Tuck Global Consultancy (TGC)—along with their second-year classmates Dale Burnett, Sue Feury, Joon Soo Ryu, and Peng Zhang. From early November 2006 through January 2007, they will organize, research, and complete a consulting project for Genzyme Biosurgery, a division of Genzyme Corporation. The centerpiece of the course is three intensive weeks of primary research in Korea, an experience that requires astonishing mental agility and physical stamina.





During the same time, another 60 second-years will travel to China, India, England, Thailand, Vietnam, Tanzania, Taiwan, and Belgium for similar projects. This is the 10th generation of Tuck students to take this course—formerly known as the Field Study in International Business—and in those 10 years, Tuck students have consulted with over 70 global organizations on over 100 projects in more than 50 countries, becoming immersed in other business cultures and producing results that companies prize. "TGC is arguably the most robust consultancy offered by any graduate business school in the world," says John Owens T'61, director of the program. And it's the only course at Tuck without a syllabus. In fact, the phased structure of the projects is standard, but the amount of uncertainty in the course is surprising to many. The first lesson is that plans can be trusted to change; one interview or business contact can alter the trajectory of the entire project. "TGC students have to be freestyle and work by the seat of their pants," says Owens. "Every one of our projects in the past 10 years has been very different, depending on the client, the country, and, especially, on team composition. Just being outside the U.S. adds a huge note of uncertainty." Burnett, a finance specialist who spent seven years before Tuck as an analyst and project manager on private equity, M&A, and product launch consulting projects, speaks from experience when he says that "a big part of being a consultant is being comfortable with the unknown."

A TUCK GLOBAL CONSULTANCY SAMPLER: 1997-2007

During the past decade, students have consulted on a range of business situations, often on repeat assignments for the same clients. Subjects studied include:

Alcoa—Russia

Market potential in oil and gas sectors

City Year—South Africa

Assessment of international nonprofit program and recommendations on strategic directions

Corning—China

Intellectual property strategies in connection with market entry

DHL—Venezuela

Market analysis of a new service for Latin America

DuPont—Romania

Conversion to company-owned distribution network

John Deere—China and India

Historical demand drivers and competition in agricultural equipment market

McGraw-Hill—Brazil

Market segmentation and competition, market-entry strategy

Nike—Turkey

Contractor monitoring systems for compliance with employment standards

WELL BEGUN IS HALF DONE

It's early November, and the Korea team sits at a small conference table at the front of the Ankeny classroom. Late on a busy day, the students are here to meet Ann Bauer T'93, their faculty advisor. A veteran of two previous TGC projects, Bauer has mastered the balancing act of simultaneously serving as experienced mentor, friend, and Tuck's authority. She immediately establishes her own style of leadership: straight from the shoulder but leavened with diplomacy and a generous smile. During the next month, her skills and discretion—knowing when to speak, to remain silent, to encourage discovery, to provide experienced instruction—will prove invaluable to the team's success.

It's time to prepare. Time to meet the client, understand its business, and agree to objectives and deliverables. In a conference call with biosurgery international execs Dane Bedward, senior vice president and general manager, and Jean Reiser, vice president of marketing, they learn that Genzyme Biosurgery is considering entering the Asian market with a new surgical treatment for knee cartilage injury and deterioration. The new process—matrix-induced autologous chondrocyte implantation (MACI)—is quicker and simpler than the older ACI method. Although both treatments introduce replacement cells cultured from the patient's own cartilage, MACI offers smaller incisions, less opportunity for postsurgical complications, faster recovery, shorter hospital stays, and reduced cost. Genzyme already markets MACI in Europe and Australia and wants the Tuck students to assess the Asian market and investigate startup and operational issues. As with any other advanced-technology business, there's much to learn. Pretravel organization spins out from the early meetings. Sue Feury, a Thayer-trained engineer, is chosen as project coordinator. Even as she prepares for exams, she immediately begins the job she will have for the next two months: rigorously keeping the team up-to-date and on track while providing her own intellectual contributions to the process. The team segments and assigns work into modules corresponding to the deliverables: market assessment (including physician and patient data), competition, government and regulatory issues, pricing, and manufacturing and distribution. A spreadsheet of action items blossoms; it will eventually be populated with scores of items carefully categorized, cross-referenced, and notated. Digital files of all minutes, notes, research results, contacts—everything—will be saved on a computer server at Tuck 7,000 miles away.

Remy-Cointreau—Eastern Europe

Strategic brand assessment

The Home Depot—Thailand

Specific merchandise sourcing recommendations

Unilever—Mexico

Market entry for new product family

THE BOILER ROOM: THE NEW TEAMWORK

Less than three weeks after those first meetings in Hanover, the team has moved to Seoul and transformed a conference room at the Fraser Suites Hotel into something of their own. With big street-side windows and modern conveniences, the room has a calm, corporate face. But a long, oval conference table laden with laptop computers, papers, and water bottles tells another story. Sitting shoulder to shoulder at the table, the Tuck team works intensely; their focus and stress are in the air. Cell-phone ringers are set on high. Two or three simultaneous conversations are the rule, often in two languages and often between people seats away from each other. No one is shouting, but no one is particularly quiet. And no one seems bothered. Welcome to the new world of work, where the individual desk has morphed into a shared table with a new set of table manners. The key to success is the paradoxical ability to shut everything out while simultaneously

being aware of it all. Anyone is welcome to comment on anything, and a key skill is knowing when your opinion counts. Individuals become owners of specific tasks, but their work remains open to review by the team. The advantages of this kind of teamwork become obvious: more efficient communication, faster reaction to challenges and opportunities, faster decision making, and consistency of results. This new world of work seems to be a good world.

FEEDING THE MONSTER

"Consultation," Bauer notes, "is a massive process of data gathering, input, and analysis. The process is a monster—always hungry for more information." And most of the monster's food comes from face-to-face interviews, at least for primary research. Altogether, the team conducted 24 formal, bilingual interviews in less than three weeks.



Interview subjects include orthopedic surgeons, regulators at the Korea Food and Drug Administration and the Korea Health Insurance Review Agency, personnel in the client's Korean office and its local distributor, and real estate developers. Typical of any consultation project, the interview list starts from a few names and grows like a virus, with one contact passing the team on to another source.

But the TGC team has a secret weapon in Peng Zhang, who served as a staff chief in China's ministry of foreign trade and as a diplomat in Pakistan and Canada. He offers not only a diplomat's seasoned, long-range point of view but also a wealth of contacts among Chinese officials in Seoul. A teammate jokes, "We just turn to Peng and ask if he has a friend who has a friend. In a few minutes, we get our contact name. Peng's an expert at navigating governments."

Effective consultation depends on flawless communication and equally flawless analysis. The hours that Park and fellow Korean Joon Soo Ryu spend translating language and culture and interacting with every Korean interviewee, both on the

telephone and face to face, are in addition to those spent in their roles as analysts and are given without complaint. And Sereiva, a scientist and technologist who has worked for Aspen Technology and The Boston Consulting Group, wrestles many medical issues to the ground and is a key driver and consolidator of analysis.

FUN BUT NO GAMES

It's December, dark early, and cold in Seoul. But the streets of Insadong are lively with Christmas shoppers crowding the traditional crafts stores and snacking at Korea's ubiquitous *pojangmacha* street vendors. It's the Tuck team's good fortune to live in this preserved neighborhood, and it becomes a rich resource for diversion. Even 12-hour-a-day types need to leave the office.

In TGC projects, students frequently choose to socialize with each other during their stays outside the U.S. While the Korea group visits the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and Seoul Tower, for its spectacular views, the real social anchor is food. The daily routine includes an early dinner followed by a stroll down the street for the appropriately named hottuck—heavy, sweet, and dangerously hot pancakes eaten by hand. Consistent with their nature, the students work to become short-term experts on Korea's extravagant cuisine. While there's a sense of adventure to eating, some team members reject octopus and silkworms out of hand. But the vibe is always good. The Romans said that in wine there is truth; the Koreans know that in food there is friendship.

Beyond the sheer fun of group activities—including a memorable bout of karaoke

AS OTHERS SEE US

Our TGC study was an excellent decision-making document, and the recommendations have shaped our Asia Pacific development strategy. I equate simplicity with genius, and, by that standard, the recommendations were brilliant—easy to understand, clearly prioritized, and actionable. The analytical models were well quantified and superbly documented. It was a first-class effort.

—Geoff Apthorp D'83, T'90
Gear Pump Division Business Development
Parker Hannifin Corporation

The TGC project I worked on for Alcoa made me realize that I wanted to work in an industrial or technical business and

—the students understand that bonding is only one of several nuanced skills in team development and maintenance. Another is balancing the perspectives and resources of the group. Just as Feury is diligent as team coordinator, Park—with management and analysis experience in large corporations—provides interpersonal savvy to smooth the way for the team and calm the waters at critical times. Citizens of four nations, the team also uses its cultural diversity to advantage: as a Korean man in this Confucian society, Ryu brings the team credibility and respect among doctors, government officials, and other high-status interview subjects. "I didn't know some of my teammates at the beginning," says Burnett, "but Tuck trains us to assess our classmates' competencies and then to trust them. So when a task was proposed, our group could quickly agree on who would be right for the job."

THE FINAL HOURS

We've all been there. The clock continues to move, and the deadline looms. Sometimes you work faster. Sometimes you work longer. And other times, you shake off your usual way of working altogether and take a different path to your goal. That's when you learn.

With their time in Seoul drawing to an end, the team has a deadline to finish their client presentation and give it to Ann Bauer by noon on Thursday, December 14. The presentation promises to be big, with more than 80 PowerPoint slides presenting a huge amount of data and detailed analysis. But even on Thursday, critical data is still trickling in. Worse, a disabling illness has passed to every member of team except one. Not finishing the job while in Korea would mean a lot of work later in Hanover. At 8 p.m., Bauer joins the group and stays until 11. "The stress in their faces was painful to see," she says, "largely because I have been in their shoes many times myself. They were exhausted."

On Friday, no one shows up for breakfast, an indication that the team had worked through the night. But it has been a breakthrough night on two fronts. During their marathon work, Feury realizes that "we have nearly 100 slides but still no clear, underlying message that flows through them"—an echo of her Management Communication training that facts alone are not interpretation of facts. As Feury advocates for pausing their slide work in order to distill their findings into an explicit message, Park urges the team to disband into smaller sections to do the job, a break from the group-think mentality that has characterized their work to date. This is a watershed moment, but it doesn't come entirely without warning. A week earlier Burnett had warned "if everything has to be done by consensus, this is going to be a really rough week."

When the team reconvenes and compares the results of its dispersed work, the students discover that their thinking jibes, that they share the same synthesis and voice. The only task remaining then is to revise their slides for consistency. Invigorated even after working all night, they continue through the day Friday. With perfect timing, Park's mother appears in the early evening with a Korean meal described as "beyond fabulous"—a fitting celebratory event. After dinner, the group reassembles for its first rehearsal. They are fatigued but make their presentation with skill and even wit. At midnight, their long, long day is done. "They pulled it off," says Bauer. "and I'm very proud of them. These six people are what Tuck is so well known for."

BRINGING IT BACK HOME

"Are the students in there?" John Owens pauses at a closed door and directs his question to a nearby assistant. "All day," she answers with a knowing smile. Behind the door, the conference room is awash in black wool suiting and humming with the sound of computer fans. The team is ready for its presentation to Owens, Bauer, and Professor Joe Massey, director of Tuck's Center for International Business, who helped start the TGC.

Unlikely as it may seem, a presentation on the Korean orthopedic market is nothing short of fascinating. The team methodically lays out its research and builds a case, aided by more than 60 slides plus an appendix half again as long. The arguments are well reasoned. Every statistic is footnoted. Professor Massey shoots questions at the group, both as an expert critic and as someone eager to explore even more options. While the client's tolerance for risk and ultimate motivation in Korea remain wild cards, the wealth of data and analysis promises to lay ambiguity aside.

On stage, each member of the team becomes different, in varying degrees, from the day-to-day person. Such is the power of great preparation and a good suit. One surprises by showing himself to be a smooth persuader. Another—a deliberator—steps forward to become single-minded and unflappable. But most important, each

opened the door to GE Nuclear Energy. As a former Air Force intelligence officer with a BA in foreign affairs, I faced difficulty convincing companies I could handle technical roles. The Alcoa project gave me the experience and credibility to blow away those misperceptions.

—Pete Rogers T'06
Supply Chain Leader
General Electric Nuclear Energy





Tuck Global Consultancy's Korea team on the way to karaoke. Back: Ju-Yeon Park, Ann Bauer T'93, Peng Zhang, Sue Feury. Front: Kestas Sereiva, Joon Soo Ryu, Dale Burnett.

is totally, yet uniquely, credible.

A week later, the students present again to their clients. Although the history of its presence in Korea has yet to be written, Genzyme's response is characterized by Ann Merrifield T'79, president of Genzyme Biosurgery: "The team worked through the Korean business infrastructure, overcame barriers of language and culture, and delivered cohesive recommendations from a U.S. corporate point of view. It's unlikely that a team from our company or even Korean consultants could have done better. But even more valuable to us is the comprehensive perspective that is unique to Tuck—those great Tuck minds."

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