

# MBA offers high-flying slice of US and China

**Rachel Lebihan**

The University of California, Los Angeles, put one of its specialists up at Sydney's Sheraton on the Park last week to promote its global executive master of business administration program. But at \$US75,000 (\$84,000), the degree is proving to be a difficult sell.

The university's Anderson School of Management has teamed up with the National University of Singapore Business School to offer the dual degree that awards successful participants with a globally recognised MBA from each institution.

UCLA's senior associate dean for global initiatives, Christopher Erickson, said the turnout for the Sydney information session — the only one held in Australia — was low, but stressed that "quality was more important than the quantity".

The price tag for the 15-month program — which incorporates six, two-week sessions rotating between sites in Los Angeles, Singapore, Bangalore and Shanghai — includes textbooks, tuition and meals, but no travel or accommodation costs.

"It sounds like lot of money, it is a lot of money — though if you're paying in Australian dollars it's becoming less and less every day," Professor Erickson said.

"But I invite anyone who might be interested to compare it with other executive MBA programs and I think, well I know, through that type of comparison it is very competitively priced."

The program is certainly not for everyone. Participants have to commit to 12 weeks over 15 months away from work. Each two-week international jaunt consists of 90 hours in the classroom, and some work to be completed in between each three-monthly session.

Professor Erickson joked that the side benefits of the program are that it helps participants develop delegation and time-management skills, pointing out that the intense classroom sessions mean students really have to focus on the course and take a step back from work.

He said it was suited to people who could not afford to take two years off work to do a full-time MBA, and who wanted to get a global perspective on work.

The program is targeted at executives and aspiring senior executives with about 10 years of full-time work experience.

"Some have less, some have much more. We have one gentleman who has just turned 60," Professor Erickson said, adding that the average age is 38.

"It's certainly true that it's not for everybody, but it's a way to remain in full employment whilst getting a high-level education and the global perspective. Because our participants come from all over the world, there is a great deal of peer learning, as well as the development of a global network."

The universities are recruiting for the fifth intake, in May 2008.

The fourth intake, now in Shanghai, consists of 44 students. No Australian students have enrolled to date.

The first intake embarked on the program in May 2004. Course work consists of 16 modules and a two-part management practicum dealing with management, negotiations, corporate finance, and business strategies.