

My 2nd year at HBS

After a very eventful and exciting first year at Harvard Business School, a two month internship in Germany and a well deserved holiday trip with my family, I was very thrilled to get back to campus and to start my second year at HBS. With hindsight, the second year at HBS was quite different from the first year for various reasons.

In contrast to the first year, the elective curriculum of the second year allows students to choose from a broad range of courses. Students of different sections who choose the same courses study together so I had many opportunities to make friends outside of my own section. During the first days of each term, the so-called “shopping period”, students are allowed to check courses and to request final changes. I chose a balanced curriculum from various faculty units in order to take advantage of the diverse course offerings. In addition, I wanted to make sure to choose a curriculum that will not only provide me with the necessary hard skills, but also the soft skills that will have a long-term impact on my career.

Furthermore, I spent even more time thinking about my long term career goals and how I can best realize them. The recruiting period started early at the beginning of the second year and students started immediately to prepare their resumes, to meet with career coaches and to conduct mock interviews before meeting companies on campus. I spent a lot of time discussing career topics with friends and I could learn a lot from their deep industry experience. Obviously, the economic crisis made it a lot more difficult for all students, especially for career switchers. However, I could not have been at a better place during these times of uncertainty. I was able to navigate and better understand the financial crisis through a variety of mediums - including macroeconomic courses, expert panels, speaker events, and meetings with professors - that gave me insights that normally I would have never seen.

Unlike in the first year, when graduation still seemed to be very far away, with every month that passed by, I realized that my time at HBS will have an end. The time flew by but several reflection sessions with the section and the celebration of the centennial anniversary with a day-long event cemented the fact that HBS is not a 2-year experience.

When I graduated in June 2009, I was proud to be part of HBS’s 99th commencement and during this traditional and moving ceremony, I felt that HBS was a life-changing experience. Through HBS, I was able to meet and form life-long friendships with students and professors who are now across the globe - yet still only a simple phone call away. I had and will have opportunities to exchange experiences with great people and a platform for a lifetime of learning. Since I was able to change industries in a very difficult time, HBS enabled me to enhance my professional career in a very meaningful way. More importantly, I am confident that my time at HBS gave me the potential to realize my dreams.

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