In this series, participants of the Ateneo Graduate School of Business Summer Exchange Program share their experiences, adventures, and lessons learned from their time spent in AGSB partner institutions in Hungary, France, and China.

For this first installment, Perth Salva, Student Council President, recounts the first two weeks of his month-long stay in ESSCA School of Management in Budapest, Hungary.
The Summer Exchange Program has been such an amazing experience so far. From the lessons I’ve learned, to the people I’ve met and the places I’ve visited, the first two weeks have already been so fruitful.

My two classes for this month-long term are 1) International Marketing and Logistics and 2) Self-Development. Each class earns me free elective credits.

In International Marketing and Logistics, we have been learning to leverage the practicality of logistics in the creation of feasible, effective, and efficient marketing plans.

In Self-Development, we’ve learned about egostates – how a great deal of who we have become is simply our response to relationships we have. Knowing this helps us in our self-discovery. Understanding this concept is facilitated by how the classroom is set up, with everyone in a circle sharing and interacting.
Each class is a healthy balance of theory and practical knowledge. During every three-hour session, the professors discuss the theories, which their invited guest lecturers then relate to their careers in their respective industries.

As our program is for exchange students, we have no local Hungarian classmates. Our class still showcases the cultural diversity of the program though, as we are composed of four Chinese students, three Filipinos, three French, one Peruvian, and one Mexican.

Despite the language barrier, I still get to connect with them, picking up on their unique viewpoints and habits. Our conversations in class have further opened my mind to how people from other cultures approach solving problems. The differences in our background and perspectives enrich each classroom session as we openly learn from and about one another.
The Summer Exchange Program is not all work and study, though. On weekends, we get the chance to travel to other nearby European countries. Last weekend, we went to Italy. We maximized our stay there by going to the capital, Rome, and then, Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance and where I possibly left my heart. We saw Botticelli’s Birth of Venus painting and Michelangelo’s David. We also visited Naples, where pizza was invented and where the ancient city of Pompeii was wiped out by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

I am already looking forward to our trip to Vienna, Austria this weekend.

Having already taken most of my core courses in the MBA Standard program has helped broaden my sense of spotting business opportunities. While travelling or when eating out, for example, I wonder about the people I come across – their product preferences, spending patterns, and so on. I also ponder whether establishments and ventures that are profitable here will be as successful in the Philippines. Truly, my MBA experiences through AGSB have widened the scope of my global curiosity and the past two weeks of this Summer Exchange Program has let me partly sate it.