

SIHAN DING, A MATH STUDENT FROM THE HUNAN UNIVERSITY

PUBLISHED ON 14 JULY 2010

"I did my bachelor in Applied Mathematics in China. Since Applied Mathematics can be applicable in some companies, I thought having some business courses in my master would be useful for my future career."

"That's the reason I decided to join the Master of Science Specialisation called Science Based Business as part of my Research Master Mathematics at Leiden University. After finishing my first semester of Math courses, I started the SBB Fundamentals course in my second semester in February 2010."

COOPERATING WITH OTHER TEAM MEMBERS MOST CHALLENGING

"The most notable thing about the SBB Fundamentals course is that it is really intensive. Normally, I started with lectures in the morning till middle afternoon, then my team had some discussions about the assignment and after that, instead of a free evening, everyone had to read the case as preparation for the next day. By the time I went to bed, it would only take a few minutes before I fell into deep sleep.

Although it is quite intensive, the course itself was interesting for me. The most challenging and exciting part was to learn to cooperate with other team members, because I am not used to debate fiercely with others in mathematics. But in business, sometimes there is no 100% correct answer and each person has a different opinion. I have learnt to make my opinion clear and to convince others by debating. Besides that you will reach a deeper understanding of the knowledge by discussing it together.

This two and half months of business courses can not compare with 3 or 4 years bachelor courses in business. But if you are a science student and you are interested in the business field, it is definitely worthy. I used to think business as mysterious. During SBB Fundamentals, I learned what Marketing is for a company, as well as Corporate Finance. The most useful thing for me however, turned out to be getting to know the general assets of business.

For example, how to tackle a business project, how to contribute to your team, and how to give a good presentation, etc. As a science student, all courses I did before were all related to science and I never had the chance to learn those things in a systematic way before.

After all, I don't think I will be a pure scientist. I am more intending to put science in application outside research. So my new gained knowledge and skills would be an advantage if I go to work in a company.

At last, as an international student, I experienced my first time of working with Dutch people. I got to know what the “western way” in the business field is. Also, since I have worked mostly with Dutch students, I got to know their way of expressing themselves, which is quite different from the Chinese way of course. This experience also may benefit me to adapt different cultures.

Besides that, I have gained a lot of good friends in my class!”

By Sihan Ding, student of SBB Fundamentals course Spring 2010.