

The Expeditions Fund contributed towards my finances that allowed me to attend a summer school in Barcelona. The programme I participated in was called Leadership and Negotiation Techniques at the University Autonomous Barcelona. The university has an occupying position of 4th best universities in Spain, 147 in the world ranking, and in Europe it ranks among the top 100, with 68th position. The summer school lasted three weeks from the 24th of June until the 14th of July 2017. Throughout the three weeks we had classes scheduled from 9.00 until 13:00 pm, during week days. We covered a range of topics from learning about the leadership theory, to case-study based activities, where we had to assess the position of each candidate- and how the theory can be applied to their situation. This related closely to my history degree, because we had to select the best primary and secondary sources that would support each case, which is very similar to what I need to include in my history essays. Therefore, the summer school exercises were a useful way of practicing my analytical skills. After our morning classes, in the afternoons we also had the chance to participate in social activities with the current U.A.B students. The activities varied from learning about the Catalan culture and language to ice-breaker group activities. The reason why I wanted to attend the summer school was because I am interested in a career in Law, and I thought that all of the skills gained throughout the summer school would allow me to become a better negotiator. This is a very useful skill within the field of Law, because in order to win a case, you need to negotiate the best conditions of a contract for your client. This summer school also stood out to me because I was preparing to take the role of the President of the Baking society for this academic year. Therefore, the leadership aspect was also another key reason of why I wanted to attend.



The summer school was amazing, I honestly describe it as one of the best summers of my life so far. I have met people from all over the world, including the United States, Morocco, Austria and Australia, with whom I am still in touch, and we are planning our next trip for the upcoming summer 2018. What I have definitely gained from the summer school was communication skills, and being able to respond quickly and effectively to challenging situations. During our daily sessions we have practiced these

type of soft skills through group exercises based on the case study we would be analysing that day. This summer school programme taught me how to think outside the box, and how to become more confident in my abilities, to not only communicate with others from different backgrounds, but also how to lead a group effectively on a project. I believe that summer schools like this are a great opportunity to push yourself outside your comfort zone, to challenge yourself and learn how to adapt within different environments.

Another thing, I really enjoyed about the Summer school was the opportunity to live on campus. This was definitely a life changing experience as it has taught me a lot of self-discipline and organisation skills. The summer school was a great opportunity to see what moving out from home entails and what I should be prepared for once I do decide to move out from home in the future. The facilities at Vila Universitària, were varied as we had access to an outdoor swimming pool, football field, beach volleyball court, 2 table-tennis tables, 2 street basketball systems, garden and gym access. Those were great options to choose from on the days we decided not to explore the city of Barcelona. The nearest train station was Bellaterra, which had a very good connection to the city centre of Barcelona. The facilities at the university definitely improved the overall experience of my stay at the university because there was always something to do regardless of the time of the day.

Throughout the summer school I also had the opportunity to explore the city of Barcelona. My favourite route to explore was the Medieval route. From the Place del Rei, which was the centre of historic Barcelona, to the nearby city hall, that revealed the medieval roots of this institution. The architecture of Gothic and neo-Gothic buildings, competing with such beautiful churches as: Santa Maria del Pi, and the magnificent Santa Maria del Mar, amongst the gothic quarter from Plaça de Catalunya was definitely one of the most intriguing parts of Barcelona. The pathway through Plaça de Catalunya linked to the Columbus statue at the end of the pathway. The gothic pathway around Barcelona linked closely to my medieval modules during my first year of history. The architecture reflected what is left from the Middle Ages. It was a great experience to see La Sagrada Família, one of the cathedrals that we have discussed in class. Apart from the Medieval path route, I have also explored Castell de Montjuïc, which is an old military fortress, with roots dating back from 1640, based on top of a hill, with amazing views over the whole city of Barcelona. The design of the Castell de Montjuïc is an example of one of the military tactics of the time, to defend the city from any invasions from the Balearic Sea. Another famous site was the Arc de Triomf, built by Josep Vilaseca and Csanovas, to serve the purpose of the main access route for the 1888 Barcelona World Fair. Alongside, Arc de Triomf, it was also very interesting to walk through Parc de la Ciutadella, which was also built at the same time, for the purpose of the 1888 Barcelona Universal Exposition.

Overall, the summer school taught me many things varying from; leadership, organisation, planning, and communication skills, to more practical stuff such as how to live alone without my parents for three weeks. I believe that each aspect of the summer school including the group exercises, exploring of the city, and networking with students from all over the world, significantly contributed towards my personal growth, and strengthened my understanding of historical events, and their impact on society.

