

Global Is the New Local: An MBA Story Across Continents

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As I sit in my apartment in Chicago, watching the sun set over the Lake Michigan skyline, I can't help but reflect on how far I have come—from navigating Mumbai local to riding the CTA trains in a bustling American city. My journey to Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) was not just a physical relocation, but a complete transformation of my mindset, cultural perspective, and career goals.

When I applied for my MBA degree, I knew I wanted more than just a piece of paper that said MBA graduate. I wanted to challenge myself, to immerse in something completely different, and most importantly, to grow. Coming to NEIU gave me exactly that.

The Bridge from UAiU to NEIU

Universal AI University has always fostered a vision that goes beyond borders. As a student at UAiU, I was constantly encouraged to think globally and act with purpose. The academic partnership between UAi and NEIU was not just a transfer of credits—it was a transfer of ambition, identity, and exposure. It gave me the opportunity to experience a true international education while building my expertise in marketing in one of the world's most vibrant and competitive cities.

This collaboration laid the foundation for what would become a transformative two years of growth. I arrived at NEIU eager to learn, but I left with a deep sense of confidence, cultural intelligence, and global perspective—tools that no classroom and textbooks can offer.

A Classroom Without Borders

At NEIU, the classroom was a dynamic blend of cultures, ideas, and disciplines. My classmates and colleagues came from countries like Nigeria, Vietnam, Colombia, China, and across the United States. Each class discussion brought forth a mosaic of viewpoints—shaped by diverse cultures, economies, and life stories.

One situation that really stayed with me was presenting my research on “The Influence of Marketing on Consumer Behavior in the FMCG Sector”—a project I carried out based on real survey data and FMCG brand case studies of brands like ITC, WholeFoods, and Nestlé. What began as a mere class assignment eventually helped me discover my passion for research and strategic thinking. That paper was later included in academic showcases and recognized for its practical insight. A notable achievement, my **research papers have now been included in academic course curriculums** at University of Manchester and St. Francis University in the United Kingdom.

Life in Chicago: A Global Playground

Coming from India, I was used to a very structured academic setting. NEIU challenged me to think critically, to speak up, and to look at every marketing challenge through a global lens. I even collaborated with U.S. influencers, contributed to the university's official social media calendar, and got to see how corporate partnerships are built here—something I could have only learned by being on the ground.

I worked as a Marketing Assistant for Northeastern Illinois University, capturing student stories and managing social content. I also took part in corporate visits to companies like Citibank, photographed university events, and collaborated with influencers like Nekia Nichelle to promote the university's brand. Each project strengthened not only my technical skills, but also my ability to communicate and connect with diverse audiences.

I also had the privilege to represent the International Association as Secretary, which gave me the chance to support fellow international students, organize events that celebrated global cultures, and become part of a tight-knit, welcoming community. From Diwali and Lunar New Year celebrations to Thanksgiving potlucks, we didn't just study globalization—we lived it.

The Necessity of Global Exposure Today

In today's interconnected world, global exposure is no longer a *luxury*, it is a necessity. Whether you are leading a team, launching a product, or creating a brand story, cultural intelligence is just as critical as business acumen. Academic knowledge alone doesn't prepare you for the nuances of working in diverse environments, it is the experience of living, learning, and adapting in another country that truly equips you to be a global professional.

Globalization is no longer a buzzword we study in classrooms—it's something I live every day. The people I've met, the perspectives I've gained, and the lessons I've learned have taught me that business today is borderless. It's about empathy, agility, and collaboration across cultures.

A Mentor Who Made It Possible

This journey would not have been possible without the guidance and support of Professor Vijay Tandon. As the Dean of the School of Management at UAIU and now the Dean of Internationalization at UAI, he has been a mentor in the truest sense. He saw potential in me even before I saw it in myself, encouraged me to take the leap, and consistently motivated me through every academic milestone. His vision for building global bridges through education is what gave students like me the chance to not just dream, but to do—to step out into the world and find our place in it.

Full Circle

As I wrap up my MBA journey, I have stepped into a new chapter as a **Core Marketing Associate at Bortz Group**, where I manage campaigns for clients across Germany, the U.S., and Europe. The role perfectly aligns with the global exposure I have gained which demands cross-cultural understanding, strategic thinking, and adaptability.

Studying at NEIU through the UAiU partnership was not just a chapter in my academic life—it was a turning point. It gave me the opportunity, the education, and most importantly, the evolution I needed to become a global citizen, a thoughtful leader, and a lifelong learner.

End note:

I carry with me more than a just a degree. I carry stories, lessons, and relationships that span continents. I carry the confidence to walk into any room—be it in Mumbai, Chicago, or Berlin, and contribute meaningfully.