

Today, January 29, 2019 is my last first day of school at HBS. Here we are, already the very last semester. While I still have a few more months to enjoy the campus and all the extra-curricular activities, now is a great time to reflect on what I have accomplished since I submitted my first scholarship report.

I have to say, I enjoy this second year much more. Not only do I feel more confident on campus and more relaxed about the whole experience, I also really appreciate the fact that I can pick my classes and projects. The elective curriculum is a great opportunity to really focus on what you want, but it is at the same time a one-time occasion to learn more about subjects you are simply curious about. Last semester, I mostly attended entrepreneurship classes, while I also had a great time deepening my knowledge on some new topics for me, such as real estate and sales. What made this previous semester really unique was my independent project. Instead of earning credits attending a class and writing a paper or an exam at the end of the semester, I partnered with a company and, under the supervision of one HBS professor, I worked on an assignment. It was a great experience to dive into an area I had zero previous experience on, and to work closely with the CEO. My analysis helped them expand in African countries.

Otherwise, life on campus is – as usual – very nice. Friendships have deepened; and it was great to see everyone again after the summer break when we all split all over the world for our internships or vacations. Back on campus, we also had the privilege to inaugurate a new addition to all the faculty buildings. The new Klarman Hall is an awesome auditorium, way nicer and more welcoming than the previous one which was demolished during our first year.

Reflecting on what I did in the summer, I am proud to tell that I have made a bold move. While most of my classmates interned in companies they will probably work for after graduation, I decided to remain in Boston and spend my 3-month summer break on my own venture project. I joined HBS hoping to have time to develop my own business and I had always wanted to have time to work on my own ideas. This summer was an opportunity not to miss: to see what it is and what it takes to be an entrepreneur. I was based at the iLab, the innovation center for Harvard. There, I had all the resources to start working on my business idea. I gathered a team around my project and spent the 3 months testing hypotheses and go-to-market strategies. While I may not pursue this business idea beyond that summer break, I have built a clear understanding of what I am capable of and what is required to build a sustainable venture.

Now is time for me to decide on what I want to do post-MBA. Parallel to reading cases and planning treks with my classmates before we say goodbye to the campus, I am applying intensively to jobs in the U.S. The competition is tough, but I am looking forward to implementing all what I have learned during these past two years into my new position as a recent MBA graduate.

Once again, I would like to emphasize how grateful I am for the scholarship I was granted by the HBS Association of Germany. I feel very fortunate. Thank you again!

Best regards,  
Levent Sarioglu