

# HELLEN HOULLEBERGHS, A BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE MASTER STUDENT



PUBLISHED ON 25 JULY 2010

Besides doing the SBB Fundamentals course, the Orientation on Technopreneurship course and an SBB internship at SKIM, Hellen also joined the SBB entrepreneurial study trip to Boston, June 2010. "As a Biomedical Sciences student, it may not seem interesting to join a study trip focusing on commercializing technology; however I would definitely suggest it."

"On Sunday May 30th, 39 students boarded the US Airways flight to Boston, starting the adventure that was the SBB study trip, organized by HOPE. The title of the trip was: 'Commercializing Technology,' the aim was to gain insight into the investment climate in the U.S. and receive advice from experts on how to start a successful business.

While this study trip could be perceived as just a fun trip to Boston with a group of students, it was actually also very interesting and insightful. The organizers of the trip had managed to get in contact with many key people in Boston such as

Bill Aulet, the head of the MIT Entrepreneurship Center

Jacky Basset, CEO of BT Industries and author of many books on entrepreneurship

Bob Caspe, professor at Babson College and established entrepreneur of multiple companies

Hence we were able to attend lectures and speak to very inspirational individuals who were all definitely at home in the area of entrepreneurship.

As a Biomedical Sciences student, it may not seem interesting to join a study trip focusing on commercializing technology; however I would definitely suggest it. First of all because we also visited Genzyme, an extremely interesting pharmaceutical company that I know all the science-based business students from the University of Leiden enjoyed seeing. And secondly, because the entrepreneurs, even if they would have set up a cafe, were still able to provide great insights into the challenges faced and how to go about starting a business in any field.

What I considered the best part of the trip was a dinner where all our speakers were invited. Talking to them one-on-one really gave the opportunity to pick their brains. Even if you had never planned to start your own business one day, speaking to these people makes one want to open-up-shop tomorrow.

Besides being inspired by our speakers, the group company on the trip was also very motivating. The study trip group was composed of 24 Entrepreneurship MSC

(Rotterdam), 6 technical (Delft) and 9 biomedical & chemical science (Leiden) students. The diversity in academic backgrounds allowed for interesting opinions and feedback on each other's business ideas. We all became friends and made our networks available to each so that if one of us ever starts a business we may be able to help in some way. All the students really had their own views and drives for the future. This type of company makes you think about the future and actually want to do something constructive with it.

While we had a busy 'academic' schedule on the study trip, we still managed to do some Boston sightseeing. We went to Quincy market, whale watching, a Boston RedSox baseball game, the list goes on. This allowed us to relax and get to know each other better. The trip definitely had a good balance between academic and leisure activities. It was a huge success, the academic as well as the social parts."