Step Out!
A publication on overseas educational opportunities
January 2014

Opportunities and beyond with IARU Global Summer Program

FEATURE STORY –
Lessons learnt in Vietnam
Exploring an internship in China?
Hear what our partners have to say, Page 12
What is IARU Global Summer Program (GSP)?

**IARU GLOBAL SUMMER PROGRAM (GSP)**

The International Alliance of Research Universities Global Summer Program (IARU GSP) provides opportunities for students from IARU universities to participate in short intensive courses over the summer. Participants will have the chance to learn and live in a foreign language-intensive university.

**TACKLE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

Participants in this program have the opportunity to explore the most urgent challenges for humanity in the 21st century, such as international environmental policy, contemporary Asian development, and global leadership.

**WORK WITH OUTSTANDING FOREIGN PEERS**

IARU GSP students are among the very best. You will have the opportunity to study with talented and motivated people at some of the world’s top universities. By bringing together students and faculty from different countries and cultures, the courses offer a truly global perspective on key contemporary issues.

**LIVE AND LEARN AT A FOREIGN UNIVERSITY**

The IARU GSP is a residential program which takes place over three to five weeks at an IARU member university. Students will be immersed in a variety of

---

**2014 TIMELINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late Dec 2013</td>
<td>Applications open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2014</td>
<td>Information Session @ Central Library &amp; University Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Feb 2014</td>
<td>Applications close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 10 and 14 Mar 2014</td>
<td>Interview by NUS Panel (candidates must be present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Apr 2014</td>
<td>Offers by host universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Apr 2014</td>
<td>Deadline for students to accept offers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT**

http://meeday.io/networks/program/iaru-gsp/indiahel

---

**Lee Zhu’ai Sian**

Faculty:

Arts and Social Sciences

The reason I chose this program:

My decision to take up the Global Challenges of the 21st Century Summer Programme at the University of Oxford was motivated by a desire to understand the socio-economic and environmental predicaments in which contemporary governments and societies find themselves. I wished to listen to opinions by individuals who are diverse, talented and dedicated to advancing humanity’s quest for liberty, equality, prosperity and peace.

My academic experience:

Due to our small cohort, we held edifying discussions, with each other and with our knowledgeable tutors. The academic programme dwelt on the analysis of current patterns of international development, financial and political systems, climate change science and public policy. The schedule was challenging and exciting, requiring us to engage critically with relevant literature, conduct substantial research and write multiple papers in detail.

---

**University of Oxford, United Kingdom**

**Beautiful Oxford...**

Oxford is a fascinating university town, culturally and architecturally. Hours were spent in the beautiful recesses of the Bodleian, together with spontaneous visits to various museums, libraries, theatres, parks and workshops. We also had helpful resident assistants at Easter College who arranged for trips to places such as Stratford-upon-Avon, Winchester and Avebury, where we soaked our eyes on the green English countryside.

**Totally recommended...**

Through this fruitful exchange, I achieved a broader, nuanced view of the world and perceived with greater clarity my place in the prevailing political paradigms. I experienced first-hand how learning can be to work in a group of people with different but complementary skills, ambitions and worldviews. It is therefore my strong conviction and recommendation that such international initiatives be continued.

---

“Oxford is a fascinating university town, culturally and architecturally.”
American University of Rome, Italy

Siti Fatimah Bte Shaikh Omar

Faculty:
Arts and Social Sciences

My academic experience...
Academically, I have learnt so much from Professor Eser Saige, the lecturer who taught the class, European identities. It was about the sense of identity of the European nations in the European Union. Besides talking about the concept of symbols and identify construction, we also touched on the past political figures and speeches as well as many other aspects which constituted the building of the European identity.

My personal experience...
I was initially nervous about going to Rome alone. However, I felt that being the only Singaporean student in this session was a blessing in disguise. Not only did it force me to learn to stand on my own. I had to be more outgoing in order to make more friends. I also signed up for two weekend trips arranged by the school. I climbed Mount Vesuvius and visited places such as Pompei, Sorento, Capri, Florence and Siena. Seeing such inspiring sights and amazing architecture really helped us gain a better appreciation of Singapore in the world.

Words of wisdom to future students on the programme...
The most important thing to do is to be open and ready to learn any new experiences. The American University of Rome may be a very small university but it gives us a chance to have more intimate discussions with our professors and the other students. Remember to go off the beaten path and do not restrict yourself to the more touristy side of Rome.

What are International Summer Programmes (i-SPs)

In addition to regular semester exchange programmes, NUS students are encouraged to work on unique academic experiences such as summer programmes. They allow students to explore and cultivate a deeper appreciation of the culture and lifestyle of the host country through opportunities for personal development and independent travel. Summer programmes also allow students to explore non-traditional countries. These programmes are generally held from May to July each year in more than 15 countries across the globe.

ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION PROCESS
NUS students are eligible to participate in summer programmes after they have completed one year of study at NUS. They must also be in their final semester of study when they embark on the programme. Other programmes-specific requirements may apply.

Most programmes take place during the academic break between May and July. For these programmes, application will generally open in December or January. Please visit the RO website for more details.

HOW TO APPLY
Please refer to the RO website at

International Research Attachment Programmes (I-RAP)

Northwestern University, USA

Elyisa Cecilia Saputra

Faculty:
Engineering

About this research attachment...
In July to August 2013, I went on an international research attachment program with Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. where I was assigned to Professor Igor Solcik’s Molecular Modelling of Biomaterials Research Group. The laboratory aims to investigate the interplay between steric, hydrophobic and electrostatic interaction in regulating the translocation of macromolecules via the nuclear pore complex. Academically, this program enhances my understanding of the subject and sharpens my critical thinking ability. I believe that the knowledge and skills that I gained from the internship could benefit me significantly.

My personal tips...
I recommend staying in one of the school’s residential halls which allows one to live alongside fellow Northwestern undergraduates. Mingling with them helped me to learn the student life and culture in Northwestern University better. The university is only a 20-minute walk away from the downtown area and only about an hour away from Chicago.

What are International Research Attachment Programmes (I-RAPs)

I-RAP offers the opportunity for students to broaden and enhance their undergraduate research experience through attachments under the mentorship of top researchers at universities renowned for science and technology. Students will have the chance to be immersed in another culture, urban environment and diverse research in world-class facilities. These programmes, which are usually two to three months long and opportunities are available in Asia, America and Europe.

ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION PROCESS

In addition to meeting the criteria that host universities require, students must attain a Cumulative Average Point (CAP) of 3.0 and above. Research laboratory research experience in relevant fields is an advantage. Applicants will also need to provide a personal statement detailing research interests and letters of recommendation from NUS faculty members.

HOW TO APPLY

Please refer to the RO website at
INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS (I-INTERN)

Nguyen Dang Minh Tu

Faculty:
NUS Business School

Programme:
I-Intern @ Ascendas Services Co. Ltd, Vietnam

An awesome interning experience...

Interning at Ascendas Vietnam was a great learning experience for me. I have grown so much, both individually and professionally. I would like to attribute much of my growth to the awesome colleagues and the wonderful opportunities that Ascendas has provided me. The internship offered me comprehensive insights of the job scope in marketing and plenty of invaluable experiences regarding working environments and professionalism. It has enabled me to gain a better and more accurate understanding of the concepts and theories taught in school. I also learnt many new things that can only be found in real-life working environments.

Important life lessons...

One of the most important lessons that I have learnt is the amazing power of teamwork and synergy of the company as a whole. As a marketing intern, producing both insightful and comprehensive marketing analyses was one of the key elements of my job and I managed to do them well by working closely with the marketing team. At the same time, I constantly obtained complementary raw data and inputs from other teams such as Business Development, Customer Services and Project Management. For instance, I learned advanced and useful Excel tips from the Account team, and real estate and construction concepts or terminologies from the Product Management team. Learning from various departments and teams made my internship a highly enriching and well-rounded learning experience.

“...It has been a splendid and meaningful summer internship for me.”

Things that I miss from this internship...

I also appreciate the fact that as an intern, I was offered flexibility, autonomy and mobility while working, as long as I delivered excellent output. For example, I often travel to other Ascendas offices in Binh Duong where our project, Ascendas-Pradera Singapore Tech Park, is located to obtain raw data or to meet clients. This arrangement allowed me to explore the maximum creativity and productivity. I also miss office lunches and outings with my colleagues which were filled with fun and laughter. I love the way everyone treats each other like family.

“...It has enabled me to gain a better and more accurate understanding of the concepts and theories taught in school.”

Nothing but gratitude...

I would like to express my gratitude to Ascendas and NUS IRO for having offered me this valuable internship. It has been a splendid and meaningful summer internship for me. I would love to have more of such opportunities in the upcoming semesters.

What are International Internships (I-Intern)?

To prepare NUS students for the demands of an increasingly globalized economy and interconnected international community, IRO offers international internships (I-Intern) for students to expand their knowledge and hone their skills in a cross-cultural workplace setting. Students are exposed to international best practices at the workplace and career development opportunities in diverse industries, companies and non-governmental organizations.

These programmes are generally held for three months from May to July each year in Asia, Americas, Europe and Africa. A longer attachment of up to six months may be possible.

ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION PROCESS

In addition to meeting the criteria provided by the company, applicants will also need to provide a resume and personal statement to substantiate his/her motivations and objectives for participating in the internship.

HOW TO APPLY

Amsterdam, Netherlands

Baey Yan Ling

Faculty: School of Design and Environment
Programme: U31 Undergraduate Research Conference 2013

My motivation of joining this...

My motivation to join the programme stems from an inquisitive mind. Being an architecture student, I felt that the topic on building healthy, smart and creative cities for the future is relevant to my field of study. Beyond architecture and urban studies, there is much to learn from other disciplines about creating new cities, besides the multi-cultural aspect of the programme and the opportunity to embark on a learning journey.

In beautiful Amsterdam, covering different disciplines like medicine, law and urban planning. Learning from the presentations and the interactive Q&A sessions, I gained much insight. Coming from different countries, the participants have various ideas about what a city of the future is based on their own culture and past experiences.

I learnt so much...

Besides gaining refreshing insights into the lives of fellow peers all over the world and learning about urban planning from a cross disciplinary and cross culture perspective, one thing I learnt is to be confident. To learn better as a community, you have to express your ideas well and be critical of others’ opinions. Listening to an analytical mind is the best way to improve.

Thankful and humbled...

I am grateful to NUS, my home university, because the experiences in NUS have truly prepared me well for this conference, aside from the support of the staff members to the lessons taught in many fascinating modules.

Some highlights of the event...

There were presentations and interactions with different participants.

Bandung, Indonesia

Yip Yuk Lum

Faculty: Arts and Social Sciences
Programme: 14th AUN & 3rd ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers Contest

My reason for participating...

I took part in the Speech Contest because I have always enjoyed public speaking and such competitions are rare at the tertiary level. More importantly, I was greatly interested in meeting and interacting with my peers from other Southeast Asian countries. Finally, Bandung was where the famous Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 was held and as a History student, I wanted to visit the place where the momentous occasion was held.

A unique conference experience...

In this conference, all delegates had to work together to draft a joint declaration, which would be submitted to ASEAN leaders during their next summit. This was clearly a lofty task as we were representing as youths of our respective countries in voicing our expectations of ASEAN in the future. To understand everyone’s perspectives and finding the patience to accommodate all interests was taxing but certainly a necessary experience.

A better appreciation of cultural differences...

Through discussions, I realised that we had different experiences despite the fact that we were all roughly of the same age. The way different countries’ delegates tackled issues, was very telling that cultural environment dictates behaviour and mentality. This made me recognise the profound permeation of cultural context into daily life, serving as a reminder that I should be flexible and open-minded towards another culture.

My academic interest in ASEAN rekindled...

Getting a taste of how ASEAN negotiations work has triggered more profound, fundamental queries about ASEAN. Rather than saying I have been inspired or disillusioned about ASEAN’s future as a region and an organisational entity, I would prefer to conclude that my academic interest in ASEAN has been strongly rekindled, and I would like to pursue deeper studies in my home region.
Woo Xuejun Maurice

Faculty: Arts and Social Sciences
Programme: NUS

First impressions...
Being the only exchange student on TF LEARN Programme@NUS to Indonesia, I was nervous and anxious since I had no one to depend on but myself. In addition, I had two heavy research deadlines that I would have to complete. While studying at the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), my first impression of Yogyakarta was that it was similar to Malaysia. Despite that, people are self-sufficient and they help themselves to keep their general surroundings clean. People here work with a system of mutual trust and reciprocity where people would gladly offer help whenever you are in need. Therefore, Yogyakarta is a relatively safe place.

Tasks at hand...
My first research topic was about performances in Yogyakarta, where I plunged through more than 400 statistical books and conducted interviews with paramilitary officers and soldiers. The second research project required examining the small-scale businesses in Yogyakarta where I interviewed local entrepreneurs. Both projects were done while doing my student internship at a Credit Union in Yogyakarta. I also signed up for a Bahasa Indonesia class at UGM. In fact, my research tasks and internship helped improve my Bahasa, Indonesia.

Volunteer work...
Despite my academic commitments, I managed to fulfill 15 hours of volunteer work. My volunteer work was at two areas. One was at a high school where I helped teach the students English. The other was at an older volunteer group which focused on bringing happiness and hope to children with blood cancer. Overall, I would say that my experience during my volunteer work was satisfying and enlightening.

Final comments...
It is heartening to see the state of thinking in Yogyakarta where people are optimistic towards the future. There seems to be a sense of hope that they will obtain success one day. I saw the Indonesian spirit of giving and reciprocity, as well as an amazing work-life balance, which will make Indonesia become one of the cornerstones of Asian economic development.

“Overall, I would say that my experience during my volunteer work was satisfying and enlightening.”

Chua Zong Jing Zachary

Faculty: Arts and Social Sciences
Programme: SIF Student Fellowship @ Ashoka Innovators for the Public, India

About the programme...
I spent my time with Ashoka Innovators for the Public in India, one of the world’s largest non-governmental organisations (NGOs) but what meant the most was interacting with the world’s leading social entrepreneurs, otherwise known as the Ashoka fellows. Despite hailing from diverse fields and sectors, Ashoka fellows all identify with a common passion for the social good and that of an individually distinct innovation in their work.

Lessons learnt...
After eight weeks, six states and five cities in India, I saw the grace of its kind people, the magnificence of its history, the boundless opportunities in the horizon and the beauty that never fails to amaze. From a train carriage packed with passengers who all turned to render help to a certain last blonde Singaporean to the grandeur of the Taj Mahal, I marvelled at the splendour of India. Nothing steals your breath away like India does.

A blessed experience...
In these eight fleeting weeks, India took my breath away with its beauty and greatness, and taught us about passion and happiness. Not a single day went by without the thought: “Oh my God, I’m in India!” and not a single night could pass without having a story to tell every moment was surreal. Contrary to popular belief, my days were neither filled with sweltering heat nor spontaneous outbursts of Bollywood beats. My experience was less transcended all my wildest imaginations and hallowed me.

“Nothing steals your breath away like India does.”
International Internship in Suzhou (China) and Batam (Indonesia)

StepOut had a chat with Mr Willy Koh, CEO of Racer Technology Pte Ltd. He spoke to us about the importance of integrity and gave us an account of the NUS interns who worked at his China and Indonesia facilities from May to August 2013.

Denny had been instrumental to ensure the proper establishment of process documentation compliance and the planning of electronic works for new projects. As a highly productive individual, he was a fast learner and was able to adapt to a new environment. His work had been consistent and we were impressed with his initiative to contribute to the company.

Having integrity is extremely important in one’s character. Students have to guard their freedom and be street smart. They should also learn fast on the job as the internship period may be short.

We look forward to work with NUS closely on a continued partnership to provide more opportunities for NUS students as interns in our company.

ABOUT THE HOST COMPANY

RACER TECHNOLOGY PTE LTD

Established in December 1988, Racer Technology is one of the leading medical device manufacturers. They specialise in manufacturing high quality precision product components, sub-assemblies and contract manufacturing. Through a systematic understanding of the requirements and target feasibility experiments, their product design service makes device development more predictable in scope, time and cost. Its disciplined approach to systems engineering, programmatic risk management and detailed design reduces development risk and minimises cost and time to market. Racer Technology has overseas presence in California, USA, Suzhou, China, Batam, Indonesia and Senai, Malaysia.

We were delighted to have Chen Xiao and Denny as interns in our Suzhou, China and Batam, Indonesia facilities respectively. Both proved to be hardworking and meticulous interns during their time with Racer Technology.

Chen Xiao was attached to our facility in China and was responsible to update accounts application forms, customer data and other finance processes in a timely fashion. To add value to his internship, he was sent for a week of training at Ernst & Young, one of the biggest international accounting firms, in Singapore before he left for China. Equipped with a sound knowledge in finance and accounting, he was able to have a good grasp of the financial processes in the company which enabled him to learn quickly.

“...”