

HR grads get the inside edge

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The first participants in a four-week Human Resources internship are about to wrap up their experience at Great-West Life head office.

Chinecherem ("Chi") Eke, Renuka Thackar and Vrunda Shashikumar started the internship on July 29, and complete the term on Aug. 23.

"This placement is not only outstanding for the hands-on learning the interns can receive, our company and our people can really benefit from the new perspectives they can bring to us," says **Laurel Breault**, Director of HR, who secured the opportunity in conjunction with the University of Winnipeg's Human Resources Management Program.

With roots outside of Canada and a diverse array of personal and professional experience, the three Diploma graduates were just as eager to gain some hands-on experience among HR professionals as the company was to learn from them.

Chi came to Canada from Nigeria with significant work experience in accounting roles and exposure to the financial and administrative side of HR. With a Bachelor's degree in accounting from Abia State University, Chi started his HR studies at U of W shortly after immigrating to Canada in 2012.

Renuka was an elementary teacher in her home country of India and in Kuwait. When she moved to Canada in 2004 and started planning her career, Renuka says HR held strong appeal.

"Human Resources has a wide umbrella under which I can grow," she says. "It's been great to be placed with a top company with a strong sense of community like Great-West Life."

Vrunda spent 18 years in financial services management in Mumbai, India and Dubai, UAE. Her professional experience touched on employee relations and gave her a window into human resources. She says the internship with Great-West adds to that experience and her classroom learning.

Each of the interns completed their HR Management Diploma at the U of W before starting the internship.

"Connecting these University of Winnipeg graduates with learning and development opportunities within our organization is one way we are remaining community-minded and a good corporate citizen, says Laurel. "Our interns have opened us up to new points of view; we're coaching them and offering a meaningful experience, but also learning so much from them."