Welcome to the inaugural issue of Career Connexions, a newsletter to link the USJ community to its partners, supporters and well-wishers. Created by the Internship and Careers Office, this publication is focused on all news and views relevant to students’ professional and career preparation, their aspirations and hopes for their future, and how their situation compares with that of other youth elsewhere in the world.

This first issue reflects this focus by including interviews and reports on USJ students, professors, internship partners, and others. Several professional areas are featured: Architecture, Communication and Media, Social Work, Hospitality, and Human Resource Recruitment.

The Career Connexions team had fun bringing you these stories, and we hope you will have fun reading them. All readers are welcome to contribute feedback, suggestions, news and views, to make this newsletter meaningful and useful to all concerned parties. Please contact: Ms Teresa Loong, Director of Student Affairs (teresa@usj.edu.mo).

Best Regards from the Editorial Team:
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As the USJ community eagerly awaits the completion of the new USJ joint campus with the Colégio Diocesano de São José (CDSJ) at Ilha Verde, Career Connections took the opportunity to get an update from media coverage as well as chat with somebody closely involved with the project. Claire Jurado of Career Connections asked Mr Mario Neves, Executive Director of CESL-MPS, the company that is working with the contractor, HCCG Building and Civil Engineering (Macau) Ltd, towards completion of the campus by mid-2015 to kindly shared some pertinent background information that is little known.

What is the role of MPS in the design and building of the USJ campus?

The original Architectural design is by Professor Koji Yagi of Tokyo Institute of Technology. MPS was hired at a later stage to assist with the review of designs and construction drawings. It is responsible for its architectural design, structural design, MEP design, preparation of detailed drawings and specifications for statutory submission and construction, statutory consultancy and the provision of site supervision and inspections. MPS is providing the Registered Architect, Registered Engineers and Technical Director on this project. It is Mr Neves was invited to join MPS about 12 years ago. He had graduated from the Lisbon School of Beaux Arts University & Lisbon Architecture Faculty in Portugal.

What factors are considered in making USJ a “green” campus?

Green buildings are built in harmony with their surroundings, they reflect consideration for the sustainable use of energy and other resources, and offer comfortable and energizing spaces for all users and visitors. While, MPS was not involved in the conceptualization of the Ilha Verde campus, the inspiration for it could have come from the site constraints and the experience and vision of the client and the architect.

What are the technical specifications of the campus?

Its site area of 12,622 square meters is bordered by a water inlet that is the home of the Macau Yacht Club, and in a relatively green area of downtown Macau. Just under half of the area (41.9%) of the site will be built up, with buildings occupying a floor area of 38,145 square metres. The Academic Building will be 26.75 m high, and the Accommodation Building will be 59.83 m high. The campus is designed to accommodate 600 secondary school students and 1,800 university students.

How is the construction going?

The site works are ongoing and the Academic Building is taking shape. The construction of the USJ campus is estimated to be completed by the middle of 2015.
Macau Business (23 January 2014) reported the University’s management saying that the cost of the new campus has jumped at least two-thirds from the original estimate of 300 million patacas (US$37.5 million) due to inflation. The University has secured 150 million funding from the Macau Foundation, and is seeking further public and private funding to make up the shortfall, including giving benefactors naming rights to the buildings on the new campus.

There are many more architectural firms in Macau compared with 12 years ago. What makes MPS competitive in this increasingly crowded market?

MPS is a client-oriented consulting firm with over 20 years of experience and a multifunctional staff group of about 100 professionals. It is committed to providing practical and innovative consultancy services in multiple disciplines, from town planning to urban design and interior design, from architectural to engineering, from environmental-related projects to contract and construction management. MPS has been involved in several key and prominent projects in Macau, from large planning studies to design and supervision of major engineering works, prestigious institutional buildings and some of the largest hotel casino complexes in the world. Although being a Macau based firm, MPS is able to provide services to governmental agencies and private investors in the Southeast Asia Region. As a member of CESL Asia Group, MPS can call for the support of affiliated firms of the Group whenever necessary to complement and strengthen its capabilities in order to achieve the required specialization capacity required by the specifics of each project. Besides the USJ Green Campus, MPS has an impressive track record of key projects including the School of The Nations, Taipa (Completed 2010), CEM Cotai 110/66/11 kV Substation, Cotai (Completed 2008), and Nam Van Lakes East Asian Games Facilities, Macau (Completed 2005), and Venetian Macau’s Cotai Resort Development.

Architecture is a unique and popular program at USJ, and its students may like to work for CESL-MPS. What are the best things about working in CESL?

CESL-MPS is a Macau company with reputation where the “one-stop shop” concept for delivery of services. Also, it has a multifunctional group of professionals with extensive and diverse local, regional and

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‘What does it take to be a successful hotelier?’

Career Connexions’ Soo-May Cheng caught up with Mr Luis Lobo, a veteran hotelier whose career has grown with the industry in Macau, to find out how he started in the industry, what kept him passionate about it for more than 30 years, and what he would advise young graduates interested to follow his footsteps.

Luis has worked in leading hotels in the Regent, Westin, Hyatt, and Galaxy groups, in global locations including London, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Portugal, Philippines and Macau. He graduated from a local Portuguese high school, and went on to earn his Bachelor of Science Degree majoring in Hotel & Restaurant Management from Florida State University in 1975. But he pursued a Master of Science in Interior Design Program before going into the global hospitality industry in the mid-1980s, and into Macau’s hotel sector in 2002.

Luis Lobo’s professional affiliation includes being a member of Portugal’s Association of Hotel Managers, Executive Committee of SKAL Club Macau Chapter, founding member of the Macau Wine Society and he has earned the credential of “Maitre Hotelier” from the international culinary society Chaîne de Rotisseurs.

If a young graduate in Macau today was interested in a career in the hotel/hospitality industry, what opportunities will he/she find, and how can he/she prepare to win some of these opportunities?

Opportunities abound right here in our home ground Macau! There is no magic formula to short cut entry into our labor intensive industry, to learn to create, produce or deliver experiences to our patrons. Young people should make good use of spare time and find placement in frontline positions in a part-time capacity as much as possible while in school, to get a feel for their chosen field. The right attitude will open up the doors of opportunity.

What advice would you give to young hotel professionals on how to find and keep his/her dream job, advance in his/her career, and have fun doing it?

Finding their dream job is easier said than done. There are multiple disciplines within the hotel/hospitality industry and they all require, like anything, experience. If “all roads lead to Rome” holds true, be pragmatic and embrace any opportunity coming their way and take in that experience with a high level of commitment. Be realistic and practice tolerance in your early years to reap the rewards that come later… If they understand this, and are prepared to put in the energy and passion that it takes, they can count not just on keeping, but advancing and enjoying each working day!!

How else should young people prepare themselves?

DIVERSIFY! And persevere!

It is good to have a specific goal/target, but in today’s world, enhancing knowledge and competence by diversifying one’s skills is paramount for advancement and success.

How and why did you choose to become a hotelier, and how long have you been in the hotel industry?

Becoming a hotelier came quite naturally to me, coming from a home that spoke the hospitality language - my father was a hotel manager who opened Stanley Ho’s first hotel in Macau, the “ESTORIL” and established iconic LISBOA HOTEL in 1970. My mother was a travel agent, and an older brother is in the industry as well! So I guess I propagated the “tradition” in the family!

And that is what I have been doing for the past 35 or so years, in different capacities, different genres, different places, All interesting!

What has been the most memorable experience of your career so far?

It is difficult to name just one because I was taught to make the best of every opportunity. Faced with such a question, however, I could cite checking in golf icon Tiger Woods at the height of his career. Customizing his villa decor, amenities & menu etc. prior to a tournament as rather exciting! But you know, if you were to ask any hotelier he will most likely tell you that one day he would like to write his memoirs and share his incredible professional journeys.
international experience that deliver a wide range of services and technology solutions. What student/graduate qualities are desirable or not tolerated at MPS? Mr Neves likes to have students who are committed, open and clear, trustworthy, supportive of their team, creative and motivated, and responsible. He would not tolerate employees who show a lack of engagement, who are unsupportive, who are unable to grow and to deliver to expectations.

There you have it, Students. The Green Campus is certainly something to look forward to. It belongs to all of us, and some of us may even get to work with the CESL-MPS group that is helping to make it happen!

University of Saint Joseph Macau Campus under construction

CareerConnexions

Star Talent Recruiter

The acute talent shortage in Macau has spawned a business sector that is thriving: talent or personnel recruitment. This is the business of searching for, locating and recruiting suitable workers for employers which may not have the time or network to do all recruitment by themselves. While employers do the final hiring, the initial tasks of sourcing, screening and processing the applications of large numbers of workers for the big hotel-casinos is an especially daunting task that the busy human resource (HR) departments at these companies are only too glad to outsource. At higher corporate levels where the appointment of executives is involved, and the approach is much more discreet and communicative, this task is known as executive search or “head-hunting”. Suraphon Kanyukt of Career Connexions spoke with Ms Starr Xian, Managing Partner at EvolutionHR, to find out more about this business.

How is Evolution different from the other recruitment agencies in Macau?

Evolution has been in business for 10 years. It focuses on the local business needs, and cares for both clients and employees through building long term relationships. Evolution provides a replacement if the client is not satisfied with the candidate. We also try to place workers where they can be happy and productive. Since 2010, Evolution has set up branches in Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan to source for talent for Macau companies.

What services does Evolution offer to university students and graduates?

Placement in permanent and part time jobs, mostly in the casino-hotel resorts. We match-make students and graduates with frontline or back office jobs depending on the applicants’ skills. In the future, we may open internships for research or HR related work within Evolution.

Can you please describe your work as a recruitment specialist?

I do my best to help the clients to look for what they want. So I talk to clients a lot to understand the nature of the positions, the duties and responsibilities, the line of reporting, and terms and conditions of employment. Sometimes I have to advise clients about these things based on industry practice. Then I use my network of contacts to search for appropriate candidates.

For executives, once I identify them through my network, I send out a gentle email request to ask if they may be interested to consider a new opportunity, and follow up with a phone call later. If they are interested, I meet with them to talk about the opportunity, and after some initial screening of their CVs, may refer them to my client. If the client is interested to meet the candidates, I help to set up the interviews and the initial paperwork to assess the candidates’ suitability.

For non-executives, my team and I set up a data-base of possible candidates and mine this data-base when a client offers any job opportunities. If the data-base does not have suitable candidates, we send out recruitment advertisements to attract fresh applicants. For frontline non-local workers, we use our overseas offices and agents to conduct search and recruitment exercises and process all visa applications before we follow up with placement here in Macau.

Starr Xian - Managing Partner at Evolution HR
What qualifications are needed to work as a recruitment specialist?
Communication skill is the most important, as we have to talk with all kinds of people and listen to them well. HR background, recruitment experience, research skills and a degree in business will also be helpful. New staff need not have much skill to start with; we can train them. But persistence, dedication, and willingness to learn and grow on the job are essential. Success comes from becoming more confident, having a larger network, and being very professional so as to gain the trust of our clients and job applicants.

What kind of advice would you give to students preparing to enter the job market in Macau?
Get a good CV ready, prepare a short introduction about yourself, be updated about what’s going on in the market, and get some experience from relevant part-time work. The most important point is to set your goal clearly, to know what kind of work you want to do in the future. Do not look only at how much money you want in your first job. Bring a good attitude to the interview.

In your opinion, how ready for professional life are local students, compared with Macanese who have returned from foreign universities? How do they compare with foreign new graduates?
There is not much difference between local and non-local graduates, Macanese who studied in Macau know the Macau market better. For self-confidence, overseas students are more confident. Local graduates should be as confident because they know the market better than the overseas students.

What can local graduates do to be more marketable regionally or internationally?
Read market news both local and international to keep yourselves updated. To get market knowledge (local and international), it’s not enough through social media, you need to read actual newspapers and magazines.

Would you be able to give a forecast for Macau’s job market for graduates in the next five years? Please give examples of sectors with the best and the least opportunities.
There’s nothing that we need to be worried about in the next five years. There’s always someone/somewhere that needs people to work in hospitality and government. There are several large-scale hotel resorts still being built. As for government jobs, a new generation is needed to replace the retired employees.

Where do you see yourself and your company, EvolutionHR, in five years’ time?
It’s challenging in Macau because of labour shortage, and that’s what’s keeping me in this field. This job helps me to know more people. I still see myself in the same position for the next five years. I’ll try to get more people to work in this field, and to improve consulting. We don’t mind to train fresh graduates but they need to have passion and patience.
children service centres or elderly homes. Their motivation is to serve others, to know how to deal with emotion problems.

What do you think might be some challenges for students who want to work as social workers? They will get to deal with many people and emotions. They will need to keep up their psychological health.

What kind of knowledge, skills attitudes do you think the students should be prepared with before they graduate and work in the field? Students learn to handle case work, do community services. They will need to be familiar with these. They will also need critical thinking skills to solve problems.

How do students learn these at university? What kind of activities have students participated in during their practical training? They learn through receiving cases involving youth or elderly. They have to write a community report, and for this they will have to walk around and be familiar with the area to search for issues and cases.

What job opportunities are there in Macau for social work graduates? In the next five years, even if the city is getting better, social problems can always arise. So social work graduates don’t have to be afraid that they won’t be able to get a job, but it’s how long they can stay with the job. Stress will increase as the work increases.

Is their social work qualification recognized outside of Macau? For students to work outside of Macau depends on the receiving country’s visa policy for social workers. In order to work as a social worker in Europe, you will need to go through a lot of procedures to work as a professional. In order to work in Hong Kong, it depends on whether they want to hire you. In the past, we had two cases; two of our students submitted their certificates to the Hong Kong Government and these were recognized.

As coordinator of social work at USJ, how would you like to further develop this program in the future? I would be excited to see us working with UN or WHO because they have internship programs for students who specialize in social development. They have the funds and they encourage universities to contact them and work with them. Students will be exposed to different cultures, such as, hopefully, in Singapore and Korea.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about social work? For the readers or people who are interested in social work, the key to connect to people because social work is based on relationship, gaining trust with people. Students involved in this program always have to tell themselves not to just rely on everything from class but they have to step outside and learn from different people or the community. If the world doesn’t have social workers, then I don’t think we will have a better future because there has to be some people in a society to deal with human issues and to voice out the interests of those they help. They also have to work with policy makers.

Internship fires up career passion

Communication & Media students at Internship Presentation, USJ, 1st July 2014

Communication and Media students recently returned from their summer internships fired up with passion to report their experience in a full-day presentation at USJ on July 1st, 2014 - Reported by Tracy Cheong and Suraphon Kanyukt of Career Connexions.

After four years of study, these graduating students got to try working in relevant professional fields like journalism, video editing and theatre production. Their presentations revealed a wide range of experiences, some easy and others tough, some enjoyable and others less so. Lei Cheong Hou (Gino) reported about his internship with All About Macau (AAM), an independent newspaper founded by a group of idealistic journalists on principles of press freedom. Interning at AAM has given Gino a taste of reporting the news freely and fearlessly, so he will seek to develop his journalistic career and resist any temptation to take up other high-paying jobs such as casino hosting. He loves this career passionately, and will seek to travel outside of Macau as a journalist someday.

He told Career Connexions: “I thought the internship course was one of the best courses I have completed in my degree. I enjoyed the opportunity. I was impressed by the internship and I was able to find something in my field of study and it definitely developed my knowledge on the subject.” Gino said. He advised other CM students to find out which areas they are most interested in, and work for companies which best suit their interests, so as to enjoy their work and their life.

“I’ve enjoyed a lot because I’ve learnt new things. They have good teamwork,” said Rui de Silva who interned at the Macau broadcasting company, TDM, doing video news broadcast and voice over. At another broadcasting company, Aomen TV, Daxy Chan Chi Loi was part of the editing team and got to learn the editing software Adobe Premiere which she did not have a chance to use before.

Anabela Sousa did her internship with The House of Dancing Water, a well-known acrobatic theatre show at the City of Dreams. The internship made her realise that her passion was to work in theatre. She was able to work with colleagues in various aspects of the show, and now wants to enrich her knowledge to work as a professional in the theatre field. Anabela felt that an internship was very beneficial. “It will help you look for something you enjoy working with, acquire new skills, meet new friends and make more connections, she said. “As Julius Caesar has said, Experience is the teacher of all things.”
Career hopes of young Portuguese professionals in Macau

Joana Figueira, 23 years old, and Henrique Marques, 30 came to Macau to satisfy their curiosity about Asia, as well as to seek employment opportunities. They had heard that the former Portuguese colony had a booming economy, and did not hesitate to leave their home country which is currently experiencing a prolonged economic downturn and serious unemployment. Henrique is now a Senior Project Coordinator at a leading casino-hotel property in Macau. Joana recently graduated from the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra.

Portugal’s economy is currently unable to generate enough employment for young graduates, resulting in unemployment rate of more than 14% in 2014. Many young professionals and students like Henrique and Joana have little choice but to leave to seek opportunities overseas. Many have gone to Portugal’s former colonies in Africa and Asia. Macau, which was governed by the Portuguese for more than 400 years until its handover to China in 1999, has blossomed from being a small trading port to become the casino-gambling hub of the world.

Fuelled by the gambling and hospitality industries, Macau’s insatiable demand for workers has pushed the unemployment rate down to only 1.7% in the third quarter of 2014. Its local population of just under 600,000 and active workforce of about 300,000 has to be supplemented by migrant workers, who now number more than 137,000 (Macau Business, 21/1/14). With as many as six more mega casino-hotels and other infrastructural projects being built, there appears to be many opportunities for migrant labor and workers, particularly in the construction, hospitality and retail industries, though some conditions apply. Interviews with Career Connections’ reporter, Suraphon Kanyukt, Henrique and Joana were candid about their aspirations.

Henrique’s story:
Why did you choose to come to Macau?
Since Portugal is not in a good situation financially, I searched for jobs all around the world. Macau was the first place to reply me with an offer of job. I didn’t need to think twice to accept.

How long do you plan to stay here?
My first intention was to stay between 7-10 years. Now, after getting used to the Macau lifestyle, I may stay longer. Still, it is not the ideal place that I have in mind to raise up kids. It may affect my life and that will be what will determine how long I’ll stay here.

Have you ever thought about going back to Portugal?
Going back to Portugal is the first thing that comes to my mind everyday when I wake up. Still, it’s not an option right now, not until the situation in Portugal is solved. Here, I can start a family and be happy. Live instead of survive. But it doesn’t mean that, in a long term period, I’ll not return to my homeland.

Joana’s story:
The economic crisis in Portugal turned into a social crisis too. Honestly, I don’t feel confident about getting a job after graduation in Portugal. It makes me sad to know that we are very well prepared students and at the same time we feel that we are not valued enough in our country. It’s very difficult to find jobs in our study areas and for what we are specialized at. However, if you commit yourself and don’t give up you have the chance to succeed. It’s a very delicate situation we are living in there. Also, the salaries are very low at the moment, so many young people - and even some in middle-age - have no option but emigrate to other countries in order to find better working conditions.

In my case going overseas is definitely an option, not only because of work but also in terms of personal fulfilment. What saddens me is to see people who want to stay in Portugal but have no other way but leave.

Macau is a very mystical place and that attracts me. I think that if you give yourself the chance to fall in love with Macau, you definitely will. There is some kind of force that makes you want it. However, I think I don’t see myself living in this place for a long period of time - maybe just for 1 or 2 years - although there are many attractive job offerings.

Like many of their countrymen, they miss the open spaces and quality of life back home, though they realize the work opportunities in the near future are more likely to be overseas. “It’s not wanting to work outside Portugal, it’s needing to work outside Portugal,” said Victor, a journalist leaving Lisbon for a job in Angola (RT News). Rodrigo Rivera, 27, who left for Brazil with his wife, has this to say: “In Portugal, everyone knows several people who have to emigrate. We have beaten the historic rate of the 1960s, when people fled the colonial war and the hunger of the new state. And today we are also emigrating because of necessity, and not just because we want to leave the Eurozone and go on an adventure.” (Philstar)

According to a recent report released by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), the number of Portuguese exiles reached a record high of 128,000 last year. Economist Paulo Pinho told Xinhua. “These people are highly qualified, with a good knowledge of languages and a relatively advanced level of education which Portugal invested in, but it’s other countries which are going to reap the benefits out of that investment.” (Philstar)

With more young professionals like Joana and Henrique bringing their talents to Macau, it will be Macau’s gain to absorb them into the workforce. At a time when the shortage of workers at all levels of organisations is creating work stress and delays in completion of projects, Macau may need to explore new human resource strategies. If foreign students were allowed to intern, and competent foreign graduates were allowed to work in Macau, that will help reduce the pressure and enable Macau’s organisations to manage the territory’s economic success better.