



## Study Abroad Program: Destination Hubli, India

### Winter Session January 2015

*Learn and Experience Innovation and Entrepreneurship in  
multi-culture, multi-disciplinary environment  
!!!Totally awesome experience!!!*

---

## Final Report

January, 2015

## Study Abroad Winter 2015: Destination - India

### What?

The Manning School of Business, in collaboration with BVB College of Engineering and Technology (<http://www.bvb.edu/> Hubli, India), conducted a Study Abroad Program from the 4<sup>th</sup> of January to the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2015. Seventeen (17) students from UML joined 33 students from BVB College in a thirteen-day experience in Entrepreneurship learning and multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary activities.



In addition to in-class activities in Hubli, UMass Lowell students had an opportunity to visit India's capital, Delhi and the famous Taj Mahal in Agra from January 1<sup>st</sup> to January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Students also visited Mahatma Gandhi's memorial. The museum there told the story of his life's work.

### Where?

Hubli is one of the major cities of South India and it is often referred to as the twin city of Dharwad, the administrative capital of the Dharwad district of Karnataka. Hubli is the commercial hub of Northern Karnataka and also a developing industrial, automobile and educational hub of the state, after Bangalore. The host college, BVB College of Engineering and Technology is a 5000-student higher education institute offering education in 11 different engineering and management disciplines.



### Participants?

There were 17 students from UML participated in this program:

- 6 Business graduate
- 2 engineering doctoral
- 1 nursing doctoral
- 4 business undergraduate

- 1 computer science undergraduate
- 2 engineering undergraduate.\
- 1 economics undergraduate



From the host college, 33 undergraduate students joined UMass Lowell students, representing

- 9 mechanical engineering
- 8 electronics and communication
- 5 biotechnology
- 4 Information sciences
- 4 computer sciences
- 2 instrumentation
- 1 automobile

All 50 students stayed at the Scholar’s House on campus, a facility with comfortable accommodations and amenities. Students had their meals served at the House, enjoying typical Indian dishes for breakfast, lunch and dinner!



On the first day, all students and instructors were MSB!

### **Purpose?**

The course title was “Global Immersion in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. It was a continuation of the program started in January 2014 and June 2014. To that end, it was intended

to be an intensive, true multi-cultural and inter-disciplinary. It focused on both concepts of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial thinking along with experiential learning through real life projects.

### **What did students do?**

From the time students arrived in Hubli (late evening January 4<sup>th</sup>), they were busy until leaving Hubli on January 16<sup>th</sup>!

There were 9 teams formed consisting of about 5 students each. These teams spent the first two days at different social organizations, technology companies and one hospital. The purpose was to understand these organizations' processes and challenges. Teams were required to articulate problems or opportunities within these organizations.

The remaining days were spent on going through basics of entrepreneurship and working on these problems/opportunities. A typical day included morning discussion and instruction about the basics of entrepreneurship (concepts, examples, process, etc.) followed by afternoons of projects.

#### **- Class Exercise**

Class exercise covered the Ideation process where teams of 4-5 students were asked to look at familiar products (in daily use), identify primary and secondary applications, basic needs



served by the product, problems or deficiencies in the product, and then generate ideas to solve them. During this process, the instructors visited each group to observe, answer questions, and make suggestions, if needed. At the same time, care was taken to guide the students in the process, but not tell them what to do. This was a deliberate attempt to lay the groundwork for the entrepreneurial process they would begin with their projects. We found some students to be reluctant to do this, preferring to be told what to do instead. It was our job as instructors to encourage them to push past their comfort zones, and embrace a different way of learning. At the end of the exercise, they presented

their work to the class, which was a rewarding experience. This helped students bond together as a team, gain presentation experience, and set the tone for the project ahead.

## - **Sponsored Projects**

Based on their 2-day visits and discussions with several social organizations and technology companies, students worked on problem/opportunity definition, solutions development, market validation and business model canvass development.



Students worked in-class and outside class, spending many hours researching, analyzing data, discussing and sharing ideas and, having fun! They bonded so well, as if they had known each other for ages!

And, chai time was the best time students to bond with each other have some fun!



Students made their final project presentations on the last day of this class. This was a highlight of the program as students presented with such confidence and enthusiasm. There was a marked difference between their first day presentation and last day. It was very evident that they not only grasped basics of entrepreneurship, but also learned how to work in teams, share ideas and be able to communicate.

## - **Guest Speakers**



Students had an opportunity to listen to a few guest speakers, all entrepreneurs.

Two guest speakers included entrepreneurs who have established their businesses within the BVB College incubation facilities. These businesses included biologics and signal processing. BVB has an interesting incubation facility that houses both on-going businesses as well as new ventures. There are 26 such companies and their goal is to have 50 in next 2 years.



#### - **Social Organization visit- Akshya Patra**

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, the students had the opportunity to visit Akshaya Patra, a social enterprise in Hubli that helps provide 1.3 million hot lunches to school children every day. Students were shown a short video at the start that explained the process from raw food to finished meals and their distribution. After, they slipped into bamboo sandals and hair nets and made their way through the factory. One BVB mechanical engineering student said, “India is gripped with illiteracy, which is the direct consequence of hunger, which if tackled can root out the major problem of illiteracy that we are facing today. But managing an industrial kitchen can be an incredibly challenging task as hygiene and quality levels need to be ensured at every stage right from cooking to delivery of food.” It was an exciting experience, with the smells of rice cooking and the fragrance of spices, and many students felt this was an amazing example of social entrepreneurship and how it can help people. The group was able to see the entire process and the students were able to understand what this amount of food means to school children. For many school children, this may be their only meal for the day. Upon reflection, a UMass Lowell nursing student wrote, “As a nursing student I was able to further identify the struggles that hungry and poor children face. I really appreciated what this company does. I have not been to many factories before, but I thought a lot of their designs and layouts were amazing. They were able to accomplish so much in such a small amount of time.” For others, it was the first time they had thought about entrepreneurship in terms of helping others. A BVB Instrumentation student said, “My key take away from this visit was the solving social problems can also make you an entrepreneur.” This site visit provided the students with an experience that they will long remember, and hopefully, take the lessons from the experience to heart.

#### **Cultural Sites**

Over the weekend, Nitin Kulkarni had arranged a visit to Nanneshwara Temple in Lakkundi.



Our guide explained various aspects of building the temple, and noted the whole village had many temples, not all restored and open to the public. Here students were able to see, up close, detailed intricate carvings on the temple. It was interesting to learn that the designs of the carvings represented the designs on coins made in Lakkundi.

While at this site, students were taken with the local children, who only asked if the students had pens to give them. It was wonderful to watch the BVB/MSB students interact with the children. Students willingly gave up some of their favorite pens. As one MSB student said, “It’s only a pen, and yet it means so much to them.”



In addition, we were able to visit one of the stepped wells, a true marvel of engineering. Sadly, the well was dry, and has been for about four years due to drought. This trip gave students the opportunity to learn, socialize, and try new foods. They also spent time dancing and singing on the bus ride back and forth to the sites.

## Student Feedback

Below is a selection of feedback from MSB and BVB students. This multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary course required them to use their previously acquired knowledge from the classroom, and put it to use in a real-life project. As you will see, this experience encouraged them to think in new ways about their lives and their roles in the workplace.

*“... I have studied abroad a total of three times. .. China ... Costa Rica, and India, which changed how I thought of studying abroad. Immersion and observation are two different ways to experience a culture. After completing the course at BVB, my preference is now immersion. ... Working with my team was wonderful; we all worked very well together and was able to create a comprehensive and coherent presentation for our final project. Additionally, I feel like the lifelong friendships with some of the students at BVB is another priceless benefit of the entire experience.”* A UML MBA student

*“Over the past seventeen days I have learned a lot of things about myself, innovation, entrepreneurship, global business, India and the people of India, none of them as important as what I learned about leadership. I learned that leaders and the ingredients that make strong leaders are the same across the globe and I recognize now, after this trip, that I have these ingredients. ... The past seventeen days were not easy however very rewarding and am now able to myself in a new lens, a lens of a leader, a global leader. It was not something I asked for but has happened and now recognizing it I will continue to strive to be the best leader I can.”* A UML MBA student

*“My participation in the 2015 U.M.L. - B.V.B winter student exchange program has been a life changing experience. While participating in the program, I have learned how to prepare for long distance travel, experienced a vastly different culture, and unraveled the mystery of entrepreneurship. Living and learning in India has made my world a smaller place.”* UML Computer Science student

*“... this was the best part of my life which gave me a wonderful experience regarding the entrepreneurial journey. Working in multidisciplinary teams made me complete as a student, a future entrepreneur. This course proved vital in the form that it provided the benefits of entrepreneurship, its potential drawbacks and more importantly helped me put failure into the proper prospective. Overall, this experience was awesome and can easily be considered as truly rejoicing along with knowledge sharing in a playful way.”* BVB Engineering student

**“Mind Revolutionized:** *... The course has had a huge impact on me. As the heading states, my mind is revolutionized. I had limited my future studies to core electronic fields. But now i want to swim in the Business water and never drown. Having an entrepreneurs way of thinking is necessary in the current scenario. I would be more than happy to use the principles of entrepreneurship to benefit the company I would work for in the near future. It was a great experience to work with people from other side of the world. We certainly have made lifetime friendships with UML students and hope to stay in touch and discuss innovations in the days to come.”* BVB engineering student

At the end of the experience, we asked all the students to participate in an online survey, and we had 100% participation. The following are some of the student questions students answered, along with supporting data from their reflection papers. The survey results are also in the appendix.

One of the purposes of the class was to ensure that students understood the need for collaboration in entrepreneurship. This is not something the BVB students had experienced before, and the UMass Lowell students had never worked with students from other colleges on teams. To the question: *The team project helped me to understand the need for collaboration in the entrepreneurial environment—59% strongly agreed and 36% agreed.*

One outcome that we had hoped for was to have the students understand what it means to work as part of a global team. We asked the question, *“The team experience has enabled me to better understand the need to communicate in cross-disciplinary teams and cross-cultural teams.”* Our survey showed that 78% of the students strongly agreed, while 20% agreed.

Throughout the course, we invited entrepreneurial guest speakers to provide the students with real-life examples of entrepreneurship. The survey asked the students the question: *Guest speakers provided relevant information and experiences. Results showed the 83% of the students strongly agreed, or agreed.* It seems the favorite speaker for most of the students was Guarav Shah, Founder of Seven Beans, a coffee bar with a unique twist on the experience.

## **Conclusion**

There is a need for multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary courses that require students to work on real-life problems. Students learn better when they can engage with the problem by working with actual issues. Once students spent time at the organizations or with the company founders,



they began to realize that they had the ability to make an impact. A bond developed between the students as they went from being a group to a team, able to take the problem and break it down to uncover unknown issues. Most began to truly care about the clients of the organization, and wanted to help them sustain and grow the organization. This type of experience does not occur in the typical business classroom.

With this reasoning, we look forward to continuing the program at UMass Lowell and at BVB College, with winter programs being held in Hubli, India, and summer programs being held in Lowell, MA. We will take what we, as instructors, learned from this January experience and continue to develop and refine the way the program is delivered, to better meet the needs of the students and the organizations.

# USA, BVBCET students come together to work

Under hands-on entrepreneurship learning, 10 innovative solutions prepared, marketing efforts on

Manjunath Hegde Bomnalli

**HUBBALLI:** In a unique Initiative, students of different disciplines from USA are now in Hubballi, and are working with the students of BVB College of Engineering & Technology (BVBCET) here, in developing and marketing some innovative solutions.

Under the 'Global emersion in innovation and entrepreneurship' programme of the USA-based University of Massachusetts, Lowell (UML), and BVBCET, students of both the institutes are working on 10 projects, with multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary approach. After identifying the some of the problems in different fields, they have come up with solutions, and they are also trying to market those solutions.

From BVBCET, 33 engineering students are taking part in this programme, while 17 students of different streams including business administration, economics, and engineering have come from the USA, and they are working together in teams. The USA students are working here for two weeks, and in June, the BVBCET students will go to USA, under this



Students of BVB College of Engineering & Technology (BVBCET) in Hubballi and UML of USA displaying a light-weight and adjustable artificial limb at the BVBCET in Hubballi on Wednesday. DH PHOTO

programme.

## Innovative devices

A team of seven students are with an artificial limb which is light-weight, low-cost and adjustable in size.

"The cost of this artificial limb in just \$ 20, and we have already conducted its trial on a patient at the SDM hospital," said the team members Jonathan DeAlderete and Chaitanya Habib. Mr Jonathan and Erin Keaney have already started 'Non-spec' company in USA, and they want to market this artificial limb through that

company.

'Dr Amigo' is a suitcase which includes medical instruments and a solar panel, for the convenience of doctors who visit rural areas. Karthik Bhat and team has developed this device, while it is being marketed with the help of business administration student William Hanchette. "FPAI and SDM hospital have shown interest to purchase this suitcase, and we have fixed ₹ 25,000 price for it," the students said.

For the institutes with big campus, the team comprising Nilay Desai, Joanne Pesnell and

others has come up with 'Campus cloud' project which gives updates and offers registration facility for different events, for the students of an institute, and also gives feedback to the organisers.

"This application works through the mobile phones, and we will launch it on trial basis at BVBCET in March, at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, in September," says Nilay Desai.

## Marketing plans

Another team is suggesting better marketing methods like

e-commerce to sell the hand-crafts prepared by women, under the RAPID NGO.

BVBCET-UML students are also helping the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) to reach more people, and are preparing a marketing plan for Ushas Centre for Exceptional Children, and Scope organisation, to get funds, and are designing a marketing strategy for V-Tech company.

Exoskeleton and toolkit for engineering students are the other projects in which the students have identified the potential of entrepreneurship. Both BVBCET and UML students stated that they learnt new things from each other.

"This programme helps the students of USA and India to come together and work together in a multi-disciplinary approach, to utilise innovative projects to become entrepreneurial," said BVBCET Centre for Technology Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CTIE) Director Nitin Kulkarni.

According to UML Manning School of Business professor Ashwin Mehta, team work by the students of different streams gives a new approach to the efforts to develop innovative and entrepreneurship mindset among the students.

DH News Service