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Six months to go....

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So it has been over six months since I packed up my life and came to India and the ISB. The point in time also marks halfway of my MBA which is a scary thought as it seems like only yesterday I arrived!

In a two year MBA programme, the end of the first half of the MBA would be marked by some time away from the classroom; students would use this time to either intern at a company or to do other activities. In the ISB one-year MBA, students only get two weeks away from the classroom and many students spend this time working on an internship of sorts.

The ISB offers an Experiential Learning Programme (ELP) where Indian and international companies come to the ISB with real life business problems and teams of four to five students are selected to work on these problems under the guidance of a faculty advisor. The ELP is akin to a consulting project and provides students with an opportunity to apply their theoretical learnings from the core terms to real life issues. ELPs last a few months and at the end, the student teams are asked to present their recommendations to the companies. ELPs count for two credits towards graduation, there are prizes on offer for the best ELPs and since some companies use ELPs as part of their pre-recruitment exercises, ELPs are taken very seriously by students. The two week break is offered by ISB so that student teams can carry out primary research or field visits. I am working on an ELP for a subsidiary of an Indian conglomerate regarding the market entry of a new technology product so the two weeks have not been a complete break for me.

A couple of days before we disappeared for the break, I celebrated my birthday in the ISB tradition which involves being dunked in the swimming pool and wearing more of my birthday cake than eating it, all at midnight. I also had to give two exams on my birthday which was not fun at all!

The last six months have passed at a staggering rate and the core terms have taught all of the students about the fundamental aspects of business and management right from high-level strategy to low-level operations. We now enter what some

alums have termed the “fun” part of the MBA, though I’m not sure any experience this frantic and intense will be described as fun by someone going through it!

I think they call it the fun part for a variety of reasons though. Firstly, we now enter the elective terms (terms five to eight) where we get to choose the subjects we wish to study, the concentrations we wish to major in and the study groups we want to work in. Registration for these electives is through a process whereby each student is given a fixed number of points which they use to bid for subjects. This process caused quite a bit of nervousness among the students as everyone was concerned about whether or not they would get their chosen subjects; the ISB does its best to ensure everyone does and I am pretty confident when I say the majority of the students have. This process will be repeated for all elective terms.

Secondly, a number of exchange students from business schools all over the world have started reaching the ISB, they will be here for terms five and six. Meeting and studying with people from a different background is always a fantastic experience.

Thirdly, two of the ISB’s flagship events will take place in December and since this year marks 10 years of the ISB they promise to be the biggest ever. I will blog about these closer to the time.

Something that will be at the forefront of everybody’s mind over the next couple of months and which will make things a little less fun is placements and jobs after ISB.

With the global economy teetering, the US down in the dumps and the European debt crisis making news, everyone wants to know how this will affect recruitment. We can only wait and watch.

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