

## A brief write-up on the Texas “Study Abroad” Program

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### Introduction

Texas A&M University (Texas A&M, TAMU, or A&M), founded on April 17, 1871, is a coeducational public research university located in College Station, Texas, United States. It is the flagship institution of the Texas A&M University System, the fourth-largest university in the United States, and the largest university in Texas. The main campus is one of the largest in the United States, spanning 5,200 acres (21 km<sup>2</sup>) and includes the George Bush Presidential Library; therefore, we were provided with free bus service both on and off campus. The number of students currently enrolled at Texas A&M College Station campus is 58,577, of which 4,798 are international students. Maroon and white are the two official colors. The students proudly call themselves aggies and their official mascot is Reveille XI.

### Experience

About one-fifth of the student body lives on campus. I got the opportunity to rent an apartment at Callaway villas, right opposite Kyle field (fifth largest stadium in the United States) which is also known as the home of 12th man. Out of the 1,000 officially recognized student organizations for each semester, I decided to be a member of International Business Association, Bridges International, and Sikh Student Association. We, the students of SDM, were given a

warm welcome in the international student welcome party where we got the opportunity to interact with other students from France, Germany, Spain, Mexico, China, and many more. We were made to attend student conferences in which we were made aware of life style, and of the culture in USA and A&M. To my surprise, a majority of the faculty and distinguished professors were in fact Indian. One of the professors later told me that as per a study, Indians secure the 1st place when it comes to education and entrepreneurship, followed by the Chinese, and therefore if you are an Indian or Chinese, the Americans take it for granted that an A grade will surely be secured. (Otherwise you are not considered smart.) I was enrolled in Mays business school and had taken 3 courses in order to pursue MS in Marketing. The courses I chose were Global Marketing, Product Innovation, and Analysis of Consumer Behavior. The teaching methodology was similar to SDM, as in, there was the use of articles and case discussions apart from the professors delivering lectures. The only difference was in the pattern of evaluation where more emphasis was on Class participation, assignments, case write-up, and quizzes. Exams were substituted with quizzes which consisted of MCQ because they believed that Master’s students need to understand the concepts and its implications rather than mugging-up answers for the sake of marks. The professors delivered lectures for hardly 25 minutes in a 100 minutes class, and the rest of the time was dedicated to class discussion. They also closely examined various students on various parameters like leadership, amount of value addition, cooperation skill, respect for fellow

classmates & their thoughts, ability to listen etc. The curriculum was designed in a very detailed fashion by the professors, and sometimes it went up to 26 pages and contained details like important dates, due date of assignments, class schedule & plan of action, code of conduct, grading parameters etc. The classes were scheduled twice in a week for about 100 hour or so. We had to attend classes only during specific days of the week and at a particular time; the rest of the time was spent either in assignments or in fun and exciting activities around the campus which sometimes lasted till 11pm.

## Life @ Texas A&M

The students involve themselves in a number of organizations/committees, which in turn have several small events. Also, stalls are set-up at the Memorial Student Centre, and fund raisers and small meetings are held every week in order to stay connected. During fall semester a large number of aggies go to watch the football game played in the Kyle field which is the home of 12th man. There are small traditions associated with it, such as we have to stand during the entire match, step back when a player is injured etc. In fact A&M is the only team which has a band of cadets instead of cheerleaders, and the band is voted #1 among all the college bands in USA. Fall semester is the more happening than spring semester because a number of holidays such as Halloween day, Thanksgiving Day, Diwali ball, Dandiya night, Christmas and New Year celebrations take place. Events like silver taps, bonfire, pumpkin carving, Halloween costume party, potluck dinners, Christmas parties, and a number of birthday celebrations happen at

Northgate every other day. Students make good opportunities of these holidays, going on road trips to nearby places like Dallas, Houston, Austin etc. and getting involved in adventurous activities like Sky diving.

Overall, my experience was very overwhelming as I had the opportunity to study in USA, and not only getting to know American culture and lifestyle, but also the culture of France, Germany, Spain, Mexico, Sudan and many more. As a marketing student, I got the privilege to understand the consumer behavior of people from various cultures in just one country.

The world is truly a global village, and the sky is definitely not the limit.

## Other details of my Texas A&M visit-

### Recreation centers:

- Gymnasium
- Rock climbing
- Swimming
- Rock climbing
- Ping pong
- Squash
- Boxing
- Assistance for outdoor activities like kayaks

### Subjects I studied:

I undertook total 9 credits (3 each): Secured 3.666 out of 4

Global Marketing, Prof. Larry Gresham

Product innovation, Prof. Vardha Rajan

Analyzing consumer behavior, Prof. Suresh Ramanathan

Mark sheet of study abroad semester already submitted to pgdm office.

## **Total expenses incurred:**

Staying for 4 months with food would cost around \$4800 - Rs.3,12,000

In addition, Flight charges were around Rs.1,00,000

Travelling costs (in different cities, in and around state of Texas) were around Rs.3,00,000

## **Other important pointers about TAMU-**

### **Teaching methodology:**

Prof. Gresham relied on Presentations and real life examples as a teaching tool, while in product innovation, Mark Strat, a Market Simulation Game, mainly drove the learning. Whereas Prof. Suresh had a different approach altogether which was a combination of Harvard case discussions, assignments and presentation along with experiments being conducted in the classroom upon students being the live subjects promoting in class learning.

Faculty act as facilitators and only direct you, course outline is about 26 pages mentioning each and every minute details along with instructions for assignments and due dates. They train you to be independent and provide an environment in order to groom yourself in order to be ready for the corporate world.

### **Transparent grading system:**

The grades for each component in every subject were revealed to the students through ecampus blackboard.

### **Peer evaluation:**

Team members had to grade their peers in a group activity. This would help not only

eliminate free riders in the team but also punish them if any. It is your group mates who can make or spoil your image in the eyes of prof. irrespective of your behavior in class.

### **Library facilities:**

- Availability of study rooms, which could be booked by the students beforehand for group studies.
- Provision of scanners and printers inside the library itself.
- A small gazebo inside the library for students to have food.
- Availability of various other resources like chargers, scientific calculators, headphones (The penalty for non-return was also very high).
- Any number of books can be issued for the full terms unless they were marked as the reception check-in only.

### **Important Dates:**

Date of reporting: 21st August 2015

Semester commenced on 27th August 2015

Semester ended on 20th December 2015



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