

Boston University School of Law

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Boston University School of Law

Study Abroad Final Reports



National University of Singapore
Bukit Timah, Singapore

FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Please provide a written assessment of your experience abroad this past term in light of your academic and educational objectives. In particular, please touch on the following: your overall experience at the foreign institution, the quality of the faculty and the quality and availability of courses offered. Please also comment on other topics you feel might be helpful to future students, such as quality of life, financial, housing, social or other considerations that had an impact on your experience. Your report need not be longer than two pages.
- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in our study abroad programs.
 - a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?
YES ☒
NO ☐
 - b) Will you share your final study abroad report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?
YES ☒
NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

Name:

Semester/Institution: Fall 2023 Semester, National University of Singapore

REPORT:

I went to Singapore with the goal of taking some international business law classes, immersing myself in a different culture, and getting to travel in Asia (which is a region of the world I had never been to before). I would also be lying if I did not mention that I was also looking to experience Singapore's food culture! I feel as though I have achieved all of these goals—I excelled at the food one, in particular.

Overall I absolutely loved my time abroad. I feel that it is one of the best things I have ever done for myself. Getting to live in another country as a law student was such a special experience. I would recommend it to anyone thinking of studying abroad. However, there are some things I wish I had known and planned for before deciding to study abroad in Singapore.

NUS's fall start date is in very early August. As a result, I was not able to take the August MPRE as I had planned, and I now have to take it in March of my 3L year. This is obviously not an ideal situation, and I would recommend anyone thinking of studying abroad to check when the start date of your program is well in advance to ensure you can take the MPRE before leaving.

Additionally, when I was preparing to study abroad at NUS I received an email saying that I did not get into enough classes and could not enroll in the program. Given that I had already sublet my apartment and was really counting on studying abroad this was an enormous source of stress for me. Eventually (after emailing just about everyone in Singapore), I got into enough classes and was able to enroll. However, this was a very stressful experience, and I would caution anyone looking to study abroad in Singapore that this is something that could happen.

The housing situation was also a little complicated for me. A lot of graduate students do not get housing through the school (however, exchange students typically do). As a result, I was unsure if I would get student housing and decided just to sign a lease on an off-campus apartment. I eventually did get student housing, ironically. I would have saved a lot of money if I had just held out for the student housing, but I actually did really enjoy the apartment I lived in! You should know if you are looking to live off campus that Singapore's housing market is very expensive and competitive. However, you do not need to start searching for an apartment 6 months in advance like you need to in Boston which is nice. I would recommend checking out Cove if you did not get an apartment through the school. Watch out for scams if you're looking for private accommodation though! Also, Beauty World in Bukit Timah (where I lived, it's pretty close to campus) is a great neighborhood, but I'm told they're tearing down one of the hawker centers soon.

Financially, Singapore is relatively cheap for Americans in some ways if you discount housing. Housing is comparable to American cities, and I actually spent more on rent there than I did in Boston. However, food and transportation costs are much cheaper. You basically don't need to cook as eating out at hawker centers is so cheap. The Singaporean dollar also has a favorable exchange rate for Americans at the moment. However, I did spend far too much traveling so there is that.

The quality of life in Singapore is excellent. The infrastructure is absolutely incredible, the medical system is fantastic, and there is great access to green spaces. Food is plentiful and cheap and the people are lovely and helpful as well. I would say that some people find Singapore quite boring, but I personally loved it. It's a comfortable, (albeit extremely hot) English-speaking city that has retained a very interesting culture.

Singapore's legal system is notoriously strict. This is a bit of a mixed bag. Singapore is one of the safest cities in the world, and it really did put you at ease when you were out in public. However, at the same time, it can have a bit of a repressive air. I would say that as long as you act reasonably you should be fine and have no trouble with the law.

One of the few things I did not love about Singapore is the academics at NUS. Don't get me wrong, it's a great school and the faculty is very accommodating. I would actually say it felt surprisingly like being an American undergrad again. However, because the school gets so many part-time graduate students lot of the classes were held once a week at night for 3 hours at a time. Having class from 6:30-9:30 was something I found weirdly difficult to cope with.

Overall, I loved Singapore. If I manage to pass the MPRE in March then I will say it was totally worth it (even if I don't, I still had a blast). Getting to eat lunch outside under a palm tree every day is as great as it sounds. Traveling around Asia while also getting to live there was fabulous. Singapore is a really interesting place in my opinion. Be warned that people basically either love Singapore or hate it. But even if you hate Singapore you can always just go on weekend trips to escape it. I miss it already. Go and eat chicken rice on my behalf!

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Name:

Semester/Institution: Spring 2023 National University of Singapore

REPORT:

Overall experience:

I had a wonderful and enriching time in Singapore at NUS. I believe it was a perfect way to end my law school career. Overall, it was an easy transition from BU to NUS. While there were some differences between how courses are taught and a few cultural differences between American and Singaporean society, I had a great time and would recommend this program to other BU students.

Faculty:

The faculty at NUS was very impressive in both their knowledge of their topic as well as their past experiences as attorneys in Singapore. I appreciated my professor's prestige in their fields, but I believe that BU professors care a bit more about their teaching positions in the way that they teach their class and make time for students. For example, there is not really a concept of office hours at NUS, nor did several of my professors answer my emails. Further, one of my professors rescheduled three classes during the semester and forgot to record the rescheduled lecture each time.

Courses:

I took Public International Law, Singaporean Legal History, and Behavioral Economics, Law, and Regulations. My Public International Law class was very interesting as my professor was very critical of the US and China. This perspective is not one I would have gotten by taking this same class in the US. My Singaporean Legal History class was mostly a history class. I found the substantive work and the textbook very interesting but I did not learn much law or doctrine from this class. My Behavioral Economics class was not very engaging. The professor mostly only read off of her slides and did not take attendance, which incentivized students to skip class and read her posted slides rather than the assigned readings.

Quality of life:

I was denied on campus housing but ended up finding housing off-campus on my own. Unfortunately, my air conditioning unit broke during the beginning of the semester and my property company was never able to repair it. Other aspects such as food, friends, and entertainment were great in Singapore and are a huge aspect to my positive experience.

Financial matters:

Singapore is more expensive than Boston but is pretty comparable to NYC prices. Food and public transportation is very cheap but mostly everything else is pricey.

Housing:

I lived in a co-living housing unit with a random roommate using Cove Co-Living. I cannot recommend Cove as they failed to fix my broken air conditioner for over 2 months and this was a very expensive apartment. I would have rather paid less and lived on-campus or have found a cheaper off-campus apartment.

Social Considerations:

I made friends with a lot of foreign exchange students as well as a few Singaporean students. I found peers my age to be very friendly and easy to get along with. I was the only American law student at NUS this semester, but there were 6 Canadian students. As a 26 year old, I was a little older than other students (besides the Canadians). I did feel a little more mature than the other students, but I still found it easy to make friends and have common interests with other students.

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Name:

Semester/Institution: National University of Singapore Fall 2022

FINAL REPORT:

Overall, I really loved my semester in Singapore. I'll try to address the different aspects that is "studying abroad".

School: NUS is a fantastic law school (it's the best ranked in Asia) and offers a wide variety of classes different from BU. I took three modules: Trade Finance with Prof. Myburgh, International Environmental Law with Prof. Tay, and International Arbitration with Prof. Boo. Each met once a week for four hours. The NUS campus is far away from most of the city, it's in

the middle of the (beautiful) botanical gardens, and so it was nice that my time was condensed to one four-hour bloc a day and made commuting efficient. Also, the train system in SG is very great! It's connected to every part and very easy to use.

I noticed a difference between NUS and BU classes. Pros: All of my readings were online (so no renting textbooks), the professors didn't cold call, and there were either guided questions for the reading or the professor would provide you with a brief outline. In my environmental law class the lectures were almost all about the broad topics and students debating policies rather than discussing the assigned reading. Don't be fooled. The professors may not cover the readings like American law professors do but they definitely expect you to have read and taken your own notes on it. Cons: In the exams they expect you to cite cases/ readings directly (often by the page and paragraph number so NOTE THESE DOWN when you take your initial notes) even if the reading was never talked about directly in class.

Trade Finance is a really difficult class. There was only one other exchange student in the class which made sharing notes difficult. Many of the NUS students take note in Chinese characters and the academic culture isn't super open to note sharing unless you're able to make friends with some of the local students (more on this later!). In structure, this course was the most similar to an American law class with studying cases and distilling rules. However, the content of the course is so abstract and detailed that it felt like there was a pre-rec class I had missed. Essentially, it is about the documents between banks in international deals and the roles all of the banks and parties involved play. It's complicated, it's confusing, I feel like I learned a lot but this was by far the hardest class I took at NUS. That being said, the number of cases is manageable. I think we read 35 so 3ish cases a class. The Prof is a pretty good lecturer even though the content is dense. He really encourages participation and will post answers to questions on the class board. If you take this class pay super close attention to the first lecture, it's essentially the foundation for the rest of the content and was way more important than I realized. Overall, I learned a ton but felt way out of depth a lot.

*****There is a bank of notes and past exams for this class*** Either make friends with an NUS student or email me.

Environmental Law:

Prof Tay is a former member of the Singapore parliament and chair on the environmental council (plus like a 100 other things, he used to teach at Harvard Law). He's probably the most academically distinguished professor I've ever had. That being said, he class was probably the most relaxed and enjoyable. There weren't really cases that we read, more treaties and situations where countries had environmental conflict and how they were solved (Think smog from burning Malaysian forest for palm oil plantations is polluting Singapore). He goes over the broad formal structure but most of the class was discussion over related questions. For example, one lecture we talked about indigenous resource use vs. commercial use. We had a midterm project

that was very manageable (and kind of fun actually) and a final of 6 questions where you answered two of your choice. The class is interesting and relaxed but do not slack on the reading, the final wants you to cite sources to the paragraph or page number. A lot of exchange students take this class too so it's a great way to meet friends! Overall, I recommend it.

***No student bank but I have a decent outline I made with a friend for this class**

Arbitration:

This class is sneaky. The professor gives a skeleton outline of each seminar which can lull you into a false sense of security. There is a LOT of reading for this class but he lectures during the seminars and has you read after the class for the first 3 or so weeks. This way you know about what you're reading before going into cases. After the first month each class is half lecture and half a mock arbitration trial between assigned groups on the topic of that week. I liked the moots but they get harder each week so if you're in a later group know that the week of your moot will be a doozy (he releases the prompt one week in advance). Even though the moots were challenging Prof Boo would help guide (as an "adviser") if the team was lost and he let you edit your submitted briefs after the moot so you essentially can revise your argument. The final is 24 hours which is a blessing and a curse. It took me a solid 9 hours for my final so don't brush it off. ***There is a bank of notes and past exams for this class*** Either make friends with an NUS student or email me. It was crazy long but helpful and saved my butt.

School Life:

The NUS campus is beautiful! And busy. There's only one elevator so get to the Tower with some time before your class or you'll be climbing six flights of stairs. There's a cheap food court (use cash) and their signature iced coffee is a mix of coffee, sugar, and condensed milk that we all got slightly addicted to. NUS students are typically younger than BU and come across as a little bit shy. If you make an effort a couple of times they'll open up and get more friendly. (I was told Westerners always talk like you're already good friends to a stranger hahah). I'm not going to lie, NUS is a good school and some of the students can be very serious/ competitive. They may not talk a lot in class but they are definitely doing the work. I did feel some distance between the NUS students and the exchange students. It helped a lot when I had group projects and we were able to talk outside of class. One of the coolest parts of abroad for me was being in class with exchange students from China and India and hearing them have such different perspectives.

The school orientation/tour was very brief so take some time to figure out your bearings on campus the first couple of weeks. Also take advantage of the welcome lunch, there aren't a ton of events after that where you'll be in the same room with most of the exchange group.

Housing:

I didn't even bother applying for NUS housing because all of the reports said it was a mess. A couple of my friends did try and get housing and had a hot mess of a time. Only maybe 1/4 of the people who apply get it and the dorms are on the undergrad campus about 45 min away and only some have air conditioning. Not worth it in my opinion but it is the cheapest option.

I highly recommend doing a co-living building. I used Cove and lived in Lumiere in Tanjong Pagar. I loved it! The neighborhood was amazing with a lot of great food and it was close to the MRT. I think you'd be fine in any neighborhood (Singapore is VERY safe), but Singapore has a red light district in Geylang so probably don't live there. Little India is cool to visit but more loud and crowded than the rest of Singapore. I really recommend Tanjong Pagar or other neighborhoods are Orchard (the boujee part of SG) and River Valley. Some good websites for housing are Cove, Casa Mia, Hmlet, ect.

SG in general:

Singapore is a cool place to study abroad because on one hand it's very modern and safe while also being a melting pot of Chinese, Indian, and Malaysian cultures (with some lingering British colonialism thrown in). Most people speak English and Mandarin fluently. It's a good home base to settle into the region and the airport (Changi) is super well connected for traveling. If you're ambitious you could probably travel up to every other weekend. I went to Thailand, Bali, and Malaysia twice each and finished my semester with a trip to Tokyo. Definitely take advantage of being able to explore as much as you can! A note: the rainy season starts around the end of October so if you want to hit the beach make travel plans for earlier on in the semester (although I still traveled later on and just made sure to bring an umbrella). Also try and hit Thailand during a full moon, they have big holiday celebrations for that.

The hawker centers are great. My apartment had a tiny fridge and no oven so I ended up eating out a lot (like most people do). Note: SG is VERY cashed based! Make sure you always have money on hand since a lot of stores do not take card. Try and explore your local hawker center and be friendly with the workers, they'll remember you. Also, if you see packets of tissues, a lone water bottle, or business cards on any table or bar that means it's reserved. This is called "Chopp" or "Chopp-ing" and it's rude to take someone's spot. The hawker stalls are primarily noodles/ rice and some form of protein. There's tons of fresh fruit and juice around but vegetables are lightly used. If you are plant-based you might have a harder time eating out although there are a few vegan restaurants around.

If you see small piles of flowers, food, incense sticks sitting around sidewalks those are shrines people have made and just be respectful of them. Also take off your shoes anytime you walk into an apartment/ house. If you're in SG in the fall there is the Hungry Ghost Festival, National Day, and Diwali which are all fun events.

The Gardens, Marina Bay, and Sentosa beach don't take much time but are iconic SG. I think the most fun is wandering around exploring the differences in each neighborhood, popping into stores, and checking out the riverfront. Heads up, expect to pay double for alcohol what you would in the US (pro-tip: your local 7/11 has the cheapest drinks you'll find). Check out Haji lane for nightlife. Don't even think about messing around with anything other than drinks, SG is extremely strict on narcotics (like jail time to capital punishment level strict)

Overall, studying abroad was BY FAR the best experience I've had in law school. I went to a world class university in a part of the world I'd never been, was able to live and travel around South-East Asia and experience the different cultures, foods, and individuals making each unique. I've also had really positive feedback from interviews with potential employers. Academically I went abroad to learn more about the international business sphere and to meet peers coming from separate legal systems, politics, ect. I absolutely think that NUS helped me achieve that and was both a personally and professionally fulfilling experience.

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YES

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YES

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Semester/Institution: 2020/2021 Full Year Dual Degree, National University of Singapore

REPORT:

Overall experience:

It was a little weird and anticlimactic moving to a new country in the middle of a pandemic. Up until the final confirmation of my acceptance to the program I was getting no information about if the program was even still happening or what timeline to expect, when I finally got confirmation it was a very quick turnaround to have to apply for my student pass (equivalent of a visa) and special travel approval due to covid. I arrived, went into 14 day hotel quarantine, and then got out to social distancing and remote classes for my first semester. So I wasn't able to really get a launch into school community and life. Also, I had no orientation. They provided

some remote orientation but didn't record all the sessions so I didn't get to access the sessions that were specific to my program. Essentially I was on my own to figure out life in Singapore and navigating the school's various platforms.

While it was an anticlimactic start, I did really enjoy my time there overall and much preferred to be doing remote classes there than in Boston. I did a fair bit of exploring the island on foot, and also got to reconnect with some old undergrad friends of mine who live there. One of my main reasons for wanting to do this program was because I grew up in Asia and just wanted to get out of America and back to Asia where I feel more at home.

The government as well as NUS were both very efficient with covid safety protocols and tracking and containment, which made it safe to go out and about even though not in the classroom.

By second semester we had hybrid classes and I opted to attend most classes in person.

One very negative thing which I experienced was almost completely missing one of my exams because the schedule was never announced. The school seems overall to provide greater support to the LLB students and the LLM students are supposed to figure things out for ourselves. The academic calendar had stated that "exam week" was Nov 20-Dec 5, but I was supposed to have known that take home exams don't fall under "exam week." I had an exam as early as Nov 11th and I never thought to even check that an exam could be that early. The professor did not announce it. It was not posted on our version of blackboard. The registrar did not announce it. I was supposed to have found a pdf of the schedule buried somewhere on the main school website which was apparently referenced in one email that we received during class registration at the beginning of the semester. The exam was from 9am-3pm and I found out about it by total chance at 9:55 and sat down immediately and just did my best after not preparing at all. If I had not randomly found out that the exam was happening that morning I would have been sh** out of luck. This made me really appreciate BU's more strict and official treatment of exam schedules and announcements.

Academics

Academically, the classes tended to be much more interdisciplinary and leaned towards policy, political science and political economy, which personally I very much prefer over doctrinal law classes. (the LLB students take the typical core classes like torts and contracts during their first years but the upper class electives which also overlap with LLM courses were mostly seminars.) Within the Asian Legal Studies concentration some doctrinal classes were available but mostly seminars. I chose the ones which I thought sounded interesting, which may account for the lean towards policy and political economy. If you have a political science mind and an interest in Asia you will probably love them, if you prefer to learn a hard rule over abstract policy you might find them frustrating.

For example the classes I took were:

- Chinese Intellectual Property Law
- ASEAN Law and Policy
- Law, Institutions, and Business in Greater China
- Legal Systems of Asia (required for the LLM in Asian legal studies)
- Trade Finance Law (only took this one cause I needed another elective to fill credits and ran out of Asian legal studies concentration classes)

Second semester

- Democracy in East Asia
- Comparative Constitutional Law
- Law, Economics, Development and Geography
- Strategies in Asian Disputes (basically just a class on arbitration but more practice oriented).

Through multiple classes I also learned a whole lot about history and how the legal systems of different Asian nations have been influenced by colonization and other historical dynamics. For example, comparing the democratization movements in Taiwan and South Korea was very fascinating and I previously knew nothing about either country's democratic transition.

The amount of assigned reading is probably about comparable to BU. Most of the readings for my classes were scholarly articles rather than cases, and most of my professors assigned a few students each class to bring in a response essay on the reading to discuss. During my first semester I had final exams for every class and during my second semester I had final research papers for every class.

The caliber of students at NUS is very high, but overall I would say the expectations and grading are a slightly lower standard than for a JD program. I didn't study harder than at BU, and I'm about a middle of the curve student at both institutions.

Faculty

The quality of the faculty at NUS is very high and I had very diverse professors which offered valuable perspectives. During my two semesters I had two American profs, one from New Zealand, one Singaporean, one Taiwanese, one mainland Chinese, one Indian, and one from Hong Kong. (I took multiple classes with some profs).

The two American profs had left Yale law and NYU law respectively to come to NUS. I enjoyed their perspectives the most because as Americans who have been living outside of America they had really valuable critiques of the American system that you don't usually hear at

American law schools. I especially enjoyed studying Comparative Constitutional Law under Alec Stone Sweet (a top scholar in his field of proportionality analysis and rights protection in judicial review).

Life, financial, housing, social:

I stayed in a privately operated student hostel (equivalent to a dorm) which was within walking distance to campus but had no association with NUS. I had a single room which came with essential furniture and a bathroom in the room, and there was a communal kitchen on the first floor. The rent was SGD 1,200 per month (which is about 900 USD, so comparable to Boston). The advantage of this option was privacy as well as convenience since bills were all inclusive, but the disadvantage was that it was very difficult to find community, especially since the communal areas of the building had social distancing requirements.

In hindsight I would have preferred to live in the NUS grad housing compound called College Green, which is apartment style units where each student has their own bedroom and are assigned apartment mates by the school housing office. The only reason I did not end up living there was because the school's housing info page was very confusing and inaccurate. The website said housing selection was through bidding and the bidding round dates were very early (occurred before I even got my official acceptance.) I found out later that due to covid the units weren't full and several students just emailed directly and got accepted for housing, but this information was never made available publicly.

Another housing option which students may consider is renting a room out of an apartment directly from a landlord. Many landlords rent out their spare room in their own place, or you can find listings online that are just other tenants with no landlords living in. Rent will be about 1,000 SGD give or take depending on how nice the place is.

Because NUS's main law program for local students is an LLB (bachelors of law), most of my classmates were 3rd and 4th year local LLB students who already knew each other, so it was difficult to make friends with classmates (remote classes and no orientation also contributed to this). The other LLM students were mostly from China. Because I speak Chinese I was able to connect with some of them but they also all tended to live together and have their own circles. This is another reason I wish I had lived in College Green cause that's where most of the other LLM students lived.

Food in Singapore can be either cheap or expensive depending on where you get it. The local "hawker centers" which are like outdoor covered food courts have meals as low as 3 Singapore dollars, but you might get tired of these single servings of carbs like noodles or fried rice without veggies, to order a separate plate of veggies is usually another 5 or more. At any other restaurant, even if not fancy, a meal is likely to be 10 dollars minimum. Buying produce in Singapore is also relatively expensive because the island is so small so everything is imported.

For example a small bag of baby spinach which would have been 2.5 dollars in the US was 7 Singapore dollars because it came all the way from Italy. A lot of the food comes from Malaysia, and most of the dairy comes from Australia and New Zealand.

Public transportation is cheap, fast, clean, and efficient. There are bus routes as well as the metro (called MRT) which go anywhere on the island. The fare is based on how far you go rather than flat fare.

One activity I got involved with was volunteering to walk dogs at a local animal shelter. This was a fun experience which allowed me to meet some new people as well as get out of my room and have an activity apart from zoom.

Personal goals met:

My personal academic goal was to gain academic experience which would be more relevant to my desired career plan of working in China, and I believe I achieved that.

I also wanted to expand my network and get to meet peers and professors in the Asian legal field and I also met that goal.

On a more personal level, my soul was much more content and happy being present in Asia than in the United States, and I also rekindled my joy of learning which was extinguished by 1L doctrinal US law classes which I had no interest in and seemed irrelevant to my career plans.

For my 2 credit independent study I was also able to gain more knowledge in an area that is of interest to me.

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Semester/Institution: LL.M NUS

FINAL STUDY REPORT

To: American Bar Association (ABA)
From:
Date: May 17, 2019
Re: Final Study Report – National University of Singapore LL.M Asian Legal Studies

Introduction

I am very grateful I had the opportunity to spend my 3L year in Singapore. My main goal before embarking in this academic and personal adventure was to learn more about Asia and hopefully find Asia's legal systems and cultures less foreign. Not only was I able to obtain an introduction to Asia during my year abroad but I also realized that in many ways North America is very similar to its Asian counterparts.

Educational Objectives

I had three goals I wanted to accomplish during my time at NUS: "First, I wanted to study abroad for an entire academic year in order to fully immerse myself in Singapore's culture and NUS's academic life. Second, I wanted to learn more about Asia and its legal system. Third, I wanted to travel."¹

As for immersing myself in NUS's academic life, I was able to take interesting courses and participate in NUS's rich student life. I took the following five courses during the Spring semester: (1) International Contract Law: Principles & Practice (2) Strategies for Asian Disputes (3) International Law and Development (4) China, India and International Law (5) Complex Arbitrations: Multiparty – Multicontract. Courses at NUS are challenging but the professors are really engaging and know the subject matter. I think my hardest class this semester was Complex Arbitrations because most of the LL.M. students had already had years of experience in arbitration. As for immersing myself in Singapore's culture, I was able to experience local traditions and spent most of my spring semester exploring Singapore's cuisine. With the help of some of my Singaporean classmates, I was also able to celebrate some of Singapore's national holiday's like Chinese New Year and Deepavali.

As for learning about different legal systems, I now feel comfortable in research Singaporean legal questions. I am also more aware of the differences between common law and civil law legal systems.

As for traveling, I am writing this report from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. I am glad to say that I have been able to travel to several of my bucket list destinations. Singapore is a great hub for traveling throughout Southeast Asia and has a very comfortable airport.²

¹ Marianne Strassle, *Mid-Year Report* (January 2019).

² See e.g. Sanjay Surana, *At Singapore's Changi Airport, a New Jewel Shines*, NYT (April 11, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/11/travel/singapores-changi-airport-jewel.html>

Observations

Having already stated my educational objectives, below is a list of random observations:

- U.S. Chinese Tension: Even though I was not in China, I did notice some U.S. Chinese tensions. For instance, I feel my *China, India and International Law* seminar was somewhat bias against the U.S. However, I imagine some people might argue that some courses I have taken in the U.S. might be bias against China. Even though I disliked the bias against the U.S., I found it beneficial as I would normally not hear this perspective back home. It has been very interesting to be in Asia during the current trade war. My closest friend during my time abroad was Chinese. Even though we come from different countries, we are both concerned with the latest current events and have been able to share articles, arguments and perspectives that we might not otherwise have the chance to experience.
- Cleanliness: Singapore is the cleanest country and city I have every been to. This can be seen in the excessive maintenance of the public gardens but also in the cleanliness of the NUS campus (e.g. staff would collect the trash in the law library every two hours).
- A Nation of PSAs: Singapore loves its PSAs. Throughout my time in Singapore most of the ads I would get online were PSAs sponsored by the government. The most notable PSA included a PSA against legalizing marijuana and statistics on how legalizing marijuana has hurt the U.S.

Conclusion

Studying abroad in Singapore has helped me both academically and personally. I hope that my experience in Singapore will help me be a better lawyer.

I have spent most of my life in Florida. I realize that Singapore and Florida are very different but surprisingly, I felt very much at home during my year abroad. I think the reason I liked Singapore so much was because the city, lifestyle and people reminded me of South Florida.

FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
 - a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?
YES ☒ NO ☐
 - b) Will you share your final study abroad report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?
YES ☒ NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER: NUS Joint LLM Program 2015 Spring Semester

Like my first semester at NUS, my second semester was filled with positive experiences. My classes were all very interesting and covered subjects directly related to my interests that are not available at BU Law (for example Chinese Contract Law). My international tax law professor is one of the best teachers I have ever had at any level.

Living in Singapore for 9 months has been great. The university had a shortage of housing so I had to find my own apartment. I was able to find a room in an apartment building near the university. It is only a 20-minute walk to the university and cost less than my rent in Boston (for reference). Singapore itself is vibrant and full of things to do and see and is a great hub for further exploration of Asia during the holidays.

There are of course difficulties in spending a year abroad. Getting to take classes like the aforementioned Chinese Contract Law has cost me the opportunity to take some classes at BU. I have not taken evidence law, nor been able to participate in any clinics. This is a worthwhile trade-off for me but for others it might not be.

The biggest difficult for me was communication. No one at NUS is going to hold your hand at all. Registration deadlines, add/drop periods and other administrative stuff come and go without much support from the university. Emails, of course, are sent in regards to these things but vital information can sometimes be lost when you are receiving a glut of emails from two law schools at the same time while trying to keep up with your studies. However, when any issues have arisen, NUS's administration has been flexible and helpful in finding a resolution. Further, finding a job in the States while at NUS is made trickier by the fact that you cannot easily attend any interviews. This is something to think about.

All in all my second semester, and my year, at NUS has been a very valuable experience.

FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a two page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
 - a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?
YES ☒ NO ☐
 - b) Will you share your final study abroad report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?
YES ☒ NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER:

Singapore Spring 2015

Avoiding many of the bureaucratic plunders I had faced my first semester at the National University of Singapore ("NUS"), I found myself primarily focused on China in my second semester. It was through my coursework this semester, with the accumulation of knowledge gained from last semester, that I began to realize my own Western ignorance. The coursework at NUS, including my courses this semester on Chinese commercial law, its law, businesses and institutions, climate change law, and law, development and governance in Asia, has made me forever cognizant of my own incompetence, biased understandings, and entrenched ideologies, and I think that that realization is a lesson I shall forever be grateful for learning. As American law students, we are consistently taught how near omnipotent American common law is; this same sentiment has captured the hearts of numerous sitting United States Supreme Court Justices even. Yet, it is a fallacy to cut ourselves off from the rest of the world and to not share and gain from alternative perspectives, budding experiences, and cultural histories lasting centuries longer than our own. I entered this program wanting to learn more about, *inter alia*, Asian law, business, society, and culture. I would affirmatively say I have succeeded at doing so, but more

importantly, the journey has required me to reassess the supremacy of Western legalism and / or Western legal orthodoxies. I had not expected for this change to occur in me, but owing to the coursework I was exposed to throughout the year long program, I feel as though my eyes have been opened to new concepts and conceptions, and for that I am supremely indebted.

I counted the other day that I have taken off and landed over twenty-five times, since coming to Singapore. I visited Malaysia twice, Hong Kong twice, Beijing once, Japan for a full month, Indonesia once, and after my final exam will be spending ten days in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand. I have had to learn about the visa requirements of myriad states, despite having one of the best passports in the world. I have learned to stalk travel sites for the cheapest flights and have become quite adept at this art. I traveled alone to Hong Kong the first time and alone to Indonesia. I feel as though I have matured as a human being because of this program. I was thinking the other day how genuinely appreciative and fortunate I have been to have had this experience and opportunity. I think it has forever changed me for the better. I have talked to the locals while traveling. I have put faces to the term "developing country." I have met people who have forever altered my perception of what it means to be an American and a human being on this planet. I have learned to question my conceptions and acknowledge my own limitations as well as strengths and weaknesses. I feel as though Americans have in large part been desensitized to how our foreign policy, our capital markets, and our legal regime constantly affect, and at times detrimentally impact, the rest of the world. I understand this now; I have gained this sensitivity.

Singapore is clean. The gardens are lovely. The food is delicious. While I used to chastise its best qualities being its food and its prime location for travel, having taken advantage of both of those qualities now numerous times, they are better advantages than I had originally realized. The government is allegedly the least corrupt, but the highest paid. It arrested the few protestors who arose during Lee Kuan Yew's ("LKY") funeral, more or less the father of modern day Singapore, under the Sedition Act. While I used to find these *de jure* discrepancies shocking and affronting, I instead found myself more circumspect in my assessment. While I am not religious, I can appreciate how difficult it is to stagnate and silence religious gang fighting, which LKY did. While I appreciate free speech, I did not grow up punching my high school teacher for flailing hateful derogatory comments at me, as a Sikh student. I was not part of the *single* generation that saw Singapore emerge from the "third" to "first" world. If you are a Christian, you might remember the saying from the book of John, "[h]e that is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone." While a year ago, and even at the time I was writing my mid-year report, I would not have been so quick to point out my own preconditioned inconsistencies. I would have been appalled that protestors were denied their right to free speech in Singapore, while I had allowed myself to almost forget the United States citizen Edward Snowden. I would have disavowed the value of the Beijing model for economic development on developing states for being undemocratic, when I had purposefully blinded myself to the flaws inherent in

democracy, e.g., *Citizens United*. By pretending I knew the answers, I had allowed myself to be sucked into this American trap of perpetual ignorance.

Perhaps I have become more sentimental as I write this, realizing my time here is coming to an end (“you don’t know what you got (till it’s gone)”). I stand by my mid-year caution, i.e., that a vast sense of independence is necessary in candidates for this program, but I would highly recommend this program to the right candidates. I will be happy to return home, but I will cherish the lessons I have learned here. While I used to find Singapore incredibly oppressive, and still do cringe at the Tamil workers being paid some ungodly low wage, the state is tolerable and even pleasant, when you learn it well enough. Changi airport is the most convenient airport in the world (has the rankings to back-up my opinion). I would argue Singapore has the best food in Asia (apart from a scarcity of Korean eateries and Northern seafood). Since the United States dollar appreciated in value, I had the pleasant experience of taking out cash only to find my balance in Singaporean dollars had actually increased from the last time I had withdrawn funds *over* the current amount withdrawn (notably, to avoid bank fees a Singaporean account can be setup – I did not do this though; I stuck with my zero-fee travel rewards credit card and only withdrew large enough sums of cash to justify the associative bank fees). I tended to spend more time being introspective than social, but I gained some good friends along the way. I find that both Bostonians and New Yorkers tend to “go out” a bit more than Singaporeans, but I have grown accustomed to the pace of life here. It is a bit quieter (apart from the chirping of birds), a bit warmer (a “bit,” considering I avoided the worst winter of all time in Boston, is nearly comedic to write), and a bit sobering (which we could all use from time to time, as it allows you time to really contemplate life).

I hope that, having participated in this program, my firm will be more likely to send me to its Asian offices and clients. I would very much like to transition into focusing on corporate law governing mergers and acquisitions, private equity, securities with Asian counterparts. I feel as though I know the markets better; I know the cultures better, and it is a cultural collaboration, e.g., Asian-American, that I deem essential to any vision of my potential future career.

MID-SEMESTER STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
- a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?
- YES ☒ NO ☐
- b) Will you share your mid-semester report (with any indentifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?
- YES ☒ NO ☐

Please write your Mid-Semester Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER:

Dual J.D./LL.M. in Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore, Fall 2014

I shall begin my assessment with the general sentiment that the National University of Singapore has many fantastic, learned professors, who I quite enjoyed learning from in their areas of academic expertise spanning Asia. This same sentiment spilt over to courses, which are often taught by the expert scholastic professor in the course's area of focus. That being said, the National University of Singapore was an absolute nightmare to *choose* courses from these notably erudite professors. The bureaucratic administration takes efficiency to an inefficient level. I suffered from schedule errors that were irreversible upon consultation with administration. I was begrudgingly told exam schedule conflicts were the fault of the student *ab initio* after finding a 3-hour exam and 48-hour take-home exam were in conflict. This problem of inefficient efficiency is something omnipresent throughout Singapore and, from my perspective, stems from a deeply embedded social norm of *not asking questions*. Thus, despite being a commonwealth state, judicial review is largely non-existent – the one case holding a piece of legislation unconstitutional was quickly overturned and the judge presiding over the case swiftly dismissed from his position.

On a social level in Singapore, which permeates school administration, rules are largely followed with uncompromising relentlessness, even if *by law* the rules are frivolous. For example, the school administration requires I obtain a local color eye examination, as my American doctor mistakenly forgot to write "non-impaired color vision" next to writing "20/20" on the school's medical forms. Despite wondering, *why* the school requires *this* personal, private medical information about myself, *and* the realization that the cost of the additional examination will be absorbed exclusively by me, *I know* that there will be no compromise when *rules* are involved in Singapore. This element of life here has been, in large part, an eye-opening experience for me. When I studied abroad in Tokyo, Japan as an undergraduate student, I largely returned to the United States of America having discovered newfound flaws with my home country. While still at the interim, I largely believe I shall leave Singapore with the opposite conclusion, finding instead new strengths in my home country. From a comparative perspective, despite the frequent frustration derived from dealings with the program's local administration and with many local Singaporeans, the experience will likely prove invaluable.

I would caution that a sense of independence is necessary in candidates for this program. There will be no hand-holding by local administration at any step of the process. I would also emphasize the importance of *ab initio* perfection at every step of the program's process, as reversing error here is akin to climbing Mount Everest. Housing is easy enough to find, as there is a surplus of homeowners seeking renters, but the school will not help you in your hunt. Most friends have used PropertyGuru, and I recommend the same for newcomers. I arranged a temporary place to stay before arriving in Singapore via AirBNB, then utilized PropertyGuru for local listings, which took me only a few days to find a place. Notably, English here is Singlish, and I would advise candidates for the program that communication *will* often prove frustrating within Singapore. I have all too frequently been "tsk'd" at for not effectively stating an order or understanding the quantity I was to pay with my heavy accent, which makes customer service within the meanest areas of New York or from the hardest of Bostonians seem incredibly stellar in comparison.

As for the city life, the food is great and can be cheap (you can eat at a Coffee Shop or Hawker Center and spend around \$3 USD on a delicious meal), the nightlife is unbearably expensive at times owing largely to a 100% sin tax in place, and the city often feels less like a city and more like a suburb in terms of pace and liveliness. I find it telling that the two most positive aspects of Singapore enumerated by expatriates here are always: (1) the food is good, and (2) you can travel out of Singapore easily. This sentiment was repeated to me time and time again, which I have grown to find rather ironic. One of the best aspects of the city is the fact that you can leave it, and you should. I spent my *winter* break in Hong Kong for a week and Japan for a month (I am contemplating living in one of the two for their Sullivan & Cromwell LLP offices). I spent weekends throughout the semester in Malaysia and plan on flying to Thailand and Bali, Indonesia next semester as well. There are so many nearby countries that are extremely

reasonable to travel to and worth leaving the oppressive nation state of Singapore for as often as you possibly can.

FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
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☒ YES ☐ NO ☐

- b) Will you share your final study abroad report (with any indentifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?

☒ YES ☐ NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

LL.M in Asian Legal Studies at National University of Singapore (NUS)

Courses and Professors

This semester, I took three IP courses (Global Exploitation of IP, IP and International Trade, and Private International Law of IP) and two Asian Legal Studies courses (Japanese Corporate Law and Governance and Law and Development in Asia). I chose these based on my legal career goals for after the graduation. They turned out to be fantastic, adding practical knowledge and skills of international IP to complete my academic endeavor.

Professors of IP courses were very nice and deepened my insight on international IP practice. Professor Irene Calboli is responsible and understanding to international students. I liked her position that IP practice should encourage development not only of business, but also of cultures and societies. Lectures by Professor Graeme Austin were full of interesting insights. Professor Elizabeth Ng Siew Kuan's classes included live video lectures with WIPO and group IP license

negotiations, through which I learned practical skills. I was very happy to know professors and people involved in international IP practices while preparing for my career as an international IP lawyer.

I also enjoyed learning about Law and Development in Asia, something I had never studied formally before. Professor Andrew Harding gave us deep and broad understanding of the area, convincing me law and development can be related to any area of law. In addition, Japanese Corporate Law and Governance with Professor Dan Puchniak was a great subject for me to finalize my academic life, enabling me to come back to hone my legal and cultural understanding of Japan. As a whole, this semester was the busiest but the most fruitful one for me, getting me ready for the next stage of my career.

Social Activities

I tried to become friends not only with Japanese and international students, but also with Singaporean students. Basically, Singaporean students are shy and very studious, allowing less time for social activities and focusing more on study. However, I could make some great friends with them by frequently talking to and having lunch with them. (Lunch time is a great time because you can always find somebody you know at the small school dining hall, the Canteen). In addition, classes with group work give students great opportunities to make more friends. If you are interested in this program, I strongly recommend you talk to Singaporean exchange students from NUS at BU. NUS is a very small community, filled with elite students from selected high schools. By knowing one Singaporean student, you will have greater access to many more students. In my case, my Singaporean friend I met at BU became my best friend in Singapore; we took a trip to Malaysia and frequently had dinner together. One of the most precious experiences in an exchange program is to learn about the culture of another country. I believe befriending not only international students but also local students makes the experience more interesting and fruitful.

Final Note

This exchange program at NUS requires a lot of work – definitely more work than at BU. You have to take 5 classes per semester and you have to read more than 100 pages for each class. Students there work extremely hard. However, if you are interested in legal practice in Asian developing countries, I believe this program gives you great opportunities to know Asia's law, culture and people. I truly appreciate BU Law gave me such a wonderful learning opportunity.

MID-SEMESTER STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
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YES ☐ NO ☐

- b) Will you share your mid-semester report (with any indentifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Please write your Mid-Semester Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER:

1. Courses & Professors

My course, the LL.M in Asian Legal Studies, requires students to take at least 40 credits in total, within which 26 credits must be classes under the "Asian Legal Studies" classification. Usually, one class is 4 credits. Overall, coursework at NUS is very rigorous and students must read 60 to 100 pages per class. In addition, students here work extremely hard, thinking about exams from day one. (You can meet at least one student even when you go to a study room at 4:00 am!) I took the following courses.

- 1) World Trade Law (Prof. Weiler and Prof. Ewing-Chow)

This class is known as "the hardest course" at NUS, with 8 credits. Since I want to pursue my career as an international business lawyer, I took this class to build a foundation of the current international trade system under the WTO regime.

Prof. Weiler from NYU taught the first half of the semester. I can still hear such his barks of "do market analysis first!" "You are just a mediocre lawyer with that argument!" and "Bravo!" His

distinct way of teaching was both shocking and interesting. While many students were afraid of the class, you can internalize the professor's way of thinking as time goes by. I actually liked his classes.

Prof. Ewing-Chow taught the second half. After being "released" from Prof. Weiler, you must be ready for a totally different style of classes. Prof. Ewing-Chow is a sharp and kind professor. He always welcomed my opinions.

We had to write a midterm paper as a team, which gave me a great opportunity to get to know other students. You will finish "the hardest course" with a 24-hour exam – indeed torturous! However, I enjoyed this class very much and this was the most exciting class this semester.

2) Indian Business Law (Prof. Umakanth Varottil and Prof. Leena Pinsler)

This class mainly deals with Indian corporate law and regulations which change frequently. Prof. Varottil is wonderful. His explanation was very clear, well-organized and updated. I liked the co-teaching style where Prof. Pinsler supported Prof. Varottil and sometimes even raised questions to Prof. Varottil. This class was small and I felt at home.

3) Comparative Legal Traditions (Prof. Dowdle)

This class is a mandatory course. While lectures by Prof. Dowdle were far from well-organized, you can enjoy his comical teaching style (which matches his colorful shirts and bow ties) and exciting opinions. On the other hand, his sharp questions in seminar classes encourage students to argue various opinions.

4) International and Comparative Law of Sales in Asia (Prof. Bell)

Interestingly, this class used Quebec law as a typical civil law case because its English translation is well written and it represents an updated version of French law. Unfortunately, Prof. Bell became sick in the latter half of the semester and we had to skip several parts of the syllabus. Still, we could cover CISG and have the sense of international law of sales.

2. Housing & City Life & Money Matters

I live in College Green, a school dorm located just a 12 minute walk from the Bukit Timah campus. Many international graduate students of the law school and the public policy department live here. At first, I was not accustomed to the living situation here, especially the many ants and lizards which come into the house. On the other hand, I do enjoy my short walk to the school through the botanic gardens, hearing birds singing and seeing children playing.

You can eat Chinese and Indian food at the school dining with only US\$2.5 - 4.0. In addition, you can go to hawkers (Singapore's local food centers) which provide almost the same price as school dining. However, if you miss Western food, the cost will be significantly higher.

City life in Singapore is difficult to describe. Singapore is a city-state and I was surprised at the tremendous number of shops I could see anywhere. It is very convenient that the shops cover wide range of things from all over the world. While I can buy many Japanese products, I am sometimes disappointed when I can read the price in Japanese Yen and a quick calculation tells me it is about 1.6 to 1.8 times more expensive than those sold in Japan. Still, life in Singapore is convenient.

3. Social Activities

This is slightly tricky. Since Singaporean students work so hard and they are undergrad students, making local friends is more difficult than making friends with international students. In my case, however, I could see several students from NUS I met in Boston. They are very good friends of mine and show me around Singapore by their cars (which significantly improves your efficiency, considering unreliable buses.) Also, since many Singaporean students have experience studying abroad, you make friends with them if you know where they went. Note, though, if you choose to drink, alcohol here is extremely expensive.

4. Overall

While the program is rigorous, I do enjoy being in Singapore and am confident I made the right choice coming here. If you are interested in this program, you should talk to exchange students from NUS and have a clear image and goal for coming to Singapore. In addition, I am glad to help you with anything.

FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one-page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
 - a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?
YES ☒ NO ☐
 - b) Will you share your final study abroad report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?
YES ☒ NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER:

National University of Singapore (NUS) Study Abroad, Fall 2012

My study abroad experience at NUS in the fall semester of 2012 was, in a word, incredible. The experience gave me the opportunity to study a variety of legal topics that I would have otherwise taken at BU, but through a comparative lens. I found the experience invaluable in that it deepened and broadened my understanding of law by giving me an international perspective. The experience was not without small challenges, which I will detail below, but overall the experience was priceless.

Courses and Professors: While at NUS, I took 8 credits of IP, 4 credits of Comparative Transactions and 4 credits in a Sovereign Wealth Funds seminar. I took the minimum number of credits (16 units which transfers to BU as 12 pass/fail credits) and I think that that was a smart decision because it allowed me to have more of a work/life balance and to participate in Singaporean cultural activities that I otherwise would not have participated in. I enjoyed all of my classes and, because the professors all understood the differences between the US laws and

the Singapore laws where differences existed, I appreciated that the professors always took the time to explain those differences and justifications for why those differences exist. On the first day of my Sovereign Wealth Funds class (which is held on Saturday mornings), I was worried when the professor told us that the final project for the class would be to write a publishable, in depth analysis/case study about an existing Sovereign Wealth Fund. On day one, I didn't know anything about Sovereign Wealth Funds! While the class was challenging, the assignment did turn out to be manageable and extremely useful. Each student presented a Sovereign Wealth Fund to the class and we learned a lot from each other. This was the class that gave me the most interesting and unique experience. It was also incredibly 'Singaporean' because the class collaborated in offering each other feedback about our projects and theses. Where I have found US law school to be competitive to a point that people often don't offer each other help, 10% of the grade for this class was based on how valuable the feedback was that you offered other people, which really fostered a sense of collaboration and learning from one another.

My IP teacher was also incredible. She even brought us Bak Chew, a specialty Singaporean meat, for all of the exchange students to eat, when she taught a Trademark case about Bak Chew.

One thing that I found strange in my IP class, was how quiet many of the students were. The life pace is perhaps a bit slower in Singapore than in the United States, and I often found that where I and the other Indian exchange students would be quite eager to answer questions that we actually knew the answers to, many of the native Singaporean students would not answer questions until they were called in (but then when they did answer, they would give incredibly eloquent answers). This is likely the reason that 10% of the grade is based on participation but I would recommend pausing a beat before answering questions – I always learned more when I waited for the shyer, quiet types to answer rather than blurting something out immediately.

My Comparative Secured Transactions class was the one class that I liked the least and this was due to the fact that it was an accelerated class where you take 12 hours of classes each week for the first four weeks. I hated how fast paced the class was and felt quite overwhelmed for the first month. If I were to do it again, I would not take any accelerated courses, as they are super stressful and I didn't meet anyone who enjoyed learning this quickly. I also don't think it is as affective a way to learn content. Also, just FYI for future exchange students. The Comparative Secured Transactions course compares British, Australian and Singaporean law, so even if you have a background in UCC, this will be a difficult subject for American students, as there is really no reference point when learning the background and fundamentals of three new and vastly different legal regimes and the foreign vocabularies that accompany those regimes.

Housing: The biggest thing I would change if I were going to redo my study abroad is where I lived. While I lived at U-Town, which is quite new and beautiful compared to Kent Ridge, I would recommend not living on the main campus but instead requesting to live in the area called

College Green. The reason for this is that the law school is on a different campus from the rest of the University and it is about an hour commute (including waiting time for the bus) to get to the law school from Kent Ridge/U-Town. College Green however, is a ten-minute walk away from the law school. Also, the bus often doesn't show up to Kent Ridge and is not reliable. If you do end up living at U-Town, I would recommend just walking up to the yellow line station (20 minute walk) and then taking the train to the Botanical Gardens stop (20 minutes) and walking to the school from there (15 minute walk). It is a nice walk and the train always runs on time.

Social Activities: The law school organizes A LOT of social activities. There is always something going on at the law school and while I was there, even Tony Blair stopped in to give a speech! That said, one of the best ways to get to know the other Singaporean students, is to join a sports team. They have many, many sports teams and are quite active. It is also one of the few places where the students aren't as shy. I played on the women's handball team for a little while and this is where I met most, if not all, of the Singaporean acquaintances and friends that I met at NUS. Besides that, the exchange students and the LLMs usually stick together. My closest friends who I made at NUS were all LLMs and this likely has more to do with the age gap and reserved nature between Singaporean students and the more outgoing exchange students. Also, most of the LLMs tend to live at College Green, another good reason to stay there.

City Life: Singapore is pretty small so when I talk of 'city life', I am really talking about a few main train stations/streets of the city-state that is Singapore. Orchard Road is where you go to watch movies at the movie theater and where you can find lots of international cuisine cooked to international standards. Just FYI, I got food poisoning twice from undercooked foods so eating at slightly higher quality restaurants is worth it for your health's sake. Marina Bay is where the famous hotel and Singapore's only casino is, if you are looking for a pricey night on the town (and where the Arts and Science museum is, for a not so pricey night on the town). Gardens by the Bay is also near this area and one of my favorite things to visit – make sure to go around 8 pm when they do the 'dancing lights' show on the super trees. If you want some traditional Malay, hawker type fare, I recommend going to Bugis Street, which is really inexpensive.

One last thing on traveling: One of the best things about Singapore is that it is an international hub for travel. The budget airline Tiger Airways (a subsidiary of Singapore Airlines) does direct flights for really cheap to everywhere in SE Asia, Australia, and India. My husband and I went to Bali and got round trip tickets for \$S100, to Kuala Lumpur for \$S33 and islands in Thailand for \$S45. I recommend putting aside some money for 1-2 day trips during holidays. They were some of the best experiences that we had during my study abroad.

Money Matters: Singapore is inexpensive in comparison to Boston and *really* inexpensive compared to neighboring Australia/New Zealand. Your American dollar is worth about 1.25 Singapore dollars so things are generally less expensive. That said, things like salad and fresh vegetables at the grocery store are more expensive. Also, if you are really tight on money and want to save as much as possible, I know a few LLM's who almost never bought groceries

because the law school catered so many meals (almost everyday) and they would just eat at school most of the time.

MID-SEMESTER STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
 - a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?

YES ☒ NO ☐

- b) Will you share your mid-semester report (with any indentifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?

YES ☒ NO ☐

Please write your Mid-Semester Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER: Singapore One Semester Study Abroad at NUS

Courses: Since I signed up for courses that I really wanted to take, I have really been enjoying my courses. NUS offers what are called 'intensives' that are 3 weeks long at the beginning of the semester and 9 hours a week of class per week. I am really glad that I took one of these because it allowed me to sort of front load my semester in a way that has been really effective. The exam for the class was one month after the last class in the third week and that gave plenty of time to study and really grasp the material. I think that worked out really well for me because I am a bit of a self starter so I would recommend the same course selection to anyone who wants to really enjoy all of their classes without as much pressure to learn really really fast. That said, you will likely spend the first three weeks doing nothing but that one intensive class and keeping up with the others. Classes are overall great.

Professors: Professors here are used to a much younger student – for instance, class attendance and participation accounts for 10% of most classes in order to get students to talk. It is a bit reminiscent of junior high in that sense. However, all of my professors are extremely knowledgeable about their own country and the laws in the relevant field of most

other major countries as well. Because Singapore is so small, they tend to teach a lot of international law, regardless of what course it is since Singapore law is highly influenced by Britain, Malaysia and Australia. The Singapore accent is choppy but understandable after the first couple of weeks.

Social Activities: There are many organized activities and the downtown area of Singapore also offers lots of fitness and dance classes (which is my main form of 'sociality') so I can't really speak to the party culture.

City Life: The city is amazing! There are so many awesome sights to see and so many nearby exotic islands. I have gotten to travel a bit and have really enjoyed going to places nearby and within Singapore that I had heretofore never heard of. Great vibrant culture and always a lot to do.

Housing: Housing is a little annoying but that may be because it just involves a lot of university administration that you will have to wrestle through in order to get into the actual housing location. Also, I was never given an option to live where most of the LLMS are staying, at a complex right next to the Bukit Timah campus where the Law school is located. Instead, I was placed in housing that is a 45 minute MRT ride or 40 minute bus ride away. The bus that goes between the campuses is also unfortunately, the only unreliable thing in Singapore. It often doesn't show up and when it does, 50% it is a bus with the same name that goes a different route (there are two buses that are called BTC). This really annoyed me at first but I have since learned to take the MRT route which includes a 15 minute walk through the National Botanical Gardens, so it ends up being quite nice – as long as you are able to budget your time to allow for the transportation time. The different campus thing is weird but if a student gets placed at the main campus housing, I would recommend that they know this in advance because figuring it out was tough. That said, the facilities at the main campus are out of this world – there is a 24 hour starbucks, a 24 hour MAC commons study area, an outdoor swimming pool and a rainbow bridge. It is great!

Money Matters: Singapore is less expensive than Boston in general so that is really nice.

Living:

I lived at Prince George's Park Residences with most of the other exchange students. Originally, I was assigned to a type C room (no air con, shared bath). Admittedly, the room was not as bad as I thought it would have been and having to share a bathroom with other girls in my cluster provided an easy way to meet other students. I was able to switch to a type A room (air con, private bath) after about a month and while the facilities were far better I rarely saw any of the other girls who lived in my cluster. The housing office is not inclined to grant a room change request without a reason (beyond "I just want to change") so I relied on the fact that the constant use of the overhead fan was wreaking havoc on my allergies, which sufficed.

I found that the food options at Prince George's Park were fairly limited. There are two food courts/hawker centres but it's essentially the same food being offered in each – the main difference is that one has air con and the other does not. There are also three cafes in the complex and they stay open later. Beyond those, there is a small convenience store, although if any major shopping is needed it is more worthwhile to venture out to a real supermarket.

Classes:

The four classes I took this past semester were World Trade Law with Michael Ewing-Chow, International and Comparative Trademark Law with Ng-Loy Wee Loon, Corporate Tax with Stephen Phua, and International Trusts with Hans Tjio, Tan Yok Lin and Mark Lea. Surprisingly, the two classes I really wanted to take (Corporate Tax and International Trusts) were disappointments. Whereas, the two classes I ended up selecting mostly due to scheduling (World Trade Law and International Trademark Law) were far more enjoyable than expected.

Neither Corporate Tax nor International Trusts lived up to their course descriptions online and both professors Phua and Tjio taught in a manner difficult to follow. Instead of following the syllabus as provided, both jumped around creating more confusion rather than clarity. International Trusts, however, was not a total loss thanks to the few modules led by Mark Lea. In a sense, his few modules were the only ones that came close to course description and I would have preferred to have his portion of the course extended. Corporate Tax on the other hand felt like a total waste of time. Professor Phua attempted to cram the entire semester worth of lectures into the first few and then the remaining lectures were either guest speakers or cancelled.

Thankfully, World Trade Law and International Trademark Law were far better. Both professors gave clear, well-planned lectures and followed the course syllabus. As far as the workload is concerned, World Trade and International Trademark ended up being the heaviest of the four. Corporate Tax only entailed one paper, and International Trusts was based purely on the final

and one brief group presentation, although International Trusts – particularly the modules led by Hans Tjio – involved the most reading. World Trade Law had a final in addition to a paper and International Trademark involved two papers.

Singapore:

Although I would not say that I experienced much in the way of culture shock when I moved to Singapore there were a few noticeable differences, mostly good but some bad. Starting with the good, the public transportation system is infinitely better than the MBTA and after using cabs in Singapore regularly, I'm forever spoiled. Also, the food is fantastic; the options on campus are fairly slim but if you are willing to travel almost any type of food can be found and usually it is very good. And, of course, it is incredibly clean and unbelievably safe.

The one thing that I did find frustrating about Singapore however is probably the very thing that has brought the country so much success and it is the "kaisu" mentality. As explained to me, this term sums up all things Singapore and roughly means "fear of losing" or something along those lines. While I am sure there is lots of good that has grown out of the mentality, it can manifest itself in manner that can often seem inconsiderate or even rude. A simple example involves entering/exiting MRT trains. Regularly, Singaporeans will try to push onto a train without allowing passengers to exit even though it is obvious that the passenger intends to get off the train. As a result, almost every day on the MRT feels like trying to board a train at Kenmore after a Sox game. Similarly, I found that many of my Singaporean classmates were less likely to share notes or study with others than the foreign students, which gave the class more of a competitive air than I am accustomed.

Misc:

The most jarring thing for me was the age of my peers. Because law is an undergraduate degree in most of the world, many of my classmates were 19-20 years old. I had not expected to notice the age gap so I was not originally concerned about it but once I was actually in Singapore it felt very obvious to me. (It probably did not help that I had 7-8 years on the younger classmates.) As a result, I did not end up spending much of my free time hanging out with my classmates. Instead, I ended up doing a significant amount of solo traveling. I also found a group of expats nearer to my age and did most of my exploring of Singapore with them.

All in all, I loved my time in Singapore. I met some fantastic people (Singaporean and Non-Singaporean) with whom I hope to keep in touch and had the opportunity to visit and explore incredible places. I have no regrets about going and only wish I had more time to spend there.

**National University of Singapore
Spring '09 Final Study Abroad Evaluation**

My study abroad experience ultimately afforded me a multi-faceted educational opportunity that I could not have duplicated anywhere else. Graduation stress and cultural impediments aside, the trip was a very positive experience.

Through my coursework at NUS, I learned about areas of law to which I was otherwise entirely unexposed. For example, my International Trusts final project required that I create a novel and complex financial plan for two wealthy Southeast Asian families, including the restructuring of family businesses and the creation of various international trust structures utilizing several nations' regimes for asset protection purposes. This final addressed regional issues ranging from unstable governments to forced inheritance and sharia under Muslim law. I strongly doubt that I could have replicated this educational experience in the US. Likewise, my Singaporean International ADR class presented detailed explanations of Chinese, Australian and Indian arbitration models alongside the European and US models commonly taught at home.

Additionally, Singapore's centralized location allowed me to enhance my formal educational experience with trips to the many countries that surround the city-state. Airfares on discount Asian airlines ranged from \$60 roundtrip to Borneo to \$200 to Vietnam. The low cost of living, combined with the availability of these cheap fares allowed me to travel over many weekends. As a result, I was able to experience a taste of life in seven countries while abroad, learning firsthand about their histories, economies and cultures. While traveling through these nations, I

tried to focus on the environmental issues we discussed in my ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) law course. As a result, I witnessed firsthand the pollution in and around the Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia, mining in Brunei Darussalam, palm farming in Malaysia and the swine flu terror in Singapore through eyes educated to the various issues that each sight presented.

All in all, my study abroad experience was one of the most unique, eye-opening experiences of my academic career. Not only did I expand the breadth of my areas of legal knowledge significantly in the classrooms, but I also acquired considerable knowledge through informal methods of learning, such as traveling. These two educational methods combined to create an unforgettable experience.

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- YES ☒ NO ☐
- b) Will you share your mid-semester report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?
- YES ☒ NO ☐

Please write your Mid-Semester Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER:

Dual J.D./LL.M. in Asian Legal Studies, National University of Singapore, Fall 2014

My first semester at the National University of Singapore had some challenges but was an overall wonderful experience. I will first discuss some of the challenges faced and then express my appreciation and satisfaction with NUS and the Asian Legal Studies L.L.M. program.

Students considering the BU-NUS dual degree program should understand that a greater degree of independence will be required of them. From housing to class scheduling and fulfilling degree requirements NUS has appeared to be very hands off. The lack of support is especially noticeable in comparison to my experience at BU.

NUS L.L.M. Dual Degree Program

Due partially to this lack of support and communication (as well as error on Julie and my behalf as well) Julie and I encountered a severe scheduling issue and ended being forced to complete a class that we did not now to attend. Through discussion with the administration and the professor we were allowed to still write the final paper but were automatically docked 10% for the portion of the class that we had inadvertently missed. Though I feel the situation could have been resolved with more flexibility we both were able to complete the course and are on course to finish the program as planned.

The best part of my first semester here was the variety of classes and classmates and the unique courses that I have taken. I hope that my career is very international in nature. As such the diverse professors, classes, and classmates that I have encountered have worked to expand the horizons of my legal thinking. A real highlight of my first semester was "Ocean Law and Policy in Asia." The class not only increased my exposure to concerns and issues involving Asia but it also allowed me to study maritime law, which is currently not offered at BU.

In the end I am very happy with the program and thankful to BU for the opportunity to participate in this program.