
A Chinese Cinderella's Global Debut: Internationalization of Business Programs at JUFE¹

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Abstract: This case study analyzes the factors that contribute to the success of the internationalization of the business degree program at the International School of Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics and also identifies potential challenges for the school. The International School can be taken as a representative case of business education internationalization in China, particularly in a relatively less economically developed region of a fast growing economy.

Keywords: business education, internationalization, China.

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¹ Eric Wang and George Ye wrote this case solely to provide material for class discussion. The authors do not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a managerial situation. The authors may have disguised certain names and other identifying information to protect confidentiality.

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While his research has been focused on financial studies, he has been very active in international education. His previous high-profile engagement in international education includes being one of the key founders of the Master of Finance program at Saint Mary's University, which has the most students recruited directly from China and being the Dean of the International School at Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics, China.

On June 6 and 7, 2012, the meeting of the council of the heads of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was held in Beijing. Regarded by some commentators in the international politics arena as NATO's counterpart, SCO is becoming an influential international body, yet its second day's meeting started a half hour later than the usually scheduled 9:00 a.m. Realizing that thousands of Beijing high school graduates would have to report to the first test of the college entrance exams at the same time, SCO yielded the right-of-way to those young students so they could rush in time to the various exam sites dispersed in all corners of the city. The three days of June 7, 8, and 9 for annual college entrance exams are a challenging time for high school students, as these exams determine what kinds of universities they will qualify to attend. It is also an important occasion for universities in China, as they have to kick-start their recruitment plans. For the administrators of the International School at Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics (JUFÉ), it is truly an important time: in addition to the recruiting task, they have to reflect on what a strategic plan for the next ten-year period should involve—while planning for the school's ten-year anniversary celebration. With these tasks at hand, the administrators of this school realize that it is time for them to take stock of all that has been achieved during the first decade of the school and to examine the issues that have already been recognized and others that may be on the horizon.

1 Reflections on the first ten years

The International School was established as a separate academic unit at JUFÉ in 2002, in the wake of China's acceptance into the World Trade Organization (WTO), and with the conviction that China would need more business graduates who could function in both English and Chinese in their respective subject areas. This conviction was conditioned by JUFÉ's strong, well-established reputation with mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan for teaching finance, economics, accounting, and public finance. Riding on JUFÉ's reputation and expertise, the International School was authorized to offer a bachelor's degree program in the three majors of international accounting, international business, and international finance, while focusing on training globally oriented undergraduates. Ten years later, graduates of the International School have proven the venture a success. Among the 1,378 bachelor's degree graduates, 98 percent found employment upon graduation in governments, domestic firms, and foreign-owned firms, or went on to do graduate studies at Chinese universities and foreign universities of high reputation, such as the University of Cambridge in the U.K., McGill University in Canada, Australia National

University, and Case Western Reserve University in the United States. Among the 21 schools at JUFÉ, the International School has become the most sought after; it is a Chinese Cinderella in the nation's business education community, given that the university is located in the relatively less developed Jiangxi Province of China, whose gross domestic product per capita in 2009 was ranked 25th among the 32 provinces, autonomous regions, and centrally administered cities³. As a result of the school's reputation, admission into the school is reserved only for high school graduates who have achieved top marks on the college entrance exams and who can afford market-based tuition and fees. The International School has indeed built up its unique brand name among Chinese high school students and their parents.

Although the school has established itself, an examination of its operations and a look into the future uncovers several issues. First, in what way can the International School help to fully realize the potential of each individual student?⁴ It is quite widely recognized that some students could have achieved more had they made the best use of their time at school and of the learning resources available to them. Second, the school is known for its high proportion (30 percent) of graduate students accepted by foreign universities for master's level graduate studies. But the school's graduates are less successful in writing domestic tests for graduate studies and in writing professional admission tests, such as the one for the Chartered Accountant profession. Third, how could the school be more internationalized in the long run, in terms of student exchange, international collaboration, and an international mix of faculty members? Facing its two most immediate challenges, the school first analyzed the factors that contributed to its success.

2 Success factors

The International School's success was based on its skilful command and good use of strategic resources. As discussed in a report published by the International School at JUFÉ in 2010,⁵ their internationalization model consists of the following four components (see Exhibit 1): mutually enhanced teaching and learning; integrated Western and Chinese characteristics; internal alliances and external collaboration; and high-level grafting. The first component is meant to foster a learning environment where teachers and students exchange views, ideas, and feedback so that both teaching and learning are enhanced. The second component is implemented by the integration of Western and Chinese business curricula, of Western and Chinese teachers, and of Western and Chinese student evaluation formats. By studying in this integrated model, students would be able to acquire the essentials of both Western and Chinese styles of business education. The third element's purpose is to make good use of internally available resources at JUFÉ, as well as external resources, so the

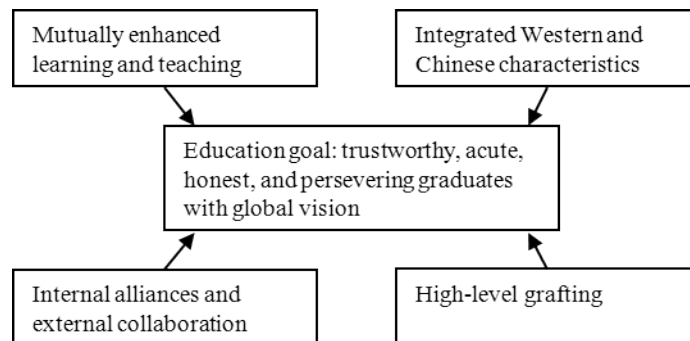
³ Zhang, Z. (2010). *Inside the growth engine: A guide to China's regions, provinces, and cities*. Hong Kong: HSBC Global Research. p. 147.

⁴ A similar request was made by the vice president of JUFÉ. See the piece of news entitled "International School held a meeting discussing course development and teaching" (Chinese version available). Retrieved from <http://intl.jxufe.cn/teaching/jiaoxuexinxi/2012-06-13/4872.html>

⁵ International School at JUFÉ. (2010a). "Mutual enhanced teaching and learning, integrated Western and Chinese characteristics, internal alliances and external collaboration, and high-level grafting: Educating graduates of the character of "Trustworthy, Acute, Honest, and Perseverant" for global economic management." Retrieved from <http://intl.jxufe.edu.cn>

student's learning experience can be enriched. The last component is meant to encourage branching out to work with reputable partners and aim for a high quality outcome. This internationalization model has guided the operations of the school for its first ten years. Specifically, the school has cultivated the following advantages.

Exhibit 1 Internationalization model of the International School at JUFU



2.1 *Operating with resource advantages*

The International School, as JUFU's window for internationalization of education, has operated with resource advantages financially, administratively, intellectually, and budgetarily. Financially, the school has been allowed to charge higher tuition and fees. These tuition and fee revenues made it feasible for the school to take the measures necessary to foster its growth. Administratively, since the university's general administration helps the school to recruit students, the school does not incur any of the marketing costs. Intellectually, the university also feeds its most talented student applicants to the International School. Not only must these applicants have exceeded the national college's entrance exam cut-off marks, they must also be among the top echelon of students admissible to JUFU. In addition, the university allows the International School to assign its unsuccessful students to the respective schools of Accounting, Finance, and International Trades. So, the student who survives at the International School is usually academically stronger than the average student at JUFU. In budgetary advantages, the International School is not responsible for training its teachers for the first two years of courses; the university does this. For example, when the International School began, the university sent more than 40 teachers to foreign universities for preparatory training to deliver courses in English and also paid for visits to recruit teachers from foreign universities.

2.2 *Cost-effective staffing*

Although it is provided with sufficient financial resources, the International School uses them quite wisely. While maintaining a merely adequate administrative and support staff, the school does not retain its teachers. They are all hired on a contract basis, from three sources, and for three distinct purposes. The first category is course coordinators who are jointly appointed to the International School and another school in the coordinator's subject area. For example, a finance course coordinator would be a full-time teacher at the School of Finance and also act as a coordinator at the International School on a contract basis. The second category includes teachers who are hired by the International School from other schools at JUFU on a course-by-course basis. Teachers in the third category are from outside of JUFU and usually deliver third- and fourth-

year core courses for the three majors. They are mostly faculty members from an English-speaking country, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, or Taiwan. They are also hired by contract, paid a foreign-expert rate by the number of hours of class meetings, and afforded nice accommodation, meals, sightseeing tours, and transportation. This model of staffing saves the school a great deal, for example, on fringe benefits and staff training.

2.3 *Mobilizing students with versatile incentives and venues*

Students admitted into the International School are usually highly academically qualified, since their scores on college entrance examinations are higher than the student scores at other schools at the university. They are also quite self-motivated. So, to help the students fully realize their potential, the school adopted a policy called *Infinite Incentives*, which means the school will give out awards to every measurable achievement a student can attain, be it a high grade on an individual course or TOEFL, or an excellent report on field studies or surveys. The number of awards given out is not limited. The school also pays for a return air ticket when a student is admitted by a prestigious foreign university for graduate studies. Parallel with this award policy, the school developed a policy to return failed students to the corresponding schools of their majors.

Besides providing students with rigorous academic programs, the school also makes a number of venues available to train students in practical skills, as well as exposing them to foreign cultures through international exchange programs (see Exhibit 2) and inviting foreign speakers to campus. In summary, the school retains an elite group of students and motivates them with various awards and opportunities so the students can optimize their own interests and strengths.

2.4 *Internationalizing the delivery of curricula*

The school strongly believes that internationalization of the curricula is the key to realizing its mission, as each curriculum equips its students with the knowledge foundation to compete internationally. Based on this belief, the school studied the curricula for finance, accounting, and international business majors at Duke University, Wharton School, City University of London, Australia National University, and many others. Then they gleaned the core requirements for the three majors and integrated them with specific JUFÉ courses. The end product is a mixture of Western-style business core courses with a Chinese liberal arts foundation for the bachelor's degree (see Exhibits 4, 5, and 6). Specifically, the courses for the first two years are intensive English studies and general education courses, including history, mathematics, and the arts. The third- and fourth-year studies are for foundation and core courses in the three majors, and the majority of them are delivered in English—or English and Chinese—by foreign teachers. Although the Western style of teaching has been encouraged, foreign teachers are given unfettered authority in selecting course materials and course grading schemes. The internationalization of the curricula and delivery of the courses is believed to be the determining factor that has familiarized the school's students with Western teaching, and therefore qualified them for graduate studies abroad.

Exhibit 2 List of International School international collaborators

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Target students</i>
Melbourne Language Centre	Australia	Summer language study trip	First and second year students
Tampereen Yliopisto	Finland	One-year student exchange undergraduate study program	Second and third year students
Fortbildung und Umschulung	Germany	Undergraduate study program	Second and third year students
University of Rey Juan Carlos	Spain	One-year student exchange undergraduate study program	Second and third year students
Shih Chein University	Taiwan	Two-week practicum tour	Second and third year students
University of Glasgow	United Kingdom	One-year or half-year undergraduate study program	Second and third year students
The Association of International Accounting	United Kingdom	One- to two-week study tour program	All undergraduate students

Beyond these four aspects, other factors may have also played a role. First, JUFÉ had not merged with any other universities, and this kept the university leadership quite homogeneous and united in supporting the International School's business programs. Also, the university had not gone on an expansion spree, which happened to many other Chinese universities and caused them to go deeply into debt. Being debt-free gives the university some leeway in its support of the International School's program and initiatives. Second, students identify with the International School. The identification comes because most of the students spend four years together.⁶ Even for those students who spend one year abroad on exchange programs, they return to the International School to receive the same bachelor's degree. Third, the relatively low-priced bilingual (Chinese and English) textbooks, due to the effort of several publishing houses in China, make the required course material more accessible to students.

3 Some loose links

As the International School continues, it has identified a number of loose links in its operations. The school administration is concerned about the following issues.

⁶ See Mael, F., & Ashforth, B. E. (1992). Alumni and their alma mater: A partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 13, 103–123.

3.1 *Geographical location of JUFÉ*

Exhibit 3 shows that Jiangxi is a landlocked province located in the south-eastern part of the south central region of China. Its southern neighbour is Guangdong Province along the coast of the South China Sea; in the south-east is Fujian Province, and to the east is Zhejiang Province. All three of these provinces enjoy a much higher GDP per capita than Jiangxi Province.⁷ In addition, the universities in Jiangxi are less well known to the rest of China and are not comparable to the prestigious universities in Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, and the coastal provinces. For example, JUFÉ has not been granted the authority to award its staff the top academic rank, full professorship, on its own. These economic and academic constraints are believed to have caused a "brain drain" in Jiangxi province in the past, which means that many of the most talented Jiangxi students choose to attend universities elsewhere.

3.2 *Student motivation*

On average, the International School's students are higher achievers in comparison with students at other schools of JUFÉ. But a significant proportion of these students have not concentrated fully on their studies. Some of the students were found to have been too obsessed with playing electronic games at night and thus were not well prepared for classes. Also, most of the foundation and core courses are delivered in English or bilingually in English and Chinese, as well as compressed within a few weeks (usually six weeks for a three-credit course). For students who are not highly motivated, have poor self-control, or are accustomed to procrastinating, the classes progress far too quickly for the students to be able to keep abreast of them. These factors and others in a student's life pose great challenges.

3.3 *Student and teacher interactions*

As discussed above, the teachers who deliver courses can be classified into three categories: course coordinators, teachers from other schools of JUFÉ, and foreign teachers from abroad. Students interact the most with course coordinators for questions related to academic issues, and with the program manager's staff, their head teacher, and the student advisors for administrative issues (see Exhibit 4). Foreign teachers do not have long enough exposure to students to interact much. As mentioned earlier, foreign teachers are only asked to deliver a course for a few weeks. By the time they become familiar with the students, their course is about to end and they are ready to leave for their home countries. Therefore, it is not feasible for students and foreign teachers to engage with each other intensively, in research for example.

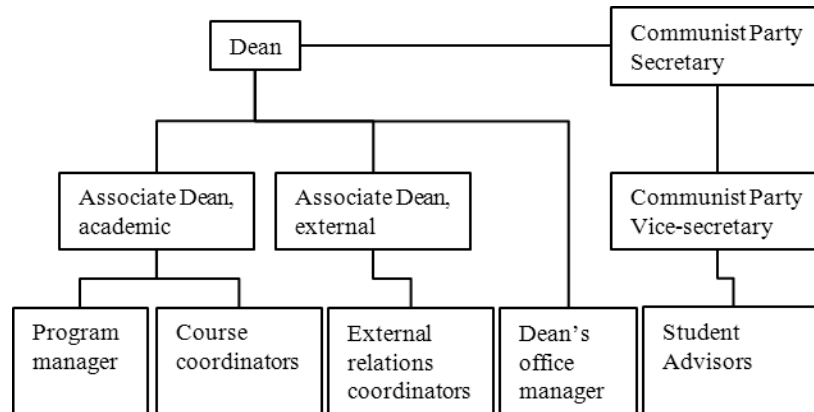
⁷ See Zhang, Z. (2010). *Inside the growth engine: A guide to China's regions, provinces, and cities*. Hong Kong: HSBC Global Research. for information on GDP per capita ranking: Zhejiang 4th, Guangdong 6th, Fujian 10th, and Jiangxi 25th.

Exhibit 3 Geographical location of JUFU



Source: <http://www.chinapage.com/map/map.html> (JUFU is located in Jiangxi Province, in the south-eastern part of China.)

Exhibit 4 The International School organizational chart



3.4 Course delivery mode and student performance assessment

When courses are delivered within a few weeks, it becomes quite challenging to make sufficient use of learning instruments, such as a term paper, research projects, or even assignments. For example, a standard corporate finance course may involve two or three assignments, a midterm exam, a term paper, a group presentation, and a final exam. Given the time frame of, say, six weeks for a course, it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to ask a student to complete the full range of these tasks. Due to this difficulty, an instructor has to resort to a simpler format for student performance assessment—a final exam or a combination of a midterm exam and a final exam. Recognizing that only exams are required, students, who could be under pressure from multiple demanding

tasks, may choose to only study for the exams and not delve into the necessary, comprehensive learning process required of a course. The end result is a less than sophisticated experience in the course, which could contribute to undesirable test results for graduate studies at domestic Chinese universities and for professional examinations such as for Chartered Accountants.

3.5 Curriculum restrictions on professional aspirations

If we scrutinize Exhibits 5, 6, and 7 and compare them with what a typical bachelor of commerce or business administration program offers, we will find that the bachelor's program curricula at the International School do not offer adequate exposure to the humanities, sciences, social sciences, nor to some key business courses, such as Organizational Behaviour, Management Information Systems, and Strategic Management. Each curriculum is mostly a combination of courses in English, quantitative skills, and respective subject areas, and as such does not offer much breadth across the disciplines. As described earlier, courses in the respective fields of study are delivered with a tight timeline and with less than adequate interaction between students and teachers. The restrictions on the curricula and the rushed delivery of the core courses may have played a role in the unsatisfactory performance of students in professional examinations and entrance examinations for graduate studies in domestic universities.

Exhibit 5 International Accounting bachelor's degree program plan

<i>Year</i>	<i>Course level</i>	<i>Course names</i>
1 or 2	University foundation courses	Calculus I, Computer Operations, Database Applications, English Intensive Readings I & II, English Listening I & II, Oral English Communication I & II, Introduction to Law, Linear Algebra, Physical Education I & II, Marxist Political Economics, Probability & Statistics, Mao Tsetung Thought, and Chinese Socialism.
2 or 3	Foundation courses in International Accounting	Business English I & II, English Intensive Readings III & IV, English Viewing & Listening I & II, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Business Statistics, Management Principles, Public Finance, Taxation, International Finance, and Money and Banking.
3 or 4	Core courses in International Accounting	Accounting Principles, Intermediate Financial Accounting, Management Accounting, Advanced Financial Accounting, Cost Accounting, Financial Management, ERP Financial Management, Auditing, Thesis, and Practicum.

We have described several obvious loose links in the operations of the International School. There may also be some less obvious ones that could pose greater risks in the future. First, there appears to be a trend in the North American labour market that some employers only recruit from business schools accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).⁸ If this trend continues and spreads to other parts of the world,

⁸ See AACSB International. (2011). Eligibility procedures and accreditation standards for business accreditation. Retrieved from <http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/standards/>

Chinese employers may adopt the same practice. Therefore, the need to have the International School accredited by AACSB or other accreditation bodies may become increasingly more real. Second, to further enhance the richness of students' learning experience, particularly the experience of working with faculty members, it would seem profitable for the school to refine or rethink the current economic model of staffing. For example, the school could start a fundraising campaign so that enough core faculty members could be recruited to satisfy the faculty requirement for international accreditation. Third, in order to move further along the route of the internationalization of business education, the school may need to develop fully international-compatible curricula. For instance, it may be helpful to integrate the operational model in Exhibit 1 and the global footprint model of Alon and McAllaster,⁹ and to condition both with China's market prospects for business education.

Exhibit 6 *International Finance bachelor's degree program plan*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Course level</i>	<i>Course name</i>
1 or 2	University foundation courses	Calculus I, Computer Operations, Database Applications, English Intensive Readings I & II, English Listening I & II, Oral English Communication I & II, Introduction to Law, Linear Algebra, Physical Education I & II, Marxist Political Economics, Probability & Statistics, Mao Tsetung Thought, and Chinese Socialism.
2 or 3	Foundation courses in International Finance	Business English I & II, English Intensive Readings III & IV, English Viewing & Listening I & II, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Business Statistics, Accounting Principles, Management Principles, Public Finance, Taxation, and Money and Banking.
3 or 4	Core courses in International Finance	Financial Statements Analysis, International Finance, Corporate Finance, Financial Markets and Institutions, Financial Economics, Investments, Financial Engineering, Financial Institution Management, Thesis, and Practicum.

⁹ See Alon, I., & McAllaster, C. (2006, May/June). The global footprint. *BizEd* (AACSB International Journal), pp. 32-35.

Exhibit 7 International Business bachelor's degree program plan

<i>Year</i>	<i>Course level</i>	<i>Course name</i>
1 or 2	University foundation courses	Calculus I, Computer Operations, Database Applications, English Intensive Readings I & II, English Listening I & II, Oral English Communication I & II, Introduction to Law, Linear Algebra, Physical Education I & II, Marxist Political Economics, Probability & Statistics, Mao Tsetung Thought, and Chinese Socialism.
2 or 3	Foundation courses in International Business	Business English I & II, English Intensive Readings III & IV, English Viewing & Listening I & II, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Business Statistics, Accounting Principles, Management Principles, International Finance, and International Business.
3 or 4	Core courses in International Business	Electronic Commerce, Supply Chain Management, International Marketing, International Trade, Financial Management, International Trade Practices, Thesis, and Practicum.

4 Conclusion

It should be understood that the discussion offered in this case is not meant to be thorough or complete, as certain information is still lacking, especially since Chinese business education is evolving at high speed. Just a few days ago, it was announced that JUFE will be folded back under the joint supervision of the central government's Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, and the Government of Jiangxi Province. How this change is going to affect the International School is yet to be studied. Nevertheless, we hope our discussion presents a case of internationalizing business education in a less developed region of a quickly developing country.

APPENDIX

Background information on JUFE

The Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics (JUFE), one of the 49 universities specializing in finance and economics education in China, traces its origin back to the Jiangxi School of Commerce, which was founded in 1923. The university's mission is to develop entrepreneurial graduates who are trustworthy, acute, honest, and persevering. Its vision is to become a comprehensive research university known for its (a) distinct student learning experience, (b) competitive subject specialties, and (c) influential research outputs.

The university has four campuses, all located in the capital city Nanchang of Jiangxi Province. With 21 schools, ranging from the Accounting School and the Foreign Language School to the Modern Economics and Management School, the university offers doctoral degrees in 25 subject areas, including Management Science and Engineering, Applied Economics, Economics Theory, Business Administration, and Statistics. It also offers master's degrees in more than 80 subject areas, as well as 48 bachelor's degree programs. The university's faculty members have earned numerous research grants from national agencies; of the total number of grants earned, JUFE is ranked Number 2 among the 49 Chinese universities that specialize in Finance and Economics and Number 1 among the 95 universities in Jiangxi Province, for the last 14 years. The university-administered academic journal, *Modern Finance and Economics*, has been the most cited among all the journals administered by the 49 universities that specialize in Finance and Economics. The university's faculty consists of 230 full professors, 422 associate professors, and 743 assistant professors and lecturers.

JUFE is the most sought after university in its home province of Jiangxi and has experienced no difficulty in recruiting from other parts of the country. Nearly 30,000 full-time students attend JUFE; as of May 2012, 25,000 of them are undergraduates, while 4,235 are graduate students. The placement rates are 85 percent for undergraduate and 98 percent for graduate students. These rates have placed JUFE among the top 50 universities nationwide in student placements for 2012.

JUFE used to be financed and administered by the Ministry of Finance of the central government. In the early 1990s, the university was transferred to be jointly financed and administered by the Ministry of Education of the central government and the provincial government of Jiangxi. In May 2012, it was announced that the university will now be under the joint partnership of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, and the provincial government of Jiangxi. This announcement may indicate that the university's financing will become easier. It is worth noting that the university did not incur any debt during the general university expansion spree¹⁰ of the last decade, as it held to its traditional model of operations. For more details, refer to the JUFE website at <http://www.jxufe.edu.cn> (Chinese version) and <http://english.jxufe.edu.cn> (English version).

¹⁰ To get a glimpse of the debt problems facing Chinese universities now, see Luzer, D. (2011, July 5). China's universities and the debt problem. *Washington Monthly*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/college_guide/blog/chinas_universities_and_the_debt.php