

August 2017, this date marks the beginning of my journey in Malaysia, my goal graduate in ten months from MISI and earn my Master degree in Supply Chain. During the first five months of the program, I spent multiple hours attending the different courses, homework and working intensively on my research project part of our thesis which is one of the major requirements of the program. During the last months of 2017, I spent many hours with my thesis partner working in the first thesis draft, and the thesis poster in preparation for the MIT Global SCALE Connect 2018, which is better know as IAP (Independent Activities Period), this is part of the MIT culture and represents the time assigned during January in which the alumni and faculty are encouraged to participate, sponsor and organize a diversity of activities outside their normal schedule or investigations, but for the members of MIT Global SCALE Network community this is the opportunity in which all alumni and faculties from all the centers over the world meet and share their college experiences, research projects, and future projects, but the most important share all their previous experiences all across the different area of the supply chain.

This year all the centers across the network got together in Boston during the first three weeks of January, as usual, freezing cold and heavy snow was also part of the event; this time fifty-four countries were represented by more than 200 students from the 5 centers; the multicultural atmosphere was always present. During the first session, we had the opportunity meet for the first time many of our colleagues exchanged some impression about our programs and the experience so far within the university, talk about our background and share with the rest why we choose to pursue a career in the supply chain, this dynamic was one of the goals of this activity been able to expand our professional network and be able to connect with new colleagues that in the future we could be working across industries and companies.

The activities during IAP were focused on three main aspects short courses, industry speakers, and team competitions. The short courses were delivered by faculties from all the SCALE centers, these were focused on supply chain trending topics from E-Commerce to Sustainable Supply Chain, we had the opportunity to know the new developments and researches done in this fields by every one of the faculties involved in the course and engage the discussions about the future of each of them. The industry speakers represented multiple areas of the supply chain from operations, procurement through data analytics and sustainability, they share with us the many aspects of how the concept learn in the classroom are put in to practice and how our field of study is becoming even more relevant due to the expansion and

globalization of corporations, they also shared the personal experiences regarding decision process, career development and how these impacted their life and especially all the learnings that they took from them, this became one of the most rewarding aspects of IAP been able to learn from them and take this learnings and make them part of our knowledge that will helps us in our future carreers in the industry in which we will eventually experience similar situations.

The third major activity was the competitions these were organized to be performed in teams up to five members with representatives from all the centers in each team, one of the competitions was about supply chain innovation and negotiation, in this one the team had the objective of developing the idea and concept for a major supply chain innovation project and then stablish the strategy to sell the idea to the steering commity and gain the company support in order to request the funds for the implementation of this innovation, the second competition was about communication skills the main objective of this one was been able to develop the communication strategy to get the approval of a government initiative.

The last competition was the Fresh Connection, this was a supply chain simulation game in which the team was part of a manufacturing company that was in a bad financial situation due to problems with the supply chain, we were part of the supply chain team that will try to steer the company into a new path that will lead to the financial recovery and company growth using all the concepts learned in the classroom during the previous year and put them into practice in each of the areas of the company from procurement to sales all across the supply chain, this requered the commitment of all the members in order to comply with the company strategy that we stablish, the previous experience of the members become one key element for the decisions made during every stage of the game. All these competitions were helpful in developing multiple skill like communication, negotiation, rapport, critical thinking and help to create bonds between every member of the team. During this time also we were able to visit multiple companies, they share with us all the projects and initiatives that they have been developing over the years in the different aspects of the supply chain.

The last activity of the calendar was the Research Expo, this is the crown jewel of IAP, in this night all the students present their Research projects poster, in which they share all their work that has been done so far with their sponsor and thesis advisor, we had the opportunity to interact with the industry

representatives and share all the knowledge and experience develop so far which in many cases this becomes relevant to the efforts and activities that they are doing with their companies, it also represents one more opportunity to increase our network.

Overall the IAP experience represents a huge opportunity to all MIT GLOBAL SCALE Community members to share their experience and knowledge to build bonds that will last many years and across multiple continents and will overcome language barriers in order to succeed in our goal to become the best in the supply chain management.

As a brief summary:

Positive

- Multicultural networking
- Opportunity to experience working with colleagues with different backgrounds and skills
- Engagement with industry practitioners and academic scholars
- Exposure to New developments and new theories
- Simulation games
- Leadership skills development

Negative

- Group assignment, every class required new groups this decrease the time available to set strong bonds with main teammates
- Lack of MIT-Staff support for visiting faculties, this shouldn't happen it looks like we are not part of the SCALE Network
- Confusing rules, not all the centers had the same rules regarding participation of short courses this affects the participation in courses from visiting faculties, MIT professor was mandatory but visiting was optional.