

- [Home](#)
- [MBA Search](#)
- [Discussion Board](#)
- [About Us](#)

« [Interview: Patrick Moreton of the Washington-Fudan Shanghai EMBA](#)

Interview: Gary Biddle of Hong Kong University



Gary Biddle

Gary Biddle, dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics at Hong Kong University (HKU), discusses his school's [MBA and EMBA partnerships with London Business School and Columbia Business School](#), and the enduring importance of "Ny-Lon Kong."

Is Hong Kong still a good gateway into Asia for executives?

Hong Kong has long been a bridge between East and West. Hong Kong knows the West, and it knows the East. For people coming out of China into the world or going into China from the rest of the world... when these people cross, sparks fly, because in our classes, people say, "let me tell you how things are done in Shanghai," and another might chime in "let me tell you how things are done in Berlin or London or New York or New Delhi." The instructors understand both, and we facilitate this exchange of insights.

Is fluency in Chinese essential for executives in Hong Kong and China? Are they coming to your program with these skills?

There's no question that if one wants to pursue a career connected to China, you'd want to know the local language there. This is true in Germany and everywhere.

In our regular MBA program, we have a “China Track” designed specifically for people from outside of China to launch their careers in China. If they don’t know Mandarin, there’s an option that takes them to Beijing for an intensive language immersion experience. This is for someone from Europe, South Asia, or the Americas who doesn’t know Mandarin, but knows China is a big thing, and wants to have some conversational fluency in Mandarin. And then they continue during their MBA studies. There’s of course a natural limit to how much you can learn in a year and a half, but still, with this kind of structure, you can learn quite a bit.

How is the MBA and EMBA market looking in Asia generally? Is enrollment and interest up in view of the global recession?

I think what we are experiencing is similar to what other MBA programs are experiencing, and that is there’s an increased interest in full-time programs, especially MBA programs. People have more time to do something they’ve always wanted to do. When business is slow, that’s really a perfect time.

Applications to company-sponsored programs are not up because companies are laying off employees. To sponsor training right now is viewed as somewhat of a luxury, and yet the far-sighted companies that know they are going to be around no matter what happens with this recession, they’ll continue to sponsor people.

What makes the HKU-LBS-CBS EMBA Global program unique from the other programs offered in Asia?

We are combining the top three business schools in the top-three business cities in the world: London, New York, and Hong Kong. You may remember this *Time* magazine cover story about “Ny-lon-kong” - the three cities that drive the global economy.

The program itself has unique and amazing features. The program combines the premier faculties of these three premier institutions, who are experts in their regions, and the participants become alumni of all three institutions, so they have an alumni network beyond their classmates wherever in the world their careers might take them.

The program offers electives in these three locations, allowing students to specialize, as well as whatever location in the world LBS, HKU, and Columbia are offering electives. For example, our participants can take their electives in Dubai, where LBS has an EMBA program, in Brazil, in India, in Germany, in Kiev, and so on.

Where do your students come from in Asia?

If you think about a four- or five-hour flight time from Hong Kong, which would be reasonable for a weekend program, that captures an amazing area for us. It’s all of China, it’s up to Korea, down to Singapore, all of Southeast Asia, and most of India. And, of course Australians are used to flying further (*laughs*). So this defines our catchment area for our participants.


Having said that, our participants will be a mixture of folks originally from Asia and folks from everywhere in the world who happen to be executives in Asia, and really “rising stars” in their organization who want global expertise, which is our target audience.

Photo Courtesy: Gary Biddle

Tags: [China](#), [Columbia Business School](#), [Gary Biddle](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Hong Kong University](#), [London Business School](#)

This entry was posted on Saturday, February 7th, 2009 at 11:41 am and is filed under [China](#), [EMBA](#), [Hong Kong](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

One Response to “Interview: Gary Biddle of Hong Kong University”

1.  *David* Says:
[February 9th, 2009 at 2:19 pm](#)

people keep repeating the importance of learning mandarin, and i fully agree on that point, but there is something even more important then that, and that is to learn the culture - the business one, and the daily one. in case of china, the differences can be overwhelming to an outsider, and one has to be prepared.

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

• Search

• Special Features

- [Accreditation](#) (1)
- [Book Reviews](#) (1)
- [California](#) (2)
- [Canada](#) (1)

- [China](#) (3)
- [EMBA](#) (3)
- [Energy & Natural Resources](#) (2)
- [Europe](#) (5)
- [Germany](#) (4)
- [Hong Kong](#) (2)
- [Ivy League](#) (2)
- [Media & Design](#) (1)
- [Sustainability & CSR](#) (4)
- [UK](#) (1)
- [Uncategorized](#) (1)

• Archives

- [February 2009](#)
- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)

FIND MBA Blog is proudly powered by [WordPress](#)
[Entries \(RSS\)](#) and [Comments \(RSS\)](#).