

# *Student Exchange Experience Report*

## *Texas A&M University, USA*

It all started with a dream! I always believed that international experience is full of learning. I wanted to see and experience different cultures and methods of teaching. Going to United States of America was my long-standing desire. I was keen on meeting new people and understanding them. These factors formed the premise for me to apply for the coveted student exchange program. Basically, I desired to have international exposure.

Soon after the institute selected me to attend the program at the prestigious MAYS Business School, I had truckloads of work ranging from making VISA appointments to booking the flight tickets. It was no easy amidst the hectic academic schedule. I had to attend the VISA interview at the US Consulate in Chennai. I got the most sought-after US VISA! 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018 I started my journey. I had chosen the Etihad Airlines because of its extravagant service and travel experience. My first destination was Houston, the city close to my University. After staying there for a day at my friend's place I moved to college station. This was the actual place where I had to attend the program. I had arranged an apartment for my stay there for five months. It was a small and comfortable home with basic amenities.

My first day at MAYS Business school started with a brief orientation that included program structure and basic instructions. The business school was a part of the popular Texas A&M University. Both the school and the University are consistently ranked as the best places to study in the United States. MAYS Business School has made it to the top thirty business schools list in the world. Texas A&M University is one of the oldest and biggest Universities in the US. The academic rigour was no

different from any other top rated Business Schools. I had chosen marketing as my major area of study with four courses in the specialisation. The courses had assignments, quizzes and exams.

The living environment was safe and conducive. College station is a small town without any flamboyant places like other parts of the country. It is a simple town with basic infrastructure. It's mostly a student dominated town where English is the commonly spoken language. Texans are very outgoing and enterprising. I had the good fortune of meeting many native Texans who were ever ready to help and support me. People of America are courteous and kind. They have the innate nature of helping people and being nice to everyone. I didn't experience any sort of discrimination.

Initial days were hard as the weather was harsh with bone chilling temperatures and cold winds. I had never experienced such extreme climatic conditions before. I gradually became accustomed to the changing and unpredictable American weather. It was not a surprise to experience cold winds, bright sun shine and heavy rains in a span of few hours. Sometimes all these together! Being a great foodie and a dependent on Indian food, I never compromised on my food. I cooked at least two times a day at home. I had carried all the necessary spices and dishes from India. Being a vegetarian cooking at home was the only option I had. Texas is a meat loving state with beef and pork as its staple. The town I lived had no public transportation. College bus and Uber were the only means of transportation.

During the spring break I had been to Florida. I saw the most desired Universal Studios, Florida beaches, The Orlando City and the celebrated Miami City. It was truly a dream come true. The down town of Miami was a sight to behold. The enchanting beauty of the beaches of Florida is truly unforgettable. Finally, I got a chance to visit the NASA Centre in Dallas. It was educative and thought provoking

to see the labs and research centres that worked tirelessly to take the man to the moon! How blessed I might have felt for all these.

I got an opportunity to work on a project with the Wells Fargo Bank. A leading financial institution based in America with operating branches across the globe. This was a great learning experience. I got a chance to interact with international bank employees and customers. I could understand the dynamics of international banking and financial services.

After completing all the academic requirements, I started my return journey on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May. I was excited to see my parents and return home. I had never stayed so far without my parents for such a long time. Needless to say, I missed my country, my college and Mysore.

More than academics I would say this program changed me as a person. I value personal learning more than anything else. America taught me to be strong, independent and confident. I feel I can survive anywhere in the world. This foreign exposure has made me see life from different perspectives and understand the differences that exists among people. I was a conservative person with fixed ideas and mostly rigid outlook towards life. I was less accepting and had my own views and ideas about everything. Now I am happy to say that it has changed. I have changed as a person.

My experience in the US has taught me to be adjusting, accepting and patient at unfavourable times. I owe this to my beloved SDMIMD. I couldn't dream of experiencing all these without being chosen by my esteemed institution to attend the exchange program. I thank my professors who were always ready to guide and support me throughout the process. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our most respected Director Sir for his keen interest in sending me to attend this program. I

thank Prof Malathi Sriram ma'am from the bottom of my heart for supporting me when I was in the US. Her kind words of support encouraged me to perform well. I wish to thank Dr Jagadeesh Sir for his constant suggestions pertaining to academics. I must thank Dr Sunil M V for his constant support in case analysis. Last but not the least, I sincerely thank the PGDM coordinators, Sone ma'am and Shashidhar sir for their cooperation during the process.

To sum up, it was an amazing experience. This gave me a chance to measure the span of my wings and the depth of my roots. I sincerely thank my parents and my sister for being supportive and encouraging during this journey. I promise to encourage my juniors to make the best use of this opportunity and enhance their management education experience. I just have one suggestion for my institute, I feel there must be a consolidated process which may include a material that educate the aspirants about the critical components of the program such as academic requirements, expenses involved, important instructions, travel advice and a clear-cut instruction list. I feel this makes the student more confident and aware of what he/she is getting into.

*Exchange Program, a dream come true!!*

Thank you, SDMIMD