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## 2010-03-19: A global co-op, and a change of plans

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## A global co-op, and a change of plans



Northeastern senior chemical engineering major Li Buessing worked at a water and waste treatment company in Paris. Photo by Lauren McFalls.

**March 19, 2010**

Northeastern senior Li Buessing started his co-op with a water and waste treatment company in Paris with the mindset of an engineer, and ended it thinking more like a corporate manager.

His co-op position with Veolia Water Solutions & Technologies over the winter transformed Buessing's career outlook, leading the **chemical engineering** major to include an MBA degree in his post-graduation plans.

In his co-op with Veolia, an international corporation with subsidiaries in more than 50 countries, Buessing used his chemistry background to promote the company's line of chemicals

formulated to treat water for widely varied applications, from drinking to cooling nuclear power plants.

But the experiential learning opportunity also afforded him the chance to see big business in action. Veolia's 300,000 employees worldwide provide more than 130 million people with water and wastewater services. Its clientele includes beverage giant Coca Cola.

"I'm going to get my MBA and I know that I'll go into business someday," he said, noting that he recently applied for a job with General Electric Power and Water, one of Veolia's top competitors.

"Instead of dealing with the small, but important details, like an engineer might do, I'd like to look at the big picture and figure out how to make everything work," he added.

Buessing's chemical engineering know-how helped him explain the technical merits of Veolia's line of Hydrex Chemicals, but it was his interaction with the company's business side that left the greatest impression.

"It's good to have a technical background," he said, "but I was dealing with business units all over Europe, including those in Copenhagen, Milan and the UK. It made me see the business world from a different perspective and I liked what I saw."

Buessing's taste of the global business world was enough to convince him to take a job abroad should the opportunity arise. "Everyone should experience living in another country," he said. "You have to be willing to get out of your bubble and experience new things."

He has also completed co-ops as a process engineer at Infineum, a New Jersey-based company that develops, manufactures and markets petroleum additives, and as a lab technician at W. R. Grace, a Cambridge-based specialty chemicals and materials company.

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