

SEMESTER COMPLETION REPORT

Submitted By – Raghav Datta



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ROLL NUMBER - 17030521042
COURSE - MBA INTEGRATED
MARKETING COMMUNICATION
HOME UNIVERSITY - K J SOMAIYA
INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
HOST UNIVERSITY - UCLL, KU LEUVEN



PREPARATION

Since graduating from school, I've wanted to study abroad, but for various reasons, I've never had the chance. As soon as I learned about this opportunity from the K J Somaiya Institute of Management, I wanted to seize it and take full advantage of it. I chose UCLL Belgium because it was in northwest Europe, making it easy for me to travel throughout the continent, and because UCLL had great international exposure with many people from different countries.

After submitting the nomination to Satyandra Sir and receiving approval from the examination department and Principal Ma'am, everything got started. I began the visa application procedure as soon as the approvals came in because I wanted to book flights and look for accommodations, both of which could only be done once the visa was issued. Getting the visa before time was important.



PREPARATION

the visa process had a lot of paper work so i tried to get done with it as soon as possible. once the visa was approved i had to look for accommodations which was easily managed through KU Leuven portal. because they have everything well organised at their website i could easily find a great student housing. I packed everything i could accomodate in the luggage limit i had, from medicines to pressure cooker and from winter clothes to even notebook and copies as i knew that these things like pressure cooker, notebook etc are costly there as compared to india so i went well prepared.

i also got some packed food for initial days of my stay as i didn't know how to cook and would learn during the duration of my stay. getting medical insurance was also very important. Choosing subjects according to the credit requirements is to be kept in mind before making any choices.



EDUCATION



I had chosen 8 subjects in Belgium to meet my minimal credit criteria. As I am studying marketing communications at KU Somaiya, The majority of my courses were marketing related, like marketing data analysis, Digital Marketing, Marketing Communication strategy etc we were free to select any courses we wanted from the wide range of options provided.



LECTURES & ASSIGNMENTS

I truly learned a lot during the exchange since the courses provided allowed for in-depth, comprehensive study of the topics. We were given lengthy homework, and their grading was really severe, so it was tremendously challenging. For instance, as part of our marketing communication class, we were required to conduct eight 30-to 40-minute interviews and then present our findings and the audio recordings as evidence of our market research.



EXAMS

Even though the assignments were lengthy and challenging, I still enjoyed working on them since they were primarily group projects where I got to collaborate with people from all over the world, which allowed me to learn so much and broaden my horizons. The professors were incredibly kind and answered everyone's doubts and questions, which made studying a breeze. We also received several guest lecturers, which was a valuable experience. Exams included written, MCQ, and computer/practical portions. It was possible to do well in the tests if you prepared adequately, but I believe the grading was more rigorous than it is in the Indian educational system.



CAMPUS & CITY LIFE

The college was located at leuven, It was a small student town which was 20 mins away from brussels. The town was crowded with students; in fact, it was built exclusively for students since the university, KU Leuven, of which UCLL was a part, is one of the most prestigious in Belgium and attracts students from all over the world. Therefore, there were many activities taking place both on campus and in the city each week.

Everyone, including me, used to bicycle to school. This was around 15 minutes' drive from my dorm. The nicest thing about Leuven was that everything was within a 15-minute bicycle ride. After approximately two months of living in leuven it was so easy to just walk around the town and meet new people or see familiar faces. as a result, it seemed like home where everyone was familiar.



CAMPUS & CITY LIFE

There was never a dull moment because there were several student organisations that used to organise a variety of entertaining events like pub crawls, the cantus, torchlight walks, karaoke nights, hippie nights, etc. Additionally, there used to be a tonne of activities in the student housing, including an easter egg hunt, beer pong competitions, and BBQ nights. The combination of this with homework and studies kept everyone occupied all the time. As we frequently had group tasks to do, we would gather in a student cafe like Pangea or the university library.

going to the bar for beers or fries when the work was completed was inevitable because it was a part of Belgian culture. Everyone at a café or library was kind and open since the city was crowded with students and visitors from around the world. The city was thoughtfully planned, and there was always some benefit for students to be found. Student IDs were crucial since they allowed us to receive discounts at many establishments, and even shockingly some of the pubs used to ask for our student card to enter the bar.



SHOWCASE OF INDIAN CULTURE

I never missed a chance to present Indian culture because student exchange is all about showcasing and learning about one another's cultures. One such instance was during the holiday season when the Indian Student Association organised a holi celebration, and I invited all my international friends to the event. They adored Bollywood music and were really happy to be a part of the festive celebration. They enjoyed tasting the Indian sweets and meals as well. I was dressed traditionally, in a kurta pyjama, which was really different from their festive dressing. You can see photos of me playing holi with them down below. They all had a lot of fun playing with colour.



ENRICHING EXPERIENCES

Cooking, grocery shopping, cleaning the house, and doing laundry are activities I have never done on my own; instead, I have always received help from family members or housekeepers to complete these types of everyday tasks. When I had to balance all of these things with my academics, I acquired a lot of perspective. After completing all of these chores, I ultimately developed greater independence and responsibility.

Meeting people from different cultures and learning how to communicate with them in a social setting are also huge skills I learned during the exchange programme. I can now say with certainty that I have the confidence to approach and converse with any random person, from wherever in the world he may be.





Throughout the process, I also learned about networking and how helpful it can be to simply reach out to someone who may know people who might be able to help you. For instance, I was able to find a part-time job at KFC for a few extra dollars by simply asking a friend who was already employed there. At one point, one of the marketing executives from Cumul.io, a rapidly expanding start-up in Belgium, gave a guest lecture on data and dashboarding. After the lecture, I simply said to the speaker that I really enjoyed his lecture and found it insightful and would love to do an internship if there was any opening. After a few weeks, he got back to me and offered me an internship; I'm presently in India still working for that business.

Most Europeans, including Belgians, are very clear about their professional and personal lives. In my city, all the markets would close at six o'clock in the evening, and everyone respected the workday. They also had well-organized schedules and completed each task in a systematic manner, which is something I would like to emulate in my own life.



TRAVELLING

Belgium being in the heart of Europe gave me the opportunity to travel all around Europe, I visited around 6-7 countries like Italy, France, Czech Republic, Germany etc during the exchange and loved every second of it.



TAKEAWAY

A student exchange is more than simply a regular trip abroad; it teaches you valuable life lessons. Whether you travel abroad for a month or a year, After you get over the "cultural shock," which is typically more of a huge surprise than a shock, you'll discover that you do a lot of things that you wouldn't do at home. You'll converse in a foreign language with strangers, But you'll also do things like learn how to use public transportation, study city maps, and attend after-school activities. When you travel abroad, you learn just as much about your own country as you do about the one you're visiting because you're a representative of it and there will always be people asking you about your culture. I would highly recommend this experience to everyone specially at UCLL belgium as it will give you a lot of great memories, friends, skills, among other things, and you will undoubtedly emerge as a better person.

