

OXFORD ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

Balliol College, Oxford, England – 30.06 – 13.07.2013

“I am a person who has experienced summer camps of all sorts and I enjoyed every moment I spent there, whether I carried out with English courses, debating or photography. However, I can infallibly say that this summer programme was the one that encouraged me to make future plans, questioned my knowledge and provided me with the best work and social environments.

From the very beginning - my arrival at the airport - I started interacting with people from Italy, Netherlands or Portugal. As soon as I reached the campus, I could feel the happiness in the air; all those smiles and greetings, all those children who came on their own and who were stepping out of their comfort zones just to make a new friend. And there I was, the only identity from Romania, traipsing into the middle of a group full of shy girls who were barely exchanging a few words amongst them. I introduced myself, we began to chat and we found ourselves one hour later chortling. Later that night, we had some get-to-know-each-other games and a welcoming meeting from our program director.

The course structure and the activities go as following: for academic purposes, one has a choice of Economics and Business Studies, Creative Writing, Psychology, Physics, Math, International Relations, Biology, English Literature, IELTS preparation, Film and many more. One will be doing those activities/courses daily for three hours, and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday one has an extra workshop for two hours. The workshops are either related to the subjects one opted for (e.g.: for Business Studies – developing a new business idea, for Film – shooting and editing a film) or debating and public speaking, English etc.

My personal selection was Economics and Business Studies, along with the same workshop, but from what I have heard from my fellow colleagues and friends, I am convinced that each subject brings appealing material to the learners. The classes were composed of ten to fifteen students and I had different teachers for the morning lesson and workshop. We were a very international class, with people from China, Indonesia, Denmark or the United States, whom I made friends with effortlessly through our group tasks and outside the lectures. My tutors were clearly very passionate about the topics. Having been in the business industry for more than 20 years, they knew how to provide us with the best examples, explanations and case studies for numerous companies (such as Yahoo or Blackberry). I have never done business or economics before but I managed to leave with so much information and interest in the global issues. I must warn you though, there is also a lot of work: whatever class you embrace, you receive homework, a project or an essay. Although you might think that writing an essay is plain sailing, writing a 1300 word essay on the causes of the Eurozone crisis demands a lot of research, but the soul purpose of those assignments is to get you closer to the argument.

We had a guest lecture every Wednesday afternoon on topics such as Behavioural Economics from people studying at University of Cambridge. Every Tuesday and Thursday, we had to pick an afternoon activity (museum visits, punting, ghost tours or free time). On Friday evenings we had the parties, where everyone was dressed their best. Sunday should have been the lazy day, however we were all working on our essays. I still call to mind how my class would gather around on the front lawn of the campus, read each other's essays and debate on the studies.

All the aspects previously mentioned are key factors of the summer camp's affable medium, yet probably the most important aspect of this summer camp is the people. Apart from the devotion and enthusiasm from the staff and teachers, the thing I was most impressed with must be the relationships that I have established with the other kids, because I would have never imagined keeping in touch with people from Hong Kong or Canada even after the session was over. The warmth and kindness acquired from them really gave me positive energy; our smiles and chuckles were surely noticeable. In those 2 weeks, not only did we learn about a subject of particular interest to us, but we also learned how to accept and socialise with people from all over the world.

For me, this was a life changing experience. If you are a person who is ready for responsibility but also for good fun, this is the place for you. My best advice while being there is to step out of your comfort zone and try to make as many friends as you can in those lovely two weeks because they will most certainly influence your journey. Don't be afraid to take a risk or to accept a new challenge because you never know what benefits they will consort you. I encourage you to try the Enterprise programme in that you only know how commendable a camp is after you start thinking about returning the following year. Trust me, if I had the opportunity to do it all over again, I most blithely would. “

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