

Southern Utah University and INSEEC  
Masters of Business Administration

# International Project

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## Overview and Explanation of International Project

The purpose of my international project is to better prepare future students for their international study abroad at INSEEC in Paris, France. It is also to assist the administration of SUU's study abroad program so they can know what occurred with the first semester of students, and what can be improved in the future.

After considering several options of projects, I decided that this project would be the most beneficial. The reason I decided to do my project on our Paris trip was because of the many unexpected things that happened during our trip. I realized that there were some things that could be done to make the experience more successful and organized. When I mentioned the idea to my fellow students they all agreed that it would be a very useful project.

The initial idea for the project arose when we realized several things that needed attention:

- There were scheduling conflicts at INSEEC.
- Unexpected Costs.
- Living arrangements were different than expected.
- International Project expectations were unclear.
- We could use our experience to help future students.
- This was a great experience that could be even better.

After looking at all of the issues we had recognized, I made a list and tried to come up with solutions to all of our problems. Once I had a list of things that deserved attention, I divided the project into several sections as it applied to each subject.

The first section is geared toward the students, and is for their preparation and stay in Paris. My wife and I tried to think of everything we could that would be useful to future students and expounded on

each subject. The second section is a survey that I asked all of the SUU students to take. It provides useful feedback for the administration to look at and see what may need attention. The third section is some responses I received from professors at INSEEC. Their responses are in answer to questions I asked about what they felt went well and what needed improvement concerning SUU students entering the INSEEC program. The last section is notes from a discussion I had with Aaron Rose, the International Program Coordinator at Brigham Young University. We discussed what BYU does to insure successful international study abroad programs and he gave some suggestions that may be useful to SUU's international program.

In conclusion, my hope is that SUU and INSEEC will be able to use this project to make improvements in the Double Degree program, and help future students gain the most out of their experience. I consider my time in Paris to be a once in a lifetime experience that I will be grateful for throughout the rest of my life. I would encourage any student who has the means to take advantage of such a great opportunity.

"If we don't offer ourselves to the unknown, our senses dull. Our world becomes small and we lose our sense of wonder. Our eyes don't lift to the horizon; our ears don't hear the sounds around us. The edge is off our experience and we pass our days in a routine that is both comfortable and limiting. We wake up one day and find that we have lost our dreams in order to protect our days. The fear of the unknown and the lure of the comfortable will conspire to keep you from taking the chances the traveler has to take. But if you take them, while there may be moments of doubt to be sure, you will never regret your choice."

-Sabrina Ward Harrison

# **Information for Future Study Abroad Students**

## **Flights**

Next to tuition and rent, flying is the biggest expense that you will encounter. Utilizing online services such as cheaptickets.com, Travelocity.com, priceline.com etc. is a good way to cut back on costs if you schedule flights early enough. However, the best solution is a website that is designed specifically for students, teachers, and anyone under 26. It is called Statravel.com. It allows you to contact an agent who can meet your specific needs, and they can usually save you money over other agencies on round trip flights to Paris. It is also a wonderful resource if you want to take any trips while in Europe too. They can help you find flights, lodging, and sights to visit. It is especially helpful to those who don't know where to go once they have chosen a destination they would like to visit.

In Europe there are two discount airlines that allow you to fly throughout Europe cheaper than riding a train: [EasyJet](#) and [Ryan Air](#). It is best to plan ahead and schedule flights 1 to 2 months ahead of time in order to get the very best deals. You are allowed 1 carry-on bag with the price of the ticket and anything extra will be charged. Most international flights allow two bags and a carry-on. It is best to verify with the airline before leaving to make sure what you will and will not be charged for at the gates.

Remember to have your passports up to date and on hand when you go to the airport. I was recently married and my wife booked our tickets under our married name. When we arrived at the airport her passport still had her maiden name on it. We nearly missed the flight because

the airport had to rebook the tickets under her maiden name before they would let us fly. To avoid headaches such as this, be sure to check and *recheck* all itineraries and documents well before your departure date.

## Housing

One of the largest problems that we encountered was our housing situations. There is no student housing in Paris as we know it in the United States.

Most likely your housing will not be in close proximity with INSEEC. The closest student in our group took 20 minutes by metro to reach the school and those on the outskirts of the city took an hour to get to the school. The metro allows quick and easy transportation around the city, but Paris is a huge city and it still takes a good chunk of time to get anywhere.

As housing was a problem, I am currently trying to contact a man in France who has started a business that focuses solely on find housing in Paris for students from America. I will submit this as soon as I come in contact with him and hopefully housing will be a much smoother operation for the next set of students.

## Food Prices

Food can quickly become one of your biggest expenses if you are not careful. Paris is very expensive and eating out can add up very quickly. My wife and I worked on a pretty frugal budget and ate out as little as possible and still spent around 800 Euros in two months on food. There are certain locations around Paris where you can shop for less expensive food. The three

main grocery stores where you can find the best prices and an American-styled layout are Lidl, Monoprix, and Carrefour.

Lidl is a small grocery store where you can find all of the basics such as milk, bread, cereal etc. We found that it was the most inexpensive place to shop if you can find what you are looking for. You need to bring your own shopping bags which can be purchased at Lidl locations and reused for future shopping trips.

Monoprix and Carrefour are similar to a miniature Wal-mart. They have groceries, clothing, toiletries, appliances and more. They are a bit more expensive than Lidl but have many more locations throughout Paris. You can bring your own shopping bags to Monoprix, however they provided free of charge. Shopping at these three stores helps cut back on the money spent on fast food and restaurants.

Another good idea for saving money spent on food is shopping at the outdoor markets. There are many outdoor markets that sell fresh meat and produce where you can barter on the price. There were many times we were able to get big discounts on fresh food at these markets. It also makes for a good cultural experience where you can practice French and see another population of the city.

Water is another resource that you do not need to spend money on. Paris has safe water as they have an advanced purification system you can check out by visiting [www.eaudeparis.fr](http://www.eaudeparis.fr). Like most restaurants, drinks add greatly to the cost of your meal. By law every restaurant in France must offer you a carafe d'eau (pitcher of water) free upon request. So you don't have to feel obligated to buy drinks.

By law, all restaurants must have their menus posted outside so that you can see how much you are going to be spending before going into the restaurant. This is helpful in deciding what will fit your budget and your taste. Many restaurants have their menus in English as well.

You will see Brasseries on nearly every corner in Paris. These are restaurants where you can sit down and order from a menu. Their prices range on average from 10 to 25 Euros for a good meal. Nicer restaurants are about 20 Euros and up. If you want to eat on the top of the Eiffel Tower, plan on spending about 150 Euros per person (this includes a “free” ride to the top).

\*Tips on saving money on food: Buy baguettes at the bakery for around 1 Euro and eat throughout the day. Water is safe throughout Paris. Buy a bottle of water and then refill it at home and carry it with you. Cook at home.

## Metro

During your stay in Paris you will travel on the Metro system every day. You will appreciate how easy it is to navigate your way through the city on the metro. The best option is to purchase a Navigo card that allows you to board the trains without having to buy tickets every day. It costs 55 Euros for a month pass within Zones 1 and 2 (where 90% + of your travel will occur) and about 17 Euros for a week pass. Be sure to bring a passport sized photo to insert on the Navigo (a simple color print from home will do) otherwise you will have to pay 5 Euros for photos in the metro stations.

An important thing to know is that monthly passes expire at the end of the month no matter when you purchased them. Weekly passes expire on Sunday night and must be renewed

on Monday. The prices are always the same regardless of when purchased. For example: if you arrive in Paris on May 15<sup>th</sup> and buy a month pass for 55 euros it will expire on the last day of May and not on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June. If you buy a week pass on Wednesday it will cost 17 Euros (the same cost as it would be to purchase it on Monday) and will expire Sunday evening.

Another option is to purchase “a la cart” tickets that come in groups of 10 and cost about 12 Euros. Each ticket is good for a one way trip anywhere in Zones 1 and 2. The ticket will not work once you change directions on the metro. For example: If you decide to go to the Arc De Triumph and you have to take three different lines to get there, one ticket will allow you to go the entire way. However, once you head back the way you came the ticket becomes invalid and you must use another. These are convenient for short trips and days that you know you won't be travelling a lot.

Day passes cost about 6 Euros and they allow you to go anywhere in Zones 1 and 2. The price goes up if you choose more Zones. We used these for the first few days in Paris and they add up quickly. Overall, the best option is to purchase the Navigo as soon as you can and never worry about buying tickets within Paris again. The Navigo card itself must be purchased from a metro booth attendant and is not available for purchase from the Navigo recharging stations. There are not attendants at every metro stop, so make sure to identify a stop where you can talk with an attendant who can initially help you purchase your Navigo card. From that point on, you will be able to recharge your Navigo at any metro booth without speaking to an attendant.

Plan on spending at least half an hour to go anywhere within Paris. Although you will find quicker routes to destinations depending on your proximity, most trips take a good amount of time because of stops and congestion. After a few days you will get comfortable with travel times and will soon become familiar with the time it takes to travel around Paris.

Most metro stations have free maps of the Paris metro system. You will need these in order to know which lines to take when you travel. Each station has a map on the wall but it is best to have one on hand. We found a free Paris Metro Map app for our iPod that we used every day. It would plot out routes for you so that you knew exactly which lines to get off and on.

It is important to note that the metro stops running at 1 a.m. and some of the outer zones stop running even earlier. We experienced this first hand as we were in Zone 3 and went to the station just after 11 p.m. When no trains came for 30 minutes we noticed the schedule of the trains and realized that we had missed it. We had to take a taxi home and it was expensive and frustrating.

Taxis must be called ahead of time or met at taxi stands within the city. You cannot hail a taxi like other large cities. Luckily a hotel attendant was able to call a taxi for us, but you are also charged for the distance the cab has to travel to pick you up as well as the distance it carries you. Taxi cab drivers will also calculate their preferred tip into your final bill, so don't pay them an extra tip on top of the price they ask for.

## Traveling Outside of Paris

Travelling is one of the hardest expenses to plan for. Since there are so many places to visit, the amount you spend is potentially limitless. We had planned on taking several trips outside of Paris, but once we realized how expensive it would be, some of us only went on two or three locations out of the city. There are plenty of things to see in Paris alone too keep you busy and entertained for the duration of your stay, but if you are planning on travelling outside of Paris you will have several options.

First, Ryan Air and Easy Jet are two incredibly cheap airlines if you are interested in flying to other countries in Europe. However, they have limited seating, limited destinations and prices change daily. Be sure to plan any outside trip at least a month in advance as prices always go up anywhere from 50-100 Euros the closer you get to your departure date. Ryan Air, the cheaper of the two, also does not fly out of Paris's main airport (CDG). It flies out of the Disneyland Paris airport or Beauvais Airport which you can access from train, but will add to your overall travel cost.

If you are going to a large city, or a more well-known area, the train will most likely be the best option for you. While train travel throughout France isn't too expensive, traveling to other countries in Europe by train can get pretty pricey and take a very long time. To give you a general idea, my wife and I spent a week before the semester in Germany and rode a sleeper train from Berlin to Paris that cost us around 400 Euros and took 10 hours. You can buy train tickets on sites such as RailEurope or Eurorail that will allow you to travel by train into several countries for a decent price (better prices for students under 26). However, if you want to see several outlying areas in France, you will want to rent a car, which legally requires a driver of 25 or older.

Our group took a trip to Normandy and Mont Saint Michel, which is on the west coast of France and highly recommended. There are no trains to Normandy or to Mont Saint Michel. We all chipped in to rent two cars. We had five in each car and after we divided rent, gas, toll booths, and fees each individual spent about 80 Euros, or about \$100 per person (roughly \$500 per car). We found that it is a bad idea to use a credit card at the toll booths. We were not only charged for the road toll, but the credit card was charged a foreign transaction fee (about \$5) for

each stop, and there were at least five stops going one way to Normandy. Have enough cash on hand to cover the tolls, the credit card may be faster but it is much more expensive in the end.

We were lucky to find a hostel in the city of Caen which was really inexpensive, about 15 Euros per night per person. You can go online to find different networks of hostels around Europe. For those who haven't stayed in a hostel, it is basically a place for lodging students and travelers who don't mind sharing a room with other travelers. They are good places to meet people of other cultures and backgrounds as well. We met people from all parts of the world. Although our experience in a hostel was positive, you may want to be careful about carrying expensive items on these trips as some hostels may be crowded and ask you to share rooms with travelers you do not know.

## Packing

When packing for your trip bring as little luggage as possible. My wife and I brought two suitcases apiece, carry-on luggage, as well as extra personal items. It only took one trip through the Paris metro system to realize that we really over did it. I had packed around 10+ shirts, 2 pairs of jeans, a few pairs of slacks, several pairs of shorts, 4 pairs of shoes, etc. My wife packed just as much or more than me. We were told that we needed to be dressed up when we went to school, which was false, so I never wore about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the stuff I brought. You can get along fine with only a few pairs of everything, and you can buy anything else you need if necessary. The main thing is pack light with as few suitcases as possible. If we did it again we would each bring only one suitcase. Also, we were fortunate that our airlines did not charge us extra for our luggage, but many airlines have now changed their policies to only one checked bag and one carry-on. If you fear you won't have room for the things you want to bring home, I

would suggest packing an empty duffel bag in your suitcase for short trips outside of Paris as well as for any items that won't fit on the way home.

Listed below are some items you will want to be sure to bring with you:

- Shoes that you can walk comfortably in since you will be walking everywhere.
- Power converters for your electronics.
- Umbrella
- Camera
- Passports
- Warm jacket (it was very cold the first few weeks even though it was summer)
- Laptop (computer labs can become crowded and most housing has internet)
- Phone with international chip (Verizon doesn't offer this) you can purchase prepaid phones in France, mostly for emergencies.

## INSEEC/Class Scheduling

INSEEC has two locations that are within a few blocks of each other. One is located on Rue Saint Merri the other is on Claude Vallefaux. You will take part in an orientation when you first arrive at the school. You are given a schedule of the classes you signed up for that includes the time and location for each class. We were allowed to take classes that crossed into different types of majors. For example, INSEEC offers a luxury, marketing, and finance degree. Normally, students who are in marketing take a set schedule of marketing classes and will not take luxury or finance classes. We took classes from several different categories, which caused a little confusion among teachers and students. This may be different for future groups.

Classes are mostly in lecture format with little homework. It is important to take good notes throughout each class because most exams include final projects that cover material learned throughout the semester. You are given plenty of notice of when things are due and most teachers tell you what the final project is on the first day of class. Several of our classes had group projects for the final where we were able to work with other international students. It makes for a very interesting experience to see how people from other cultures interact and go about completing projects. Teachers are all masters of their field they are teaching, and have had years of professional experience. The teachers were the highlight of INSEEC. They come from all around the world and are a wealth of knowledge.

We were told before we left that we were expected to dress up each day in class, or at least be business casual. When we arrived we found this to not be true. There were some who came dressed up a few times and the Chinese students tended to be rather formal, but the majority of students dressed just how we do when we go to class. However, no hats were worn as it is considered rude to wear hats indoors.

Be sure to take advantage of the cultural diversity at INSEEC. You will have the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. It is a good time to break away from those you are familiar with and meet new people. The classes were great learning opportunities but some of the best experiences come from learning about people from other cultures. My eyes were opened quite a bit, and I realized that what we may think is the ideal is not globally always accepted.

## Free Time

Classes are held Monday through Wednesday and you will do an occasional tour on Thursday with the French culture class. This leaves you with long weekends to do whatever you like. You will have plenty of time to see every part of Paris. Most of the main attractions are free to walk through (Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, Sacre Coeur, Arc de Triomphe, Luxembourg Gardens, Tuileries Gardens and many more). It is well worth the time to visit each location and learn about its history. You may find it worthwhile to purchase a book on Paris that gives details about each location throughout the city. My wife and I carried around a book put out by National Geographic that gave brief histories and fun facts about all the major attractions in Paris. It also gave information on less well known areas around the city. We found many interesting areas around the city that were much less crowded and less visited because they aren't the "main attractions". As you spend some time visiting different areas you will find your favorite areas and visit them often.

On the first Sunday of each month the Louvre and other museums around the city are free of charge. However, keep in mind that there will be thousands more visiting. If you don't like extra, massive crowds, and long lines it is best to avoid the free days. Plus, the Louvre would take a week to go through on a slow day.

## Safety

During the two months we stayed in France we rarely, if ever, felt in danger. A girl in our class was mugged and had her watch stolen. She was unharmed but shaken from the experience. She said the man who stopped her was acting very strange for a few stops, and plus

it was early morning and the metro was nearly empty. She unwisely exited the metro at an empty stop where the man was free to threaten her with no witnesses. This is very rare and our professors said they had never had a student attacked before. It is best to travel when there are people around, which is nearly impossible not to do.

The main danger/annoyance in Paris is the gypsies. There are many women and beggars who will approach you with pieces of paper and ask if you speak English. This is when lying is justified. If you say yes they will hand you a paper with a note written in English that says something along the lines of, “my husband is dead, I have 6 kids, we are refugees and my baby is starving. Please help me.” Don’t be sucked in by their act because they are professionals. Tell them no, or shake your head and act confused and they will leave you alone eventually.

Another good tip to your safety is to avoid bringing attention to yourself. Don’t be the “loud Americans” and you will avoid the attention of many people. Another good tip is to not stay out extremely late. Many people are drunk at this time and become more confrontational. You will figure out quickly which areas to avoid at night. During the day there are so many people throughout the city that you can feel comfortable going just about anywhere.

## Money

While you are staying in Paris you will withdraw money many times. It is best to withdraw the maximum amount you are allowed by the ATM you are accessing. It may depend on your local bank, but the maximum we were able to get out on a single day was about 250 Euros. The reason you want to pull out the maximum amount is so you can avoid excessive foreign transaction fees which equate to around \$3-\$5 per transaction. Though most stores and

shops around Paris will accept cards, we found that using cash was easy and a good way to avoid fees.

Another good reason to use cash is that some machines will not accept certain types of credit cards, VISA included. While we were visiting Versailles, we tried to buy tickets via a kiosk to avoid long lines. After many failed attempts we realized that our card was missing a chip that many European credit cards have. A gentleman using an American Express card showed us that his card worked because of the chip inside.

It is a good idea to carry your money or wallet in your front pocket in order to avoid being pick-pocketed. We bought a wallet that can be worn around the neck and tucked into the shirt, but ended up leaving it in our apartment because it was bulky and annoying to wear. As long as you are aware of who is around you, you will avoid being robbed.

## Language

For those who don't speak a bit of French, take the time to learn as much as you can before you arrive in France. Although you will be taking a French language class while in Paris, the class is sometimes only once or twice a week, and there is not enough time to get past the very basics of the language.

As far as preparation goes, several students purchased Rosetta Stone and found that it helped a lot in getting the basics down. However, Rosetta Stone is quite expensive and there are other effective programs available. For example, Costco sells some language training software for around \$35 that will give you the basics of the language. Books are much cheaper, and help with vocabulary, but listening to the language is extremely helpful in understanding and hearing

how the French pronounce words. We also downloaded applications for our iPod and played a French language game on the Nintendo DS that actually taught us a lot. The main thing that helped me learn was repetition and practicing among the French.

In France, people are very proud of their language and prefer to be spoken to in French. Most people in France can speak English quite well but many won't speak it if you just go up to them and start speaking English to them. Before we left for France we had heard that French people were rude to those who don't speak French. We rarely found this to be true in Paris because of one simple reason; as long as we made any attempt to speak to them in French, and kindly asked in French if they spoke English (*excusez moi, parlez vous anglais*), 90% of the time they would reply, "a little bit" and then carry on a conversation in English. We found that as we were complimentary of their language, and made effort to do all we could in French, they were much more likely to help us out in English.

## Places You'll Become Familiar With

There are many areas in Paris that you will become familiar with. Listed below are some of the main areas you will want to become familiar with:

**Lavarie (Laundromat)**- most housing had a washer and dryer in the apartment or within the complex. However, there are lavaries throughout the city for you to do your laundry.

**Pharmacies**- There is a pharmacy on nearly every block of Paris. I recommend taking any medications you may require. However, my wife got sick towards the end of our trip and a doctor wrote out a prescription for three meds that ended up being only 16 Euros all together.

**Markets/Marchets-** There are markets scattered all throughout the city that sell anything from fresh produce, to second hand kitchen ware. Markets are great places to practice French because everyone wants you to buy from them and they are more than happy to talk to you. Plus, most of the conversation that you do in markets deals with the basics of the French language (introductions, numbers, price checks etc).

**Brasseries-** are restaurants that are found on corners of buildings on the nearly every street in Paris. They are the equivalent of a café in the United States. They are something between fast food and a fine restaurant. The prices at a Brasserie range anywhere from 8 to 25 Euros per plate. Here you will see the Parisian culture in full bloom as people enjoy a long visit and a nice meal among friends.

**Boulangeries/Bakeries-** are another service that is found anywhere throughout Paris, and France for that matter. Here you can buy fresh baked bread and pastries every day. A simple baguette is usually less than one euro and makes a quick meal if you are in a hurry. You will enjoy trying the many different types of bread that France has to offer.

## Cultural tips

Listed below are a few cultural tips we learned that might be helpful to you:

- Attempt to speak French first and people will be kinder/more helpful
- Get used to the idea that “this is France” and a lot of older people feel pretty strong about you speaking French here. In fact, France has a language committee that tries to preserve their language. For example, if a popular new slang word arises from the English language, the language committee will come up with a French equivalent.

- You will find that most of the younger generation doesn't care as much.
- Eat with both hands in sight.
  - Most stores are closed on Sundays. Be sure to stock up on Saturday just in case.
  - Smaller stores are also closed at lunch time for their employees. Make sure you take note of store hours before making a special trip across the city.
  - Check out the website [www.understandfrance.org](http://www.understandfrance.org). Though hard to navigate, the site gives good examples of what to expect in France, and answers many questions that Americans frequently ask about France.

## Miscellaneous Items

- Most buildings/apartments do not have AC. You may have to buy a fan.
- Bring ear plugs (all night parties/traffic noise).
- There is no centrally located shopping. Buy only what you can carry.
- Paper is sized differently (A4), so format your papers in that style before submitting.
- The best thing, beyond seeing all the sites, is getting to know people.
- Public restrooms are hard to find and often cost a small fee - plan accordingly.
- If Mayo, PB, or Ranch are essential to your diet, it's a good idea to pack them with you.
- Food was our most expensive cost next to rent (800 Euros for 2 months) so if you want to be more conservative, bring Mac & Cheese or ramen with you!
- Skype (cheapest and most convenient way to get in touch with people back home)

## **SUU/INSEEC MBA Survey**

I asked each SUU student to respond to a survey that I created. I wanted to get feedback from those who were actually in the program and give the responses I received to the administration. The purpose of the survey was to get a good idea from each student of what went well and what should be improved. The survey had six questions. 4 out of 6 students responded. I have listed below each of the six questions and the responses of each student. Each answer has been left in its original form.

### **1. How did your expectations of the MBA Program in Paris align with your actual experience?**

**Response 1:** I didn't really know what to expect, although I would have expected to be in the classes that I originally chose and have a schedule figured out before we showed up.

**Response 2:** Good, and Bad. Some aspects of my experience were more than I expected, while others were much less. My expectations were based off of the information and preparation I received before participating in the MBA Program. Overall, the organization of the program, including the help- or lack of help I received from the institution did not meet my expectations. While the quality of the education, and the competence of the teachers exceeded my expectations.

**Response 3:** Other than the craziness with trying to work out schedules and constant changes at the school, I think the experience was still better than expected.

**Response 4:** It fulfilled my expectations in terms of the cultural experience. However, there was a severe disorganization in terms of our class schedule. There was not a proper communication between INSEEC and its professors. Sometimes they were even surprised that we were in the class. It partially fulfilled my expectations in terms of the quality of the classes taught. The class evaluations and class engagement outside the class did not meet my expectations at all. Very easy.

## **2. What was the best thing about taking classes at INSEEC?**

**Response 1:** Probably the knowledge of the professors and of course the culture class being able to see the sites.

**Response 2:** The Professors, by far. They were impressively qualified individuals; they worked hard to create a very educational course, and were very friendly and approachable.

**Response 3:** The professors were awesome and being in class with other international students.

**Response 4:** Professors' hands-on experience and professional attitude. International coverage of taught initiatives. Cross-cultural exposure.

### **3. Was there anything you feel could be improved for future students?**

**Response 1:** Yes, updated information on flights. Statravel.com will beat any price and is setup specifically for students. I didn't know this until after I was looking for a return flight but still saved over \$300 from other sites. Although mine worked out, housing should definitely be more concrete for other students. Scheduling of classes so we don't arrive after some classes already began. Both schools need to align 'Projects' and what is required, more specific information needs to be provided on how to complete these and the proper process.

**Response 2:** Several: More stability in the organization of the program, including the basics: class schedules, living arrangements, and specific credit requirements. Better communication among the faculty and staff, to provide clear responses to students' questions and concerns. Provide more information and more accurate preparation to the future students. The more prepared the students are the more successful and enjoyable experience they will have.

**Response 3:** The professors didn't know we were arriving, our schedules were a mess, and the administration of the school was very unorganized. Also, the degree to be earned for the program was not explained clearly enough and how the execution of the final project was confusing.

**Response 4:** Accommodation – living closer to each other if possible. Organizational aspect – class schedule, administration, information delivery. Have a set schedule in advance which would allow students to make traveling arrangements in advance.

**4. Were there any unexpected situations you would have liked to know about before coming?**

**Response 1:** Well it would have been nice to have more accurate information on pick pockets. I was expecting to be robbed the entire first week I was there then just realized as long as you are aware then it's no big deal, and most French are nice people and like speaking English, at least in my experience which was totally backwards from what we were told before going.

**Response 2:** Based on the information and preparation I received before going most situations were unexpected. This included everything from figuring out transportation (especially on arrival), costs of living/traveling, and much more that I cannot recall at the moment.

**Response 3:** I would have liked to have known what my degree was going to be because it suddenly changed upon our arrival. Also, the classes were not explained well and very disorganized. I had classes sometimes double booked and I missed important information.

**Response 4:** High prices (food, transportation, etc). Confirmed class schedule (how many classes, time, location, teacher, offered classes-description). Students should get familiar with transportation possibilities (metro, bus, train, etc.)

## **5. What are some things you would suggest for future students to do to prepare for this program?**

**Response 1:** I think the biggest concern that I saw were peoples budgets. Students need a more accurate cost break down. Perhaps this includes ticket prices for trains and busses, students should know they can go to Belgium for \$30 via bus opposed to \$140 by train etc. Fortunately I was prepared to pay for whatever I wanted to do but it was definitely more expensive than I thought it was going to be. For most people going to Europe will be a once in a lifetime opportunity especially for that length of time, so they need to know what they can expect and maybe even suggestions on cool places to visit while they're there.

**Response 2:** Require a mandatory meeting with preparing students, giving more accurate information and details preferably from a student who has already had the experience. Or at least create materials with up-to-date information including, finding student air-fare (we could have gotten much cheaper tickets, but learned about it after the fact), transportation information and instruction, dress code, class scheduling, realistic costs of living and traveling abroad, housing information, what to bring, packing tips and recommendations of how to transport bags and luggage.

**Response 3:** Just don't plan on anything working out like you expect. Also, be comfortable with constant change.

**Response 4:** Transportation, Cultural differences—they are always LATE! Cost of living, Program structure (classes, trips outside the Paris—if required).

## **6. How was your overall experience?**

**Response 1:** Overall I had a good time, got to experience the culture and other countries. I would definitely recommend it for any student looking for an international experience as long as the little kinks are worked out.

**Response 2:** Positive. I learned a great deal from the classes and professors, the culture including fashion, art, and history. I enjoyed my time there, and really enjoyed the Professors and the diversity. However I was disappointed in the school's organization, which resulted in mass confusion among students, teachers, and faculty. My personal situation was less than ideal in regards to separation from spouse, and the company I lived with. For future students I would increase the awareness of what to expect if they are married or single or if they are traveling with or without their spouses.

**Response 3:** Despite all of the craziness and the disorganized mess I met people from all over the world and made lots of new friends in Paris. I have a hard time looking back at all the administrative faults and feeling like the experience was a disaster. I enjoyed the experience very much.

**Response 4:** Great I loved it. I would do it again if I could. Even though we faced many organizational difficulties, it was a great experience. Even some bad experiences can teach a person.

## **Comments or Concerns?**

**Response 1:** Good project Burke!

**Response 2:** Good experience worth doing if it's affordable, and convenient for family and work situations. I think we all came away with a better understanding of Europe, especially the Frenchies, including a greater education and of awareness of: business, culture, history, and luxury.

**Response 3:** Better organization and clearly define the expectations. Outline how things will work and explain the different degree options. Only allow students to select the courses for the specific degree tracks so that there is no double booking of classes.

**Response 4:** Thanks Burke for doing this. Let me know if you have more questions. I know I was little brief but I am sure you get the point I am trying to make under each one of the questions.

## **INSEEC Professor Responses**

I thought that it would be helpful to gather some information from some of the professors at INSEEC since they were affected by our arrival and had to make some changes to their classes to accommodate us. I wrote to each professor that I took classes from and asked them questions about what they thought should be done to make the integration of students from SUU go much smoother for both the students and faculty. I received feedback from two professors: Amir Dhia, and Robert Young. Below is the feedback I received.

### **Dr. Amir Dhia**

Cell 00 33 622-919-238. Dr. Dhia is the Director of the Marketing Department.

The following feedback is paraphrased from a conversation I had with Dr. Dhia on the phone.

Issue to resolve: Students need to choose one program and take the required classes for that particular program. Students should not be allowed to swap between programs. SUU students chose classes a la carte. This caused problems for the teachers who were already teaching students that were building off of other required classes. When the new students arrived the teachers were unaware of what the students already knew or what needed to be reviewed. Teachers had to cater their programs to the new students and current students felt discriminated against.

INSEEC has no information on SUU. There was no coordination in what was taken before students arrived in France or what we expected from INSEEC. The Deans of each

school need to arrange access to course catalogs and curriculums for each school. This will allow for the schools to see what students have already taken and which classes would benefit them the most while abroad. Students need to have access to the course catalog in advance so they can decide which program they should enroll in. They can choose from 18 courses from any given program.

Another option for international students would be to allow only 8 students to come to the program, perhaps deans can come up with a program that will be zoned in on the 8 students and tailor the courses for the students.

Another issue that should be addressed is the amount of American students allowed in each class. At one point, seven American students were in one luxury class. It would be best to split them up and allow maximum value and coverage. We expect more exchange among students and when there is a dominant culture, it tends to drown out the minorities. Try to get students spread throughout the program to avoid concentration of cultures so that there can be maximum feedback, Americans add value to classes and they add an international flavor to each class. We want to try to create diversity. Perhaps break them up, 2 to each class, and allow for a greater dispersion throughout the school.

Every program has about 18 courses of five lessons each. So each student can choose one program and stick with the courses, and then no overlapping of schedules will happen. Another option is to come in March for the whole 18 weeks and end in June if the student can afford it.

French students feel discriminated against because they can't choose classes from each course like American students did. They felt dominated at times by American students. This is

why it is important to spread the students throughout the different classes, so there can be good cross cultural interaction. Otherwise we might as well send teachers to the U.S.

Please send regards to Dean Templin. I'm more than happy to coordinate with him to set up a time to teach at SUU.

## Dr. Robert Young

Below is Dr. Young's response to my question on what would make things flow better for students and faculty:

"I don't have a lot of free time these days, but in thinking about your question I came up with one major problem for me. Your group arrived in the middle of the session. I teach two classes during the session and I assumed I would have the same students for each class, so I structured the classes accordingly. I then found myself with students in the second class who had not attended the first class and I had to "re-teach" certain things, or skip over other things. It seems to me it would be better if the group was there for the entire session."

## BYU Program Coordinator Response

As part of my project, I wanted to assist SUU's international program by bringing to light a few issues that need to be addressed for future reference. As we were part of the first group to be accepted into the INSEEC program, there were a few issues that arose that need to be worked out to enable both INSEEC and SUU to be able to correlate schedules and expectations.

Dr. Alan Hamlin suggested I contact other schools with international programs to gather information on how they handle international relationships with foreign schools. After trying several colleges I contacted Aaron Rose, who is the International Program Coordinator at BYU's David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies. I asked him what main things BYU does to build and maintain relationships with international schools, and what can be done to help prepare future students and faculty for international studies abroad. Listed below are some points that we discussed during our conversation.

- It is important for representatives from each school to visit in person, and to meet with people that they will be working with. Gather a professional understanding of what is to be accomplished.
- Housing needs to be fixed and determined beforehand. Students need to understand that there is not student housing and European universities don't have student services like American universities.
- Once the semester is finished, it is important to follow up. Post program evaluations are necessary for first year programs, administration and logistics. Evaluations need to be conducted with students as well as with administrations.

- Housing and scheduling are the main two things for SUU and INSEEC to work out. Must be handled sensitively and explained according to cultural differences “we need to adjust accordingly to French standards.”
- Meet with a housing person. Meet with George Washington friend (Housing Coordinator in Paris). Get the service of SUU’s coordinator.
- Visit programs as much as possible. Obtain a written post-program report from each faculty member and the hosting institution so they can see what they provide and how well they communicate with SUU students and administration. Have students do post-program evaluations.
- Go to [NAFSA.ORG](http://NAFSA.ORG), look under different knowledge communities and studies abroad issues.