

My Exchange in the City of Fashion and Design

Milan, what an awesome city. Going on exchange was one of the best decisions I've ever taken in my life. I needed some change in my life and that's exactly what I got. I was able to meet so many new people from all around the globe! I was surprised by how many exchange students Bocconi was able to welcome. We were over 600 exchange students and everything was so well organized! The ESN (DEN at McGill) was very welcoming and they would organize trips and events every single week. Being part of this amazing experience made me want to be involved in DEN, so while I was still in Milan, I applied and got in.

So, coming back to my experience in Milan, it definitely was up to my expectations, the city was nice but mostly because I was able to travel with very little money and make new friends. Fortunately, I was fully prepared when I got there, because I don't like bad surprises, I rented an apartment through an agency, it was kind of expensive but I don't regret it because it was very close to the University. I only had some issues choosing and setting up my courses but I didn't stress too much about that.

The thing that surprised me the most about this exchange is how quick it passed, I feel like it was just a month ago that I was leaving the very cold Montreal. Of course I felt some culture shock, but this wasn't a surprise for me, I'm getting very used to it since I started University. I had a hard time getting along with some of my Italian roommates but I dealt with it the best way I could.

Bocconi was a great school. I feel like economics was their forte. I learned a lot in my Macroeconomics course and my professor was amazing. Unfortunately to be honest, I took a Strategy core course and a Marketing course (New Products) that were very repetitive and not as interesting as they should be. My favourite course, and one of the reasons why I chose to attend Bocconi: Workshop in Film Industry Management was incredibly enriching and interesting. It definitely lived up to the high expectations I already had. I was sad to hear that the course is going to be replaced by another culture-related course starting next year. I'm sure a lot of McGill students would have loved it.

Concerning the things that can be improved, I would advise McGill to check the list of approved courses, because I found myself choosing courses that were for Graduate students at Bocconi and had to completely change my schedule when registering.

I will finish up with my top 5 tips for going on exchange:

- 1) Plan in advance (from courses to accommodation) to make sure you don't get very bad surprises and to be able to enjoy your first month without worrying about these things.
- 2) Travel as much as you can, if you can make sure your Friday or Monday or both, are free
- 3) Use platforms like airbnb, blabla car, Capitaine Train and many others, you will save so much money!
- 4) Do as many activities with the Exchange Network in your new University as you can in the beginning, to meet people and then travel with them!
- 5) Don't leave all the studying for the end of the semester, trains and planes are great for studying!! And this way you'll be able to travel until the very end.

Finally, I am very grateful for this opportunity I was given, I had so much fun but at the same time I learned a lot, I hope everyone had as a good experience I did.

P.S: Please find attached some pictures, I had a very hard time choosing just one.

Valentine Bougaud

Exchange student at Bocconi, Milan - Winter 2015



Me in my favourite Italian city: Florence