

2019

VIENNA INNOVATION PROGRAM



ADLYN RODRIGUES

COURSE: EXCH 6901 – Exchange

EMAIL: arodrigues18@schulich.yorku.ca

EXCHANGE SCHOOL: VIENNA UNIVERSITY
OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

EXCHANGE TERM: Winter 2019

CONTENTS

1	PRE-ARRIVAL	3
1.1	Selection Process:	3
1.2	Program Fee Details.....	3
1.3	Accommodation	4
1.4	Visa Application	4
1.5	Insurance	5
1.6	Pre-Course Assignments and guides.....	6
2	ARRIVAL.....	6
2.1	May 11 th , 2019 - Arrival at Vienna.	6
2.2	May 12 th , 2019 - City Tour	7
2.3	May 13 th , 2019 - Orientation Day	9
2.4	May 14 th – May 23 rd , 2019 - Classes.....	9
2.5	May 24 th , 2019 – Presentation Day And Farewell	10
3	ACADEMICS	11
3.1	Faculty.....	11
3.2	Grading	11
3.3	Classes.....	11
3.4	Consulting Project.....	12
4	CULTURAL EVENTS	12
4.1	Vienna Walking City Tour.....	12
4.2	International Cultural Evening.....	12
4.3	Visit to Viennese Wine Tavern.....	13
4.4	Day Trip to Salzburg.....	14
4.5	Opera House.....	15
5	FOOD.....	15
5.1	Mensa.....	15
5.2	Groceries	16
5.3	Restaurants	16
6	CULTURE SHOCKS	17
6.1	Language.....	17
6.2	Drinking Water	17
6.3	Shopping	17
6.4	The German Clap.....	17
7	FINAL THOUGHTS	18

REPORT ON SHORT EXCHANGE AT WU

ABOUT ME:

I am a 25-year-old Business Analyst from India with three years of experience at a Management Consulting firm. I was a part of the MBA in India program at Schulich and just completed my first year in Hyderabad. I decided to take a break during the Summer and continue in Fall 2019. As I had some free time, I decided a short exchange would be ideal during this time. I went through the list on the Schulich website and short-listed the ones that were best suited to my interest. I submitted my form along with an application essay and was interviewed by the International relations team before I was selected to go for the Vienna Innovation Program - a Short Program Exchange at the Vienna University of Economics and Business.



WHY I CHOOSE THE PROGRAM:

The Vienna Innovation Program focuses on learning new approaches to innovation along with managing them. However, what caught my eye was the opportunity to work for a real-life company and solve a real-life problem. As a former consultant, I found this exciting. Moreover, the opportunity to explore a new country in just the right amount of time without feeling homesick was delightful. The program was just right.

1 PRE-ARRIVAL

1.1 SELECTION PROCESS:

Once I had confirmed my acceptance with the Schulich International relations team, I was contacted by one of the Program Managers at the host university. I was required to fill up an online form with my details (to be submitted by January 31, 2019) along with my CV. (The online form asks one to upload a picture of themselves. This picture is going to be used on the ID Tag, so make sure to upload a good one.) Once the details and a confirmation of acceptance to the program had been sent, the program fee details and payment introductions were sent by e-mail.

1.2 PROGRAM FEE DETAILS

The Program charges a participation fee of EUR 515. Though this covers certain benefits such as sponsored events and public transportation tickets, it does not cover accommodation.

The program fee includes:

Transport/Logistics:

- Public Transport Ticket Vienna
- Course Materials

Cultural Events:

- Sightseeing Tour Vienna and Viennese Coffee House
- Daytrip to Salzburg: Transfer and Sightseeing Tour, Lunch
- A Cultural Event in Vienna: Vienna Opera House

Social Events:

- Welcome Dinner
- International Cultural Evening
- Evening at Viennese Wine Tavern
- Farewell Evening

1.3 ACCOMMODATION

There are 3 options for accommodation.

What?	Where?	Program Fees
<i>Austria Trend Hotel</i>	Located right in front of the Campus. The college provides accommodation in this hotel along with breakfast and Wifi.	EUR 1,593
<i>Student Resident Hall</i>	Accommodation will be provided by the university in a student resident hall (including Wifi, Excluding breakfast) First come, first serve basis and some of them might be a little far from the Campus.	EUR515+ ~EUR 550
<i>Own Accommodation</i>	Hotel/ Hostel/ AirBnB	EUR 515

The Hotel is comfortable and its proximity to the campus makes it attractive. However, it is a bit expensive. About 20 students stayed in the Hotel. The rest were split between the residence halls and Airbnb's. I booked an entire Airbnb flat for the two weeks. The entire apartment cost EUR 465 for the two weeks and included facilities such as Wifi, laundry and also access to streaming platforms. Though it was a bit far off (5KM), it had good connectivity to the campus with easily accessible bus and subway. The commute took about 30 minutes each way. The best location to stay would be near 'Messe Prater' or 'Pratersen' (which is 1 subway stop from the campus). Not only is it closer to the campus, it also located closer to the city centre.

Accommodation details are required to be provided in the online application mentioned above.

The fee payment details were sent according to the accommodation selections as indicated above and was to be paid by March 7th, 2019.

1.4 VISA APPLICATION

As I was a part of the MBA in India program, I had to apply for Visa from Hyderabad. Even though I had plans to travel to other countries in the Schengen region, since my longest stay was in Vienna, I had to fill a form which was directed to the Austrian embassy. To go to other

countries, I had to check 'Multiple Entries' on this form. The Schengen visa made me applicable to travel to all 19 countries in the Schengen region.

Miss Christina was really helpful in ensuring that I received a physical copy of the 'Letter of Acceptance' from the host university before I applied for my visa.

A prior appointment was required at VFS Hyderabad and the following documents were required as a part of the Visa application:

- 1) Austrian Visa Application Form
- 2) A letter stating purpose and a Travel itinerary with details of stay and duration
- 3) Two recent photographs
- 4) Proof of Student status and Exchange – Home university acceptance letter, Letter of selection for exchange from home university, letter of acceptance from host university
- 5) Flight details – to and from Schengen region
- 6) Proof of stay in Schengen region – AirBnB receipts
- 7) Travel Insurance

As I applied from India, the Visa application cost was Rs. 6,000. The Passport with my stamped visa was delivered to my home in 2 weeks. I ensured that the Visa contained my right details and was indeed eligible for multiple entries.

1.5 INSURANCE

I enquired with my Program co-ordinator if there was any specific type of travel insurance required for exchange students visiting Austria. She mentioned that there was no such requirement. Since the program was just for 2 weeks, the host school did not provide any insurance plan as it was not deemed necessary.

However, since I was applying from India, I was required to have one for my Visa application. I chose Bharti Axa – Schengen Gold, which covered Medical, Dental and Accidents. I thought it better to have an insurance in case of emergencies. I was fortunate to not have any incidents during the trip.

1.6 PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GUIDES

Before we started our program, I received a pre-arrival guide with details of the program. It also delved deeper into how to travel to the city and had maps of the city's transit line. This came in pretty handy and provided a better understanding of where we would be.

We were also asked to read four HBR cases on Innovation techniques and submit two essays based on the content that we'd read. They were fairly simple and pretty interesting reads. The essays were to be submitted to the professors on May 12th, before we started our course.

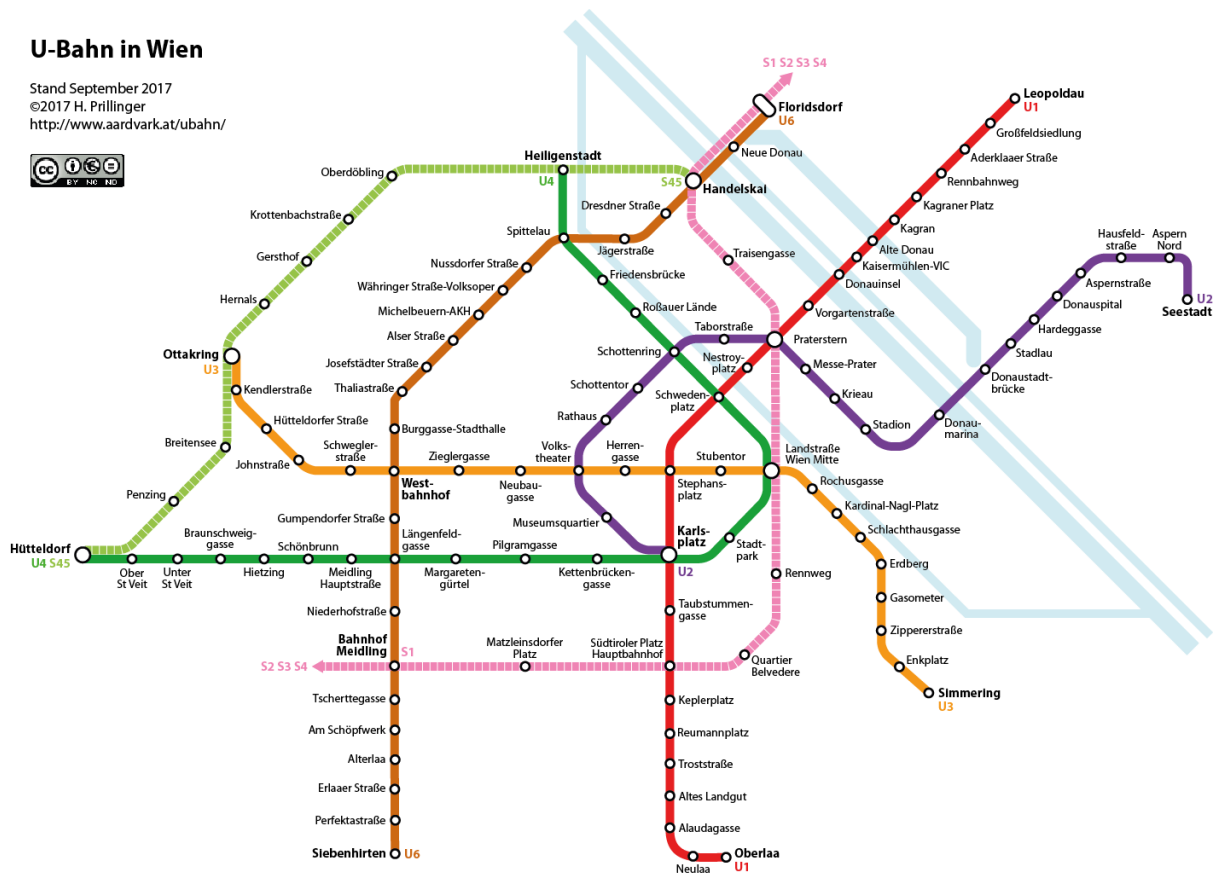
2 ARRIVAL

2.1 MAY 11TH, 2019 - ARRIVAL AT VIENNA.

I was delighted that the immigration took only 5 minutes. It is hassle free if you have the right visa. Once I cleared the immigration, I proceeded downstairs to collect my baggage. Airport pickup/drop is not arranged by the hosts, but there are many options to reach the city centre from the Airport. There is the city express train which is slightly faster. However, it costs EUR 16. The best way is to take the S-7 Bahn. As soon as I exited the airport, I walked right towards the train ticket counter (OBB – Red Sign) and bought a ticket for EUR 4.20. I walked downstairs to the platform. It usually arrives every 30 minutes. However, I was fortunate to have to wait for just 5 minutes. It took me 20 minutes to arrive at the station closest to my accommodation. However, it would have taken another 10 minutes to arrive at station 'Pratersten' (Pink Line). From here, one would have to switch to the U2 (purple line) and travel 1 stop to 'Messe Prater' to reach the Campus.

U-Bahn in Wien

Stand September 2017
©2017 H. Prillinger
<http://www.aardvark.at/ubahn/>



I reached my accommodation around 2:00 PM. At 6:00 PM, I met the program co-ordinator, Miss. Christina P and a few of the other students to receive our welcome package. This included details regarding our program (Schedule and meet-up points, calendars), but we also received City Maps, A guide to City according to locals, Transportation tickets for the 2 weeks, A student day pass and a Sim-card (Optional). As a few of us had just arrived, some of us decided to have dinner at L'Osteria (Pizza joint right next to the campus). The Pizza's served here are pretty huge and two of us had to share one.

2.2 MAY 12TH, 2019 - CITY TOUR

The university arranged a walking city tour for all the incoming students. Unfortunately, the weather wasn't so great, and it was raining. However, we still went ahead for the tour. We assembled in front of the station at Messe-Prater and used our student day pass to travel around.

We took the U2 (Purple Line) to St. Stephansplatz, where we met our guide. She provided us all with devices with ear-phones so that we could hear us as she showed us around.

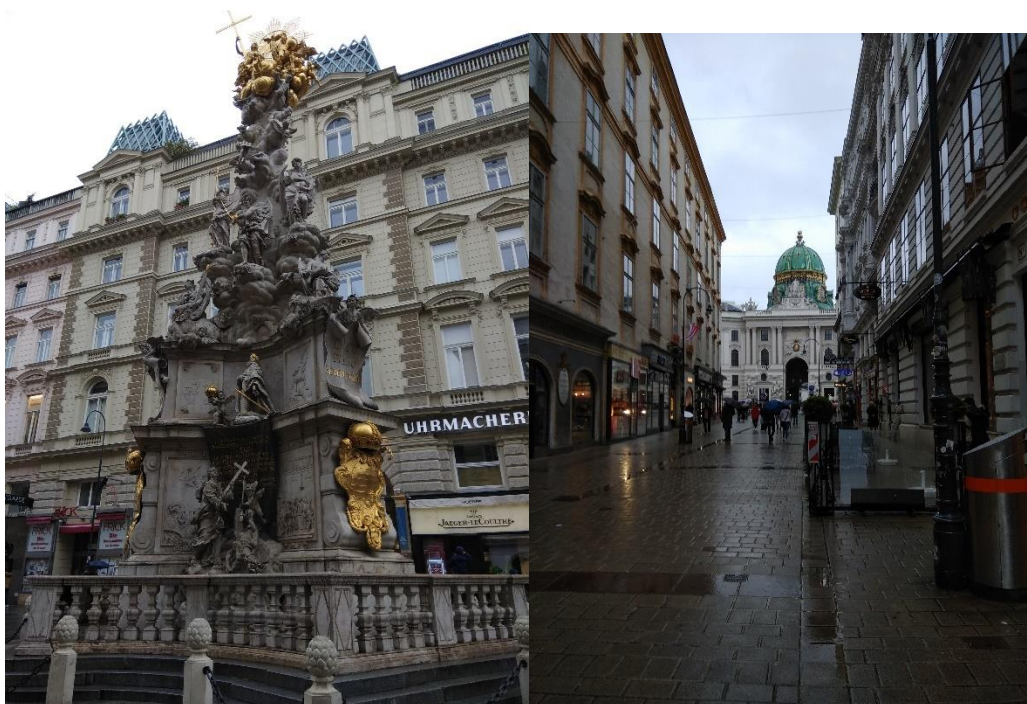
The lane is filled with many of Vienna's historical places and stores. It is definitely a must see.

We saw many famous places around which was quite beautiful.

Unfortunately for us, the weather just got worse. With the rain and winds, the temperature dropped to 9°C. ("feels like 6°C" according to google). It has been a while since I experienced such cold and even my sweatshirt along with my rain jacket weren't enough to keep me warm.

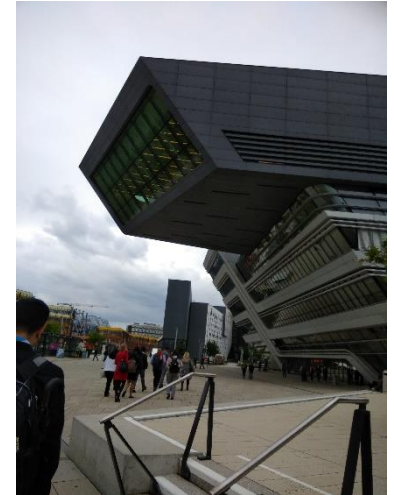
My hands felt like ice and I regretted not having any gloves on. After the tour (which lasted for almost 2 hours), we went to a coffee place which had warm coffee and cake. It was delightful!

We returned home soon after and had dinner at a traditional Viennese place. It was also a chance to meet and interact with the rest of the cohort. It was a wonderful evening.



2.3 MAY 13TH, 2019 - ORIENTATION DAY

The Class assembled in the Executive Academy building to get to know more about the course and each other. There were 48 students in the cohort and about 12 students from the host university and the rest were international students. There were 3 members of the International relations team who introduced themselves to us and talked about the University for about 30 minutes. We were then introduced to the Faculty which consisted of Prof. Christopher Lettl, Prof. Christian



Garaus and Prof. Nadine Moser. They gave us an introduction to the course and the structure along with the breakdown of the grading system. There was to be a team project which was to be done in teams of 4. The professors assigned us into teams and we even had a team-bonding exercise (Egg-Drop). The whole session took about 2-3 hours, after which we were provided with lunch at the Club room located in the state-of-the-art library. After lunch we were shown around campus. It was interesting how the campus is designed. All the buildings were located



along one pathway (It takes about 10 minutes to reach from one end to the other by walk). The unique design also ensures that the campus is always windy!

After the campus tour, we met as teams to decide on what project we'd be working on and have a Q&A from the representatives of the organizations. The sessions lasted for about an hour and was interactive and gave us information on the scope of the project.

2.4 MAY 14TH – MAY 23RD, 2019 - CLASSES

Classes were held in the mornings from 9-1. There was a lunch break from 1-2 after which the respective teams met to work on the projects.

2.5 MAY 24TH, 2019 – PRESENTATION DAY AND FAREWELL

The final presentations were held on the last day of the program. All 12 teams presented their findings and insights. The representatives from the respective organizations were present and provided their inputs and feedbacks. Overall, they were pleasantly surprised by what was recommended. After the presentations we had a final feedback session and received our certificates before we headed for lunch.



We had our farewell dinner at Hotel Hilton. We had a good time interacting with each other one last time. The following day, we headed our separate ways. I decided to explore a few more countries before heading home. I am not sure how the commute to the Vienna Airport would have been. But for anyone planning to explore the nearby countries, I would recommend the RegioJet Buses.



3 ACADEMICS

3.1 FACULTY

Professor Christopher Lettl was one of the most intellectual professors in the field. He is very clear in his thoughts and teaches the concepts with various examples. His classes are delightful and interesting to learn. Professor Christian Garaus is an Assistant Professor at the academy and he covers most of the frameworks and techniques. Prod. Nadine Moser was a guide to all the projects and helped steer us in the right direction.

Classes and sessions were alternated between all three professors and each class would usually explore one technique in-depth.

3.2 GRADING

Pre-Course Assignments	20%
Class Participation	20%
In – Class Assignments	20%
Interim Presentation	20%
Final Presentation	20%

3.3 CLASSES

The classes are very interactive and have assignments in them. Since this program focuses on innovation, there intercultural aspect brings in a lot of new ideas. Apart from classroom sessions, we also had a workshop on Design Thinking and a Guest Lecture by one of Austria's renowned industrialists.

What I always found interesting was the way Prof. Christian grouped us in teams for the in-class assignments. For one class, we had to pick up Lego bricks from an envelope and match the colour. In another, he randomly handed a marker to each one of us (all 48!) and we were again grouped by colour.

3.4 CONSULTING PROJECT

The Project is based on 2 organizations, one in the private sector and the other in the public. Both organizations have two problems and each topic would have 3 teams working on it. I worked on the Private Sector organization, which was an Austrian Crowd-funding company called CONDA. The problems revolved around customer acquisition and retention of CONDA.black, one of their subscription-based premium services. The public sector problems involved involving citizens in the policy making by the Ministry of Civil Services and Sports. The students are required to reach out to various stakeholders to better understand the problem and come up with a feasible solution by exploring the frameworks covered in class. Multiple review sessions were held with each of the professors to guide us on the right path and to help tune our ideas.

The final presentations were held on the last day of the program. All 12 teams presented their findings and insights. The representatives from the respective organizations were present and provided their inputs and feedbacks. Overall, they were pleasantly surprised by what was recommended.

4 CULTURAL EVENTS

4.1 VIENNA WALKING CITY TOUR

The walking tour was held a day before the start of the program. As mentioned earlier, it covers most of the must-see sights of the city. One advice here would be to wear warm clothes (if the weather is cold) and comfortable shoes.

4.2 INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EVENING

For the international cultural evening, students were asked to bring some snacks or drinks from their home town. We were also requested to make a small presentation (slides, quiz e.t.c) to

showcase our countries cultures. This was a fun evening where we got to learn a lot about different cultures and tasted some amazing food. The host university students held an entertaining quiz which also involved the local food and drinks. We learnt a lot about the Austrian culture and history. This is a fun evening meant to enjoy and enhance the intercultural experience. I got a few snacks from India and presented a few slides on it. We had others who made local drinks, busted a few moves or showcased tribal calls.



4.3 VISIT TO VIENNESE WINE TAVERN

One of the visits was to a traditional Wine tavern, located next to the Vineyard. This was a nice evening with great food and even better wine.



4.4 DAY TRIP TO SALZBURG

The day began early by assembling at the train station at 7:30 AM. We had a 3 hour train journey to Salzburg. Since it's a Saturday morning, it would be better to grab a quick bite before the long journey. Once we arrived in Salzburg, we were taking on a walking tour to show us around Salzburg. We were shown Mozart's birth place and places where scenes of 'Sound of Music' were shot. The whole tour took about 2 hours and it was only 2:00 PM before we got to have lunch. Since there was a lot of walking, most of us were tired and pretty hungry before lunch. (Tip: If you see a street vendor, DO STOP to grab a bite). Lunch was held at the Steigl Brewery which is on a higher ground. The view from here was amazing. I had a Radler here, which was pretty refreshing after the long walk. After lunch, we were free to do whatever we felt like before the train back at 5:00 PM. There are many beautiful shops here for those who would love to take a piece of the city back. A few of us decided to check out the fortress on top. We climbed up the path and arrived at a place where we got a stunning view of the mountains. We even had a few locals dressed in traditional outfits playing some music and yodelling. It was a unique and beautiful Austrian Experience.



4.5 OPERA HOUSE

One of the cultural events is a trip to the Opera. We all dressed up formally and assembled for Champagne in the great hall before we headed for the show, 'Danton's Death'. The Opera was held in German and was about events that took place during the French revolution. It was my first time at an Opera and though I am not sure if I would go to one again, it was unique.



5 FOOD

The local food is amazing and fortunately, there are many options to choose from. The University does sponsor meals on some of the days, but you would have to make your own arrangements on most days.

5.1 MENSA

This is the College Cafeteria. Meals usually cost about EUR 6 and include quite a few options. There are 5-6 counters to choose from and they have a different menu for every day of the week. Options range from Salads, Italian to traditional Viennese food. One lunch option includes a soup, salad, juice and a main dish for just EUR 6 and is pretty filling.

5.2 GROCERIES

SPAR is a pretty popular outlet chain and there is one located right in front of the Teaching Centre (where most classes are held). Here you not only get coffee, but also ready-to-eat meals, salads, sandwiches and even fresh fruits.

5.3 RESTAURANTS

If you don't feel like eating at the cafeteria, there are plenty of restaurants all around the campus. Meals vary from EUR 5 to EUR 10, depending on the cuisine. The Campus even has a couple of food trucks, so hunger is never an issue.

BONUS:

There are plenty of great places to eat all around the city and it might not be possible to visit all of them. However, there was one particular one that I loved so much that I visited it thrice! It's a nice beach-themed restaurant by the Danube Canal called 'Tel-Aviv Beach'. The food is excellent and the view at Sunset is amazing! It's quite a different experience dining by the canal.



6 CULTURE SHOCKS

6.1 LANGUAGE

Austria is a German speaking nation and it's hard to find English on the street. However, the local students do speak in English and the language barrier isn't an obstruction in navigating the city. It might be an issue in some restaurants. However, most of them do have an English Menu too.

6.2 DRINKING WATER

Austria gets its water from the Mountains and it's pretty clean and refreshing. But it felt a bit weird to drink water from the Toilet taps. (There are water fountains too!)

6.3 SHOPPING

Though there are plenty of stores, I was surprised that most of them close by 8PM. Also, all the grocery stores are closed on Sundays. So, make sure to do all your shopping beforehand.

6.4 THE GERMAN CLAP

At the end of each class, instead of applauding the professors, the students knock on the tables. Nobody knows how it originated but apparently, it's a German thing and is done after each class.

7 FINAL THOUGHTS

What must you bring?

Based on my experiences, I would go with Warm clothes. The weather is pretty unpredictable varying from sunny on one day to rainy/windy on the next.

- 1) Sweatshirt/ Jacket / Gloves
- 2) Umbrella/ Rain Coat
- 3) Comfortable shoes – There's going to be a lot of walking

I loved the 2 weeks that I spent in Vienna. The host students are extremely friendly, and it was culturally fulfilling, educational and a lot of fun. I would definitely recommend this program to anyone interested in learning something new in a different cultural context. It was interesting interacting with people from all across the globe. The people definitely made the most impact. While I did learn so much more and make more connections (even from Canada), I was surprised at how close I became with a few of them, even though it had been just 2 weeks. This program has a lasting impact on my life. The only advice I have to whoever goes next is – Have a lot of Fun!

