

REPORT AL RIENTRO DELL'ESPERIENZA DI SCAMBIO - A.A.
2013/2014

_Cognome	JUNG BOEHM
_Nome	MICHELLE
_Matricola	798164
_Anno di corso	2.LM
_Corsi di studi	PRODUCT SERVICE SYSTEM DESIGN
_Sezione	Polimi Design
_e-mail	mjungb@gmail.com
_Sede di scambio	Bauhaus University Weimar
_Stato	Germany
_ID ERASMUS (per sedi in EU)	DWEIMAR01
_Semestre svolto all'estero	2°

Testo

My erasmus experience in Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany has been more than a learning opportunity, but rather a full life changing experience.

For a foreigner student in such an internationalized university like Politecnico di Milano, an exchange may seem as something that one might take for granted. On the contrary, the chance of living in a different country, with different people, speaking a different language, within an environment full of various cultures, it is definitely a challenging and amusing situation.

Traveling and meeting new people has always been a thing that I eagerly look for in my life. Probably, the reason why I decided to come all the way from Argentina to Italy.

Having the chance of coming to study in Europe is certainly a dream come true. Therefore, it is even more enthusiastic to have the possibility of fulfilling yet another one, while already being living the first dream.

Nevertheless, my experience with erasmus actually started back in 2010, moment in which through a friend, I learned that the possibility to apply for an exchange also extended to international students. A few years passed before I actually took the opportunity, but I realize if it was not for my friend probably I would not have known I could also do it.

When formally evaluating my participation to the Erasmus program, I remember looking at the offer of places to go to and how easy it was for me to choose. Reading the name Bauhaus University Weimar, was almost unbelievable for me.

As I studied in the early stages of my career, Weimar was 'the place' where design was born as a serious profession. There is literally a before and after Bauhaus in Weimar. So many important designers and world influencers lived and studied there. Just thinking about stepping on the same soil as them, almost made my eyes watered. Therefore, I obviously did my best to be able to get the chance.

I applied immediately when Politecnico di Milano opened the call for students interested in this kind of experience. The procedure was followed step by step including also the interview with the sponsor teacher. There, every student must show its portfolio and state what their motives for participating are and exhibit the qualifications to be taken into consideration for the exchange. After passing this interview, Politecnico posted the list of candidates chosen for each university. That way, I was accepted to go to Bauhaus University and it marked the beginning of the journey for me.

After a very demanding period, with the ending of the final studio and other subjects of the semester I managed to finish the preparation of my trip to Weimar.

The organization was indeed a bit difficult given the fact that the city is not so well connected to Milano. It takes either a train of 12 hours, a 9 hour drive or a flight to Berlin followed by a bus to finally arrive to Weimar.

On the 6th of March 2014, I entered the city full of hope and excitement. The impact of the winter period, though I must say has nothing to do with the vibe you get when the summer starts warming Weimar.

The following day, there was an event for Welcoming Erasmus students. I remember waking up early to arrive on time. I met a few people that were later part of my group of friends and classmates that I grew very fond of. In that welcoming event it was explained the course of the semester with focus on the activities organized by Erasmus associations for international students. After the presentation, came the questions about the procedure in general and some of my doubts were evacuated in that moment.

Of course, nothing actually prepares you to face the actual procedure, which defies very much from Politecnico's way, obviously.

The real challenge for me was the german language, even though I had previous preparation, because of some administrative issues I was not given a place in the language course before the beginning of the semester. This fact, I believe affected profoundly my experience in a german speaking community. Therefore, I would strongly recommend a future candidate to take this matter into consideration.

The semester finally started in April 2014, for me in the middle of a craze for hunting an accommodation and the election of the semester subjects. The previous are two very important tasks that in my opinion could be handled better by the offices in charge at Bauhaus University.

The first one created serious problems not only in my case but in many other students that came to Weimar. The limited amount of places in the university residences combined with the fact that it is a small city, makes the demand saturate the market for rooms. Many students prolonged their erasmus periods and extended their contracts in the residence rooms, making the offer even slimmer. Nonetheless, this is not new for Bauhaus University, and according to me they should find other solutions for students that are accepted in their institution but find themselves with no place to live.

Unfortunately that was my case, I was without a steady residence until late April, which obviously affected the level of stress I had to handle besides the normal one considering transferring to a new city, finding yourself in a new environment. Thanks to the help of friends and family the situation was taken to good terms.

The second task, choosing the subjects was another challenging situation for me in particular and also for almost of the student body, including the german ones.

For Bauhaus University there is a requirement for each student to follow in every semester 1 Projekt subject, which is worth 18 credits, a Fachkurs, which is 6 credits, and a seminar, which is also 6 credits, or the possibility of taking 3 workshops during the entire semester length, which mean 2 credits each. Explained like this might sound more clear than the actual experience you live once you are enrolled and considering you also fulfilled already the study plan that unfortunately was wrong because it was chosen ahead of the semester's subject presentation. Every semester the subjects change, therefore nobody really knows really what they are picking.

In addition, there is a day dedicated to the named presentation of the subjects but unfortunately for international students it is fully conducted in german. The following day you have to find the teachers you are interested in and introduce yourself for the teacher has to actually pick you for the subject in question. The next day, there is a craze of students around the campus to present 3 sheets of paper that mean the application for the courses. In spite of this procedure, the subjects can be changed until late in the semester, something that still puzzles me a bit.

Despite all of the above, once settled in and having chosen the subjects and being chosen for attending them, the experience changes completely.

The way of conducting classes and working in Bauhaus University is completely different from any of my past experiences. Following the traditional learning by doing approach of the early Bauhaus, each student is in charge of their education and he/she can strive to achieve whatever it is in their

purpose. The facilities of the campus certainly allow that to happen. You can count on a photolab, a videolab, and editing room, a recording studio, a wood/metal workshops, and so on.

Looking back at my rough beginning, I feel very proud of my performance, and the work I came up with, after a lot of hard work is something that I was able to teach myself within the context of the university.

A became a bit of a researcher, taking advantage of the extensive bibliotek's offer and the results of that research are the early seeds for a bigger project of mine that might actually start in my master's thesis. So, as you might conclude it has been a very fruitful experience that will change the course of life probably forever.

In conclusion, I am nothing but thankful for this opportunity and looking forward to making the best out of it in my very next future.

Autorizzo al trattamento dei miei dati personali ai sensi del Decreto Legislativo n. 196/03 da parte del Politecnico di Milano.

Firma_____