CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST; HOCHSCHULE BONN-RHEIN-SIEG, UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES EXCHANGE

PROGRAM REPORT

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Background
The nature of the program was an exchange program between Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg, University of Applied Sciences and the University of Cape Coast. The program was advertised and we applied. We were shortlisted for interview and we were selected as the candidates for the exchange program. The program took a period of five months. We set off from Accra, Ghana to Germany on 7th September 2015, and returned to Ghana on 25th January 2016.

We were involved in several activities in Germany. We attended lectures, workshops, excursions, and carried out research, among other things.

The International Management Course
In all, we took seven courses which included International Marketing, International Trade and Finance, International Strategy, Current Issues in International Business, Leadership and Organizational Behavior, Intercultural Communication, and Scenario Planning. We also joined an introduction to the German language class.

Our lecturers can be described as genuinely international. We were 29 in class from 11 different countries. The diverse nature of the class offered us the opportunity to work with and appreciate people from different cultures.

Teaching Methods
The lectures were practical and interactive. We worked in teams and made several presentations in class. The lecturers used computers, PowerPoint presentations, pin boards, projectors, and smartboards.

Nature of the Course
The courses were related to the business world. They were quite practical. We had a feel of what actually happens in the business environment.

Courses in the Program
We took seven courses which included International Marketing, International Trade and Finance, International Strategy, Current Issues in International Business, Leadership and
Organizational Behavior, Intercultural Communication, and Scenario Planning. We also joined an Introduction to German language class.

Assignments
Assignments were given at the end of each class. Presentations were made during which the class was given the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions.

Travel as Part of the Program
In the International Marketing course, we carried out a field research in three different cities in three countries in one day; Liege (Belgium), Maastricht (the Netherlands), and Aachen (Germany). The objective of the research was collecting and analyzing primary data on the marketing strategies of McDonalds in these cities. We also took the opportunity to visit some historical sites.

We also took part in a 3-day Business Start-up Clinic for Ghanaian Students in Germany at Leipzig (Germany). The program was from 24th – 25th September 2015. The seminar introduced us to a concept in entrepreneurship known as the Business Idea Canvas. We had lessons in this concept and also made presentations. We were assigned mentors to provide guidance for our business ideas. The seminar again exposed us to ten ways to innovation in a business.

During our short stay in Germany, we also took part in several projects and presentations. Notable among them was a project on “Insects as a source of food – mastering the international marketing challenge”. We contributed to the project in different areas. We were put in teams and each team had to work on one aspect of the project. Mrs. Mavis Opoku Boadu carried out research work on the contribution of consumer behavior theory to marketing. For my part, I mentored the teams in data collection, analysis, and the presentation using SPSS. I also served as the editor for the final project report.

We also took part in a monthly colloquium organized by Prof. Bode, Dr. DaGbaji, and Ms. Christine Freitag. During these sessions, final-year bachelor students and doctor-of-philosophy students made presentations on their research work. We as part of the panel offered advice and direction to the presenters. Dr. DaGbaji, a visiting professor, also made presentations on how to effectively conduct academic research. We learned a lot from these sessions.

Exam and Nature of Exam Questions
We wrote the exams when we returned to Ghana. Dr. Anokye supervised the exam questions. We wished we had been given the opportunity to write the exams in Germany before returning to Ghana.
Differences Between the Teaching Methods in UCC and H-BRS
There is a vast difference between the teaching methods in UCC and H-BRS. H-BRS had small class sizes as compared to those of UCC. At H-BRS, students were given the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions and they got immediate feedback from the lecturer and colleagues. H-BRS employed suitable ICT to make teaching and learning convenient. The Internet could be assessed by students via Wi-Fi right in class as lessons were going on. Lecturers also sent learning materials directly to students’ portals. The library services at H-BRS were great. We could assess books, journal articles, and other studying materials from the library right in our hostels. The lecturers, administrators, and library staff were very professional.

Conclusion and Recommendation
In general, the exchange program was a success and we want it to be continued. We also acquired several skills. We learned the German language and got some idea about the unique German culture. The Business Start-up Clinic for Ghanaian students in Germany at Leipzig (Germany) was also very educative. The “Insects as a source of food – mastering the international marketing challenge” was a very practical research project we also undertook.

The exchange program is excellent. Participants from the exchange program should be engaged in their home country to share their knowledge and experiences. They should be involved in subsequent programs concerning the purpose of their visit to their home countries.

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