

September 2012

MEET OUR ERASMUS MUNDUS WINNERS

Since 2004, Erasmus Mundus, the international mobility program of the European Commission, has aimed to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote intercultural understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with countries from around the world. Erasmus Mundus is based on the hugely successful Erasmus exchange program which has enabled over 2.2 million students as well as 250 000 higher education teachers and other staff to study and undertake research at other European universities.

Today, the second iteration of the Erasmus Mundus Program (2009-2013) continues to offer funding to education institutions and provide mobility opportunities for students at several academic levels – undergraduate, masters, doctorate, post-doctorate – and also for academic staff. Erasmus Mundus programs involve several Universities from across the EU and also offer the possibility for Non-EU countries to be partners in the program. While the main language of instruction is usually English, local language courses are offered which makes the Erasmus Mundus experience a highly valued intercultural experience.

But the European experience is about to evolve. The European Commission has proposed a new project that will bring together all the current EU and international programs for education, training, youth and sport and regroup them under the name "Erasmus for All".

The main goal will stay the same – to improve people's skills and ultimately their employability as well as to facilitate mobility, improve language skills and support the modernisation of education and training systems. This new program will be better structured which will increase effectiveness, meaning more grants and prospects for students, trainees, teachers and others.

In May, the European Council of Ministers reached a first general agreement on Erasmus for All, supporting the fundamental ideas of the European Commission's original proposal with some additional amendments. For the scheme to be adopted, both the European Parliament and the Council must agree on the project. More will be known in November, after the Parliament takes its final decision. Stay tuned!

Listed are some of the students who were successful in obtaining a scholarship for the 2012-13 European Union's Erasmus Mundus Scheme. The scheme is highly competitive, and these students are to be congratulated on their academic achievements.



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KIRSTY ALLEN



Kirsty Allen is 24 years old and graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Applied Science (Exercise Science). In Europe she will be studying for a Masters of Adapted Physical Activity at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium.

Kirsty says "Aside from experiencing the European culture, Belgian waffles and beer; I am looking forward to becoming part of the Erasmus Mundus Programme's unique global outreach and perspective. The knowledge sharing and collaboration between so many divergent countries and cultures will be a fantastic way for me to understand the varying approaches which programs are adopting in other parts of the world compared to my experience so far in Australia. Throughout the course of my academic and professional experience I have been highly interested and motivated in enriching the lives of individuals with disabilities through the development and delivery of adapted physical activity services. I believe the Erasmus Mundus Masters of Adapted Physical Activity will offer me a unique opportunity to build upon my experience and knowledge in this area and successfully achieve enhanced personal development and career goals in my future ventures in this industry."

DIVINE BACARRA



Divine Bacarra, originally from the Philippines, is now residing in New Zealand and working as a care and protection social worker. Divine is 30 years old and completed her Bachelor of Science in Social Work degree from the University of the Philippines-Diliman.

She took her Master of Arts in Women and Development from the same University and was accepted in the GEMMA Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies.

Divine says "As I study in Europe, I wish to widen my scope, strengthen my grasp of abuse, learning, friendships, diversity and culture using gender lens. I want to be enriched by an immersion in European academic modes and realities. This international and multicultural exposure can in turn be an asset for me in pursuing an advanced and rewarding professional career as a gender advocate believing in global solidarity while respecting difference."

HAL BALDERSTON



Hal Balderston is 23 years old, and graduated from the University of New South Wales in 2010. In Europe he will study for a Masters of Economics and Management of Network Industries in Paris, Madrid, and what he describes as "another mystery location" for the final 6 months.

Hal says "In undertaking the Erasmus Mundus Masters of Economics and Management of Network Industries, I hope to obtain a better understanding of global commerce, economics and the source and distribution of electric power both now and in the future. But beyond an academic level, I am looking forward to experiencing another culture (or three!). I'm excited to immerse myself in its language, music, food, art, fashion and people. I am hoping that through this experience, I will not only understand economics and the management of network industries but I'll understand people on a whole new level. As I am confronted with challenges, adventures and conversations, living in a culture different to my own, I anticipate that I will grow and better know where others are coming from."

DEANNA HOOD

Deanna is a 20-year-old maths and electrical engineering double bachelors graduate from Queensland University of Technology. In September she'll be undertaking an Erasmus Mundus Masters in Computer Vision and Robotics (VIBOT) involving three semesters of coursework in France, Spain and Scotland, then a semester of research with one of the program's international partners.

Deanna says *"Of course I'm excited by the prospect of being immersed in these cultures over the two years, but what I'm really looking forward to is spending the time with such multicultural-diverse groups of students, with my peers from literally all over the world! Because our cohort stays together as we move to each of the locations, I'll have two years to develop friendships and international networks that could have only been made possible through a unique experience like this. Overall, I'm expecting to graduate as a completely different person because of this experience: the challenge of living as a nomad in foreign lands, the connections with so many different cultures, and the academic networks I'll have generated made an Erasmus Mundus masters an easy decision for me. I'm just glad that I heard about the scheme from a friend of mine: I was hooked straight away!"*



VIVIANNE LINS

Vivianne Lins is 26 years old and is currently studying at University of Western Australia. She has received a scholarship to study at the Joint European Master in Environmental Studies - JEMES. The focus is on "Cities and Sustainability" and the participant universities are Aalborg Universitet in Denmark, Technische Universität Hamburg-Harburg in Germany, Universidade de Aveiro in Portugal and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain.

Vivianne says *"The opportunity to study in excellent universities in Europe will definitely broaden my perspective about our current social and environmental issues. I wish to contribute in the process of positively transform unsustainable cities in healthier places to live, re-integrating human beings with natural patterns. Considering that nature live in our cities, not only in the wild, but shapes with us new connections at every second, developing research in this field will improve chances of sustainable projects around the world, and especially in developing countries. For two years, I will live in different countries, learn about their cultures and improve my language skills. I feel lucky to combine my career with my love of travel and expect this experience to be at the same time challenging and rewarding."*



LEA MEAGHER

Lea Meagher is 24 years old and graduated from the University of Newcastle in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science. Lea has worked in the Pathology Department at BSES as a Research Assistant for the past 2 years. She will be completing a Masters of Science in Nematology at Ghent University in Belgium.

Lea says *"As the Masters course will be co-ordinated through several European Universities, including Bielefeld University in Germany, University of Evora in Portugal and University of Jaen in Spain, I am enthusiastic about gaining an international perspective on all aspects of nematology from the highly qualified and respected staff of these universities. I look forward to immersing myself in a new culture and meeting fellow classmates from various nations who have also been selected to participate in this course of study. Following completion of the Masters degree I intend to return to Australia to apply this knowledge in the agricultural industry."*



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MEGAN PATE

Megan Pate is 24 years old and studying at La Trobe University, Bundoora. She holds a Bachelor of Medical Science with majors in medical science and microbiology. Her Honours thesis, in conjunction with The NRL, Australia and St Vincents Institute was 'Developing an improved HIV-1 Neutralisation Assay' ie: research towards identifying potential HIV-1 vaccines. Megan will be studying for a Masters in Forensic Science at the Universidad de Cordoba, Spain, the Instituto Superior de Ciencias da Saude Egas Moniz, Portugal and University of Lincoln, United Kingdom.

Megan says *"I am really excited to have been given the opportunity to study my Masters through Erasmus Mundus. Science and its application to forensics has always captivated me and the chance to pursue further studies in this field in places like Spain, Portugal and the UK is absolutely incredible! With an increasing complexity of crimes being committed it is becoming ever more important for authorities to take a more unified and collaborative approach when dealing with and solving these types of cases. I hope that the international nature of this course will allow me to not only develop my expertise in the field of forensics but also aid in establishing a strong base of international colleagues to work with in the future."*



KRISHTINA THAPA

Kristina Thapa is a 24 year old student at The University of Queensland, who will study in Europe at a range of universities : (SEFOTECH) Msc Degree in Food Science, Technology and Nutrition in Katholieke Hogeschool Sint-Lieven (Belgium), Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland), Hochschule Anhalt (Germany), Universidade Catolica Portuguesa - ESB (Portugal).

Kristina says *"I am a food technologist from Nepal and have a dream to establish a model food industry in my country for commercial production of Nepalese indigenous foods. I want to use this as one of the intervention strategies to address the problem of food insecurity in Nepal. This dream is the inspiration to do my Masters here in Australia learning the social system of food security and now aspire to polish my technological knowledge and skills before I move ahead to fulfill my dream. I am extremely glad that Erasmus Mundus is giving me that platform. Under this Msc program I will be studying in detail about different food commodities, their nutritional and ecological aspect as well as other emerging areas of food technology (food biotechnology, global food issues, food safety and total quality management). Besides this, I am enthusiastic about internship in international food industry under professional competence module where I will get exposure of highly developed European food sector."*



ANDREW TRAVELLER

Andrew Traveller, 28, says *"I was delighted to have been offered a place as a Erasmus Mundus Scholar recently and very much look forward to studying towards a Master in Research and Innovation in Higher Education, which includes semesters at Danube University Krems, Austria, University of Tampere, Finland and Beijing Normal University, China. The reason I applied for the scholarship is essentially twofold. Professionally, I have worked with a number of higher education institutions in multiple countries and I am fascinated by the shifting priorities that today's world presents, such as demographic changes, increased competition, and the demand for applied/practical courses to address global skill shortages. Certainly, many studies I have read point to the fact that the higher education sector will continue to play a key role into the future for our economic and cultural well-being. I greatly desire to gain the knowledge and skills to be part of this "new era" of education. This Masters programme will not only give me a competitive edge in the labour market, but also allow me to contribute to a key global issue for the future."*

