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IAP write up:

IAP 2018 was held successfully from 8th to 26th January 2018 together with about 200 students came from the MIT Global SCALE network centres in the United States, Spain, Luxemburg, Columbia, China and Malaysia. The number of participants allegedly was double compared to previous years.

The programme of IAP consisted of seminars, leadership workshops, APICS competition, SCALE challenge and industrial tours. Students were grouped randomly for each assignment or activity so that we have chance to get know with different background of students and learn from each other.

There were 10 seminars with industry leaders came and conduct professional contacts with students. For instance, they were BASF, C&S Grocers, Adidas, Uber, UPS and etc. They had shared the industry experience and insights of supply chain management to all the students.

Leadership workshops in generally had given us a bunch of guidance of negotiation skills, efficient ways of convincing people, listening skills, deal making and etc. All the mentioned soft skills are equally important as professional knowledges that can enhance our strengths in dealing all kinds of challenges.

APICS competition had given students the opportunity to work as a team to discuss the emerging technologies and think of how to develop a business case based on the innovative supply chain ideas and present to APICS judges. It was quite interesting as we can get to know the new technologies which we might not explore to and knowing better the updated information during discussion with team members.

SCALE challenge/Fresh connection game is a web-based simulation game whereby a team of players with different roles such as supply chain, sales, operations and purchasing work together to overcome the challenges of supply chain game and improve the ROI of the company. It was a very interesting game as it almost similar to the real working environment whereby plenty of constraints happen in the real world and we need to collaborate with different department of people. Students have chance to play around with all kinds of decisions made based on theoretical methods or some methodologies that associate with supply chain.

There were 2 industrial tours given during the IAP which was Walgreen and Locus Robotics. It was so impressed when we saw the automated facilities in Walgreen and each department are connected through the comprehensive computer network. Although all facilities are fully automated, Walgreen moving towards with their vision of achieving 20% workforce of PWD by year 2020. It is amazing that an established big company leads by example to build a caring society. Locus Robotics has introduced their fully automated robot which the machine is able to identify the location of item and intelligent enough to detect the traffic and find the accessible route in the warehouse. It is undeniable that the machine is efficient enough to replace workforce and is giving e-commerce a boost on picking efficiency which will lead to faster delivery to customers.

During the entire course of IAP programme, we have learnt the importance of fully integrated supply chain network, demand and supply planning, emerging technology, big data analytics and etc. All of these should be strengthened in order to achieve more successful supply chain network. Advance technology and big data analytic would be worth to invest as consumer's purchasing behaviors is getting more and more complicated. We need the useful tools to help us understand well the demand from consumers.

Last but no least, the IAP is a meaningful and precious experience to all the students including me. There are lots of fun, knowledge and benefits that we are able to gain from it.

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