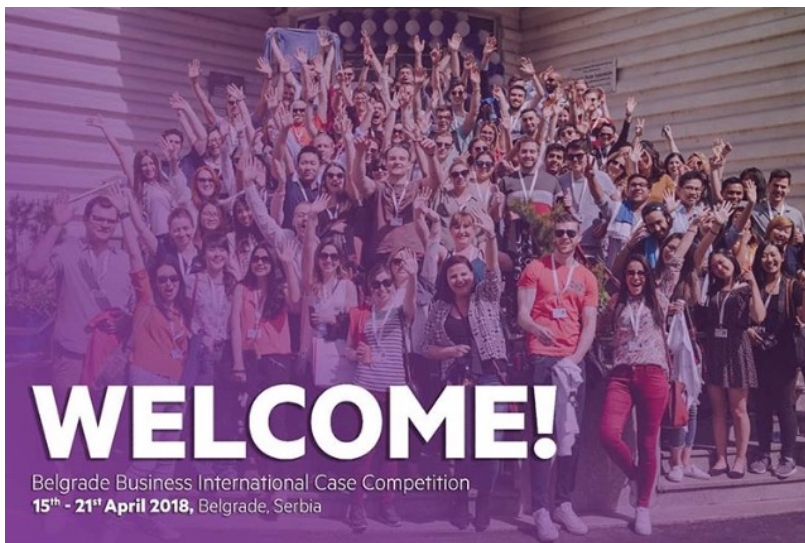


Once in a Lifetime Discovery – My First International Case Competition

This April, I made an incredible discovery at Belgrade Business International Case Competition (BBICC) 2018. In 7 days, the most challenging cases were crafted, the craziest yet most feasible strategies were created, and the most pleasant connections were established. Our memories of the beautiful historic city of Belgrade, Serbia, will stay with me forever.

Late this March, when I received the invitation from Dr. Zachary Leung, my heartbeat accelerated. It was the first worldwide case competition that CityU, and I, had ever been invited to. BBICC is one of the top 12 international case competitions, with 20 recognized business schools from all over the world competing in it. As a sophomore, I felt privileged to represent CityU together with Jade (also from the AC department), Vickie and Frances, under the guidance of Dr. Zachary Leung.



CityU was invited by the BBICC committee.

Crafting Challenging Cases

We encountered three challenging cases of real-life problems in recognized companies in Serbia, with two short cases and one long one. We were required to solve the short cases in 5 hours and the long case in 24 hours, and then give a presentation to the jury members composed of industry experts.

The cases facing us were not ordinary business scenarios, but real-life challenges related to **digital transformation**, one of the trendiest topics in the current business world. The first case concerned **E-commerce** solutions for a very complicated and big electrical corporation, while the last case concerned the **Internet of Things**. Solving our second case was the toughest yet most thrilling experience. Surprisingly, the Serbian company wanted to launch its own **cryptocurrency** like Bitcoin. We, as consultants, had to select the best blockchain and formulate a marketing campaign for its local and global promotion.

All of us four girls were quite unfamiliar with cryptocurrencies. Things do not always go as smoothly as planned and results are not necessarily proportional to effort, so we had to start from scratch. I did thorough research on the blockchain mechanism to select the most appropriate mechanism for the cryptocurrency products. Unfamiliar with the context, we brainstormed and discussed intensively to come up with brilliant ideas. It wasn't until the very last moment that we came up with satisfactory ideas. We struggled, yet never gave up.



I practiced hard before the formal presentation

During the presentation, we believed that only when we had a strong position could we convince others. We were very lucky to get intensive feedback from the jury members composed of consultants and company representatives. To our delight, the jury admired our idea of an app for the game Monopoly to engage and attract startups and offer an advisory service to help them raise capital. One of the jury members gave us first place. As a young entrepreneur, he encouraged us: “Do not be afraid of thinking about crazy ideas. It is such a wonderfully safe platform for your experiments!”

All three cases served as a precious chance for us to learn about the impact of digital transformation on today’s business world. The idea generation process indeed helped us to understand the trends of today’s business world. What a fruitful learning journey!

Although we did not enter the final, we got the chance to observe the presentations from the best teams, from the National University of Singapore, Queen’s University, Washington University and others. I came to understand how there was room for improvement.



Final grand presentation

Exploring Serbian culture and making friends

Apart from the intense competition, cultural tours were also a highlight of the journey. In the “Amazing Run,” we stepped into the city of Belgrade, which I had never visited. Located at the intersection of the Sava River and Danube River, Belgrade is the capital of Serbia where the old meets the modern. The modern district is under rapid construction, whereas the old streets and gardens are well preserved. Serbian people told me that the city had been destroyed many times yet has been rebuilt in a tenacious way. A strong spirit has been cultivated and is reflected in the landscape and architecture in addition to people’s lifestyles.



The treasured landscape of Belgrade, Serbia.

Serbians are very friendly and hospitable people. They enjoy the slow pace of life. It impressed me that we could talk to people everywhere in Serbia, and they were quite happy to make contact with us. They are optimistic about their life after so much historical turbulence.

I could definitely feel the people’s passion in various BBICC 2018 activities. Apart from the “Amazing Run,” I participated in a special gala where everybody dressed up and enjoyed traditional Serbian singing and dance. The competition is definitely a golden opportunity for cultural collision and rich exposure!

At BBICC 2018, each team was assigned an ambassador from the organizing committee of the University of Belgrade. Our ambassador, Katarina, was a very pleasant, talkative and outgoing girl. She introduced the best Serbian pizza and sausages to us, which were very impressive! Before our formal presentation, she encouraged us to be confident and always wear a smile. Every time we felt anxious or discouraged, she was optimistic and inspiring. Thanks to her passion and company, we could enjoy the competition, push our boundaries and also try so much delicious Serbian food!



BBICC 2018 ambassadors

Teamwork, determination and courage

Participating in an international case competition was definitely about pushing my boundaries and realizing my potential. Teamwork, determination and courage were my best friends along the way. Jade, Vickie, Frances and I cooperated on the most challenging cases. We established our own strong points through discussion and had a clear division of labor. I remembered distinctly that in a Q&A session, we were challenged by the jury members with very tricky questions. Jade took the lead in answering, leaving time for me to come up with some stronger answers. Thus, I would add to her response to construct a more complete and compelling answer. I came to realize how teamwork could make things happen. I will definitely hold on to the same spirit throughout my university life to conquer more challenges!



The competition made us a strong team!

The above three ingredients shaped my wonderful experience of BBICC 2018. The eye-opening experience added to my 4-year university life, and I am sure I will keep my passion and carry what I have learned here to make more once-in-a-lifetime discoveries!