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THE SCALE CONNECT

The SCALE Connect. Words which now conjure up images of being an MIT student (albeit for a short stint); classes in an exciting new environment, meeting and working with counterparts from across the world, experiencing and engaging with world-class speakers, learning visits to other supply chain industries and enjoying the beautiful city of Boston!

When I first started with my PSCM course in MISI, I focused on enhancing my expertise in the supply chain and did not think about SCALE Connect. So, when I received an email about offering me to join the SCALE Connect, I was taken aback and overwhelmed by all the work that needed to be completed within short deadlines to make this happen. I decided to put my nose to the grindstone and worked on whatever necessary to make the SCALE Connect happen for me after being encouraged by my cohort-mate (thanks to Steven!), who reminded me that this was an opportunity of a lifetime.

Making sure we were bundled up against the cold with a hot cup of coffee to tide us through the morning. Walking to class was one of my favourite part of the day. There were two primary classes that we covered at the SCALE Connect, which is Python and Llamasoft. Python was not (and remains!) the language I am keen on. As a middle manager trying to expand my career to a leadership role within supply chain project management. I do not believe that coding is for everyone, because when I learned the basics of coding in class, and if I have to manage any upcoming projects with the needs of using the code or software development, presumably I would hire a trained personnel with adequate expertise to execute the project. Llamasoft, on the other hand, is a software that relatively easy to use. I could understand on how I would potentially apply this at my workplace. Also, I would hire a modeller in order to implement. However, the introduction to Llamasoft and its possibilities provided a good practical application in a large scale, cross-border supply chains.

The SC leadership speaker series was one of the highlights of SCALE CONNECT. It was insightful to engage with the industry experts who have walked the talk and have real-life, practical experience in the supply chain and provided us with role models and ideas on what we could further explore within our careers. Corporate supply chain leaders such as Michelle Livingstone (Home Depot) and Lynn Torrel (Flex) were incredibly open and forthright about the challenges they have faced and their career journey within the supply chain. Both highlighted the need for work-life balance and how to pursue your passion outside of the workplace. Other notable speakers were Joe Coughlin (The Longevity Economy) and Colleen Murphy (Strength Finder), who brought new perspectives and information that could be used and applied for our individual growth, both personally and professionally.

The career chat series was an exceptional idea. Kudos to Katie Date for making this happen! I do believe that across industries, women still need to work much harder than men to go up the corporate ladder, and for this reason, we need to band together and bring out the best from each other. Continued networking and advocacy for each other is imperative to ensure we are developing as individuals and industry. Engagements to female supply chain leaders were very intriguing for me as a woman in a very male-dominated organization.

The ASCM Shark tank competition was also an inspiring experience for me as it reflects the type of innovative business leaders' presentations considering financial and practical application aspects of an improved idea. It was refreshing to work with my counterparts from MIT and ZLC. I learned and debated differing views as well as their approach to problem-solving. It was an excellent opportunity to gain exposure in the Research Fest that involves stakeholders from various industries, MIT students, alumni, and faculties. I presented my poster and discussed ideas with a myriad of experts and peers!

The learnings and memories from the SCALE CONNECT will be treasured. Beyond the classes, speakers, and tours, my biggest takeaway was the friendships I made along the way. Outside of the classroom, I had a chance to meet so many new people and get to know my Malaysian mates so much better. These are just a few of the activities we had outside of the regular schedule; having a beer at the Muddy's bar, attending a Boston Celtics game, eating hotpot in cold weather, visiting the Empire State building, and celebrating Chinese New Year in Boston. I am so glad to have had the chance to enjoy it with good friends!



- (i) Three definite vital highlights that you will take away from your three-week SCALE CONNECT experience:
- a. Field trips** – The Walgreens and the AB-Inbev industry tours were an excellent way to explore different types of supply chains and understand challenges faced first-hand. I enjoyed those!
 - b. Speakers series** - Great speakers, especially in bringing in the female leaders and having the career chat series right after. Very nicely done!
 - c. Shark tank + SC game** – These two activities had encouraged networking between students. It's also a great way to evaluate different thought processes when brainstorming and executing decisions.

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