International Business in the European Union:

STUDYING ABROAD IN LYON, FRANCE

JANUARY 2020
International Business Practices and Policies: A European Perspective

In January, 2020, the Bank of Montreal and Financial Women’s Association provided assistance to 7 diverse female graduate students from Baruch College’s Zicklin School of Business to participate in an intensive study abroad program, “International Business Practices and Policies: A European Perspective,” in Lyon, France. The program was designed by the Weissman Center for International Business in collaboration with the School of Management (IAE-Institut d’Administration des Entreprises) at Jean Moulin University in Lyon. The highlights of the program included:

- intensive preparatory seminars at Baruch prior to departure
- lectures in cross-cultural differences and business practices in Europe and on the institutions of the European Union
- participation in IAE’s International Seminars, one of which was devoted to “Doing Business in the Post-Brexit United Kingdom and the European Union”
- visits to companies and international organizations
- walking tours of old Lyon and the new Confluence redevelopment area
- a visit to the Resistance and Deportation Centre
- cultural excursions: to a vineyard in Vaux-en-Beaujolais and to the town of Annecy in the Savoy region of France

In two different International Seminars that were organized as part of the IAE Lyon’s International Week, the participants were able to study alongside students from Lyon’s IAE in a classroom setting, offering these women a degree of academic and cultural immersion largely unknown in programs of this type.

Without funding from the Bank of Montreal and the Financial Women’s Association, these students would have found it nearly impossible to attend this program. The seven women have therefore expressed their sincerest appreciation to the Bank of Montreal and the Financial Women’s Association for making this study abroad opportunity a reality for them. These women MBA students have also shared their experiences on the program and discussed the impact they believe it has had and will continue to have on their personal and professional development.
First and foremost I would like to thank the Bank of Montreal and the Financial Women’s Association for providing funding for this generous fellowship, which enabled me to study at Jean Moulin University in Lyon, France. At the university, I took one intensive seminar on Brexit and another on multicultural team management. The Brexit Seminar provided me with more detailed information about the potential outcomes of Brexit and opened my eyes to how different businesses around the world are affected by it.

The multicultural team management seminar offered insights on how to understand and manage diversity on global teams. Cultures differ when it comes to socialization, risk tolerance, and long-term goal orientation. When managing a team of people from different cultures, one has to be cognizant of these differences and know how to balance them in order for the team to be successful. With this knowledge, I am confident I am one step ahead of the game for when I manage a global team one day.

I will always remember my study abroad experience in Lyon and I am so grateful for this opportunity. This experience has refreshed my global perspective, which I will carry with me in my professional life.
The opportunity to study abroad in Lyon, France has been the highlight of my MBA experience, and I am so thankful to the Bank of Montreal and the Financial Women’s Association for supporting this program. While it only lasted 2 weeks, the program provided me with wonderful and enriching experience, including many cultural excursions in addition to studying at Jean Moulin University. We participated in guided tours of Vieux Lyon and the Confluence neighborhood, which provided detailed history of Lyon’s past from the Roman age to the present; visited Beaujolais to learn about wine making and its importance in the French economy; and toured Annecy, where we learned about the town’s history of silk manufacturing. We also visited La Ruche Industrielle and the Renault Trucks factory, which was the highlight of the trip for me. We learned about the founding of Renault, how the company has evolved over the years, and how the plant operates currently. I have studied operations management and strategy in many of my classes at Baruch, but it was amazing to witness first-hand the operations and application of the lean methodology at the factory.

I currently work as a manager in a multi-national financial services company, and decided to pursue my MBA in order to advance into more senior management positions. Almost all senior leaders within the company have international experience and manage teams across the world. I attended a seminar on Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity to provide me with greater knowledge of how to be more mindful and respectful of colleagues at work. As companies become increasingly globalized, I think it is important to take into consideration how diversity can be an asset for an organization, and that is something I will remember for the rest of my career.
I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Bank of Montreal and the Financial Women’s Association. The Lyon Study Program was a once in a lifetime experience, and I am so grateful that with the support of the Bank of Montreal and the Financial Women’s Association, I had an opportunity to travel abroad and gain international study experience.

During the Lyon Study Program, I was able to network with students from Jean Moulin University and professors from France, Hungary, Italy, and Germany, as well as meet experts from multiple companies, such as Renault Trucks, La Ruche Industrielle, and OnlyLyon. That, and of course the opportunity to be immersed in the culture of a non-English-speaking country, was highly valuable and helped me to learn more about the European business environment. Working in groups with French students allowed me to improve my communication and especially presentation skills, my overall cultural perception, and definitely helped me get out of my comfort zone.

The Lyon Study Program was a fantastic adventure that enabled me to learn directly from international business professionals and to develop a strategy on how to apply my new global perspective and experience to my career. I wish I could do it all over again! Thank you!
The Future Depends on What You Do TODAY. – Mahatma Gandhi

“Meeting new people and discovering new experiences provides us with a possibility to learn more about ourselves.”

About Me

Born and raised in Ukraine, I moved to the United States by myself at the age of twenty. For the past twelve years, I have learned to be self-aware, self-reliant, and goal-oriented. Today I work as a Clinical Study Associate Manager at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals and am pursuing an MBA in the Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College. My career goal is to advance professionally in the field of clinical operations, with a focus on the processes needed to bring new medicines to the patients in need.

What I got out of the Study Abroad Program

Meeting new people and discovering new experiences provides us with a possibility to learn more about ourselves. In Lyon, I was able to work on projects with French students, to learn from professors from Germany and Hungary, and to meet interesting and inspiring Baruch students I would not have known otherwise. Brainstorming with French students about the best way to present a case study of nepotism in Vietnam, I observed how my decision-making process differed, due to cultural differences. While learning Hofstede’s cultural dimensions from the German professor who taught the course on multicultural team management, I identified some of her skills, habits, and behaviors that I would like to mimic in my personal and professional life. The trip also allowed me to be a “classic” student who does not have to work while studying, even if it was just for a short period.

I will be forever grateful to the Bank of Montreal and the Financial Women’s Association for the generous scholarship that made this enriching experience possible.
I am an MBA student at the Zicklin School of Business with an undergraduate background in biology. After working in medicine and healthcare administration for a few years, I decided to pursue a career combining business with my creative interests in music.

The long-term significance of my participation in the Baruch-Lyon study abroad program, “International Business Practices and Policies: a European Perspective,” is inestimable. The new things I learned and experienced on the program not only deepened my interest in reshaping my career to include an international component, but also widened my network of professionals and peers. I started the program hoping to gain further insight into work culture, business practices, and civilian life in the European Union, knowing that my ultimate career goal is to work on a global level—specifically within the United States, Europe, and Latin America.

Yet after this experience, not only do I feel more confident in my decision, I also feel as though my goal is more attainable. I cannot imagine that I would have the same depth of learning solely in a classroom setting in the United States. I am sure I speak for all the women in my cohort in expressing my sincerest gratitude to the Bank of Montreal and the Financial Women’s Association for their support.
Every study abroad is rewarding, but what makes a difference is what you do with the knowledge you have gained and enriching experiences you have had. I will be taking all the lessons I have learned and re-investing them in my professional career and beyond.

My time in Lyon was eye-opening. As I talked to local students, I was surprised as to how familiar they were with business culture in the United States, compared to how little I knew about that of the European Union. At Jean Moulin University, the seminars provided the opportunity to gain insights about doing business in the post-Brexit era, cross-cultural management practices and internationalization strategies. Before traveling, I believed that being knowledgeable about a topic was the key to professional success. During my time abroad, I learned that true success comes only when we can complement this knowledge with the ability to embrace cultural differences. I have a new appreciation of the European business environment after participating in company site visits, where we saw how robots and humans work together in factories and how new collaborative methods are used to solve business problems. Outside of the classroom, I was able to immerse myself into French culture by talking to hospitable locals and walking though Lyon’s winding traboules, which allowed me to appreciate what the city had to offer. As a full-time MBA student who did not think she would have the means to Study Abroad, I am especially grateful to the Bank of Montreal—the Financial Women’s Association for an unforgettable winter break.
I am sincerely grateful to the Bank of Montreal- the Financial Women’s Association for the opportunity to be a part of the study abroad program and attend International Seminars at the IAE School of Management in Lyon. Since I am at the very beginning of my career in finance, this program not only taught me a great deal about international business practices in Europe and about the specific problems arising from Brexit; it also significantly contributed to my personal and professional development. While attending the seminars, for example, I had a chance to improve my ability to facilitate collaboration and thus productivity within a team. The active engagement in the International Seminars helped me overcome the challenges of communicating and expressing myself in an unfamiliar environment. On top of that, I was particularly excited to learn the European perspective on Corporate Social Responsibility. After taking a course in CSR at Baruch the previous semester, I was deeply moved by the impact of business activities on society and wanted to learn more. Thanks to the Lyon Study Abroad Program, I was introduced to the concept of social business and how these practices can potentially resolve a social or environmental issue. This experience has inspired me to become a part of such a company upon graduation.

I believe that the productive atmosphere of the international seminars and the chance to experience the cultural heritage of France will greatly benefit my academic and professional growth.