



Braude International Relations Office

IRO News

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This has been a busy year for the IRO. The number of institutions with whom we have signed agreements has grown to 25 of which 13 are in Europe (including Romania, Italy, Austria, Cyprus, Poland, Germany, Russia and Latvia), 2 in the US, 9 in China and 1 in South Korea. We have seen a steady flow of visiting faculty over the year, and an increasing number of Braude faculty are participating in Erasmus+ exchange visits. Students from several departments traveled to our partners in Europe and the US, representing our college with dignity and pride and returning with impressive academic achievements as well as many unforgettable life experiences.



Profile: Prof. Arie Maharshak, President of Braude College of Engineering in China:

Professor Maharshak is a strong supporter of internationalization at Braude and has been instrumental in deepening our ties with academic institutions around the world. Professor Maharshak recalls his visit to China at the beginning of this current academic year.

In October 2018, you visited Wenzhou University in China as an invited speaker to the university's 2018 Congress on industry-education integration and entrepreneurship education. What was the topic of your talk?

Prof. Maharshak: The focus of my lecture was on entrepreneurship in industry and academia. I answered many interesting questions from the audience which included participants from all over Asia.



What did you find most interesting about your visit to Wenzhou University?

Prof. Maharshak: This university is situated in a small (by Chinese standards) city of approximately 4 million people and is known as an intellectual city which embodies the spirit of entrepreneurship. Wenzhou University is forward looking and has great plans for its future. I saw these ideas expressed in the model, housed in the senate, of what the future university will look like. Not only does the university have vision, it honors its graduates and staff in their fascinating museum which presents a hundred years of the institution's history. I was honored to have been personally invited to talk about entrepreneurship in such a venue and to be able to share my own vision of the seamless integration between industry and academia.

How do you think this visit will benefit our college?

Prof. Maharshak: Wenzhou University has several engineering programs, including a combined electronics and mechanical engineering department, and also offers courses in software engineering and civil engineering. I believe that we will be able to forge deeper relations with Wenzhou University and I am optimistic that we will soon be welcoming their students as participants in our Study Abroad Program. I can envisage a time when Braude students and faculty will travel to Wenzhou as part of an active exchange program in the future. While I was there, I met with the Dean of the Engineering Faculty, and also with the head of the Wenzhou University IRO, who is now in direct contact with the Director of Braude's IRO, so steps in that direction are already underway.

What additional benefits do you see from your visit to Wenzhou?

Prof. Maharshak: I believe that all of our international initiatives are helping to raise our profile. Even though Braude is firmly in the periphery of Israel, we have established connections with numerous institutions abroad, many of which are highly ranked in the international ranking systems for institutions of higher education. The more well-known we are abroad, the more international students will choose to study here at Braude. These incoming students help to enhance the international flavor

of our campus and to provide our students with greater exposure to other cultures, broadening their horizons and better equipping them for their future as engineers in the globally connected world of the 21st century. Internationalization of our institution also helps to raise our profile which is beneficial to students and to faculty alike.

What can you tell us about Wenzhou?

This city is highly developed and offers many cultural activities. It is situated in the southeastern Zhejiang province of China on the bank of the Ou River, a beautiful area of the country surrounded by hills and rivers.

Some background on Wenzhou University:

Wenzhou University, established in 1984, is a non-profit public higher education institution with close some 25,000 full- and part-time students and almost 2000 members of staff (including teaching and administrative). Wenzhou University is actively pursuing the strategy of educational internationalization and is vigorously engaged in various international exchanges and cooperation. WZU has established exchange and cooperation relations with over 70 universities and research institutes from about 20 countries and regions such as the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan and Korea. The university has 20 departments covering sciences and humanities, including Mechanical & Electrical Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering and Civil Engineering, as well as math and physics, with 57 undergraduate and 46 postgraduate programs, all of which are open to international students.

<http://ic.wzu.edu.cn/index.htm>

FOCUS ON A PARTNER:

In this issue, we focus on the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in Romania

<https://www.utcluj.ro/en/>



Cluj-Napoca is in the heart of Transylvania (literally, if you look at the map, as well as symbolically) and traces its origins back to the 2nd century A.D. Roman settlement, Napoca, which in 124 A.D. received the rank of "municipium". The city quickly advanced socially and economically and during Marcus

Aurelius' reign Napoca received the title "colonia", the highest possible urban status in the Roman Empire. The remains of the ancient Roman settlement can still be seen in the central square, Unirii/Union Square. The city is also known under its German name, Klausenburg, and Hungarian name, Kolosvar. It has been a multiethnic and multicultural city for centuries, (Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Saxons, Jews, Gypsies being just some of the ethnic groups), treasuring and promoting its unique social and cultural profile.

There are six public universities in Cluj-Napoca and several other private universities, making it the city with the largest student population in Romania. This was one of the reasons for which Cluj-Napoca was chosen as European Youth Capital in 2015. A walk in the city centre can give a flavour of the beautiful architectural diversity the city has managed to preserve in spite of the violent attack on its monuments in the communist era. A very crowded city with heavy traffic, it compensates with green areas such as the Central Park and a spectacular Botanical Garden, both worth visiting to recharge batteries.

The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca trains specialists in technical fields (mechanical, electrical and civil engineering as well as architecture) through long and short-term educational programs, postgraduate and PhD studies. It has over 20,000 students. According to the university's charter, the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca is a *"cultural, scientific, social and historical entity which brings together values that go through time and become landmarks. It must be a space of freedom and dignity, professional competence and integrity, education and morals, promoting value, merit and competence, fairness and fidelity to the university. It aims to ensure academic training in the field of engineering and applied sciences, architecture, economics and management, creation and technology, letters and theology."*

The university has 12 faculties (9 in Cluj-Napoca, 3 in Baia Mare, plus the extensions in Alba Iulia, Bistrita, Satu Mare and Zalau) and studies take place over 4 years for engineering sciences, 3 years in the Faculty of Letters and in the Faculty of Sciences in the North University Center in Baia Mare, and 6 years in the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism. Masters and doctoral studies are also offered in all of the faculties. The International Office (<http://bri.utcluj.ro/en/index.php>) actively supports all incoming international students, providing an excellent Buddy Network for individuals, assistance with accommodation issues, and information regarding academic studies.



Dr. Sonia Munteanu, Senior Consultant, the IRO contact person at TUC-N for students from Braude.

Visitors to Braude from TUC-N:

A delegation from TUC-N's international office visited Braude in early March 2019. Professor Dadarlat, Professor Cristina Campian, Erasmus+ Director, and Dr. Sonia Munteanu Senior Consultant, IRO.



During their visit, they held meetings with the departments of Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, the Teaching and Learning Unit and the English Studies Unit. During these meetings, future collaborations and exchange opportunities were explored. Dr. Munteanu visited

Braude again in June 2019 and met with members of the English Studies Unit to discuss language teaching methodology and applications of the Common European Framework for Language Teaching and Learning (CEFR). Dr. Munteanu also led a workshop on English Medium Instruction as part of the process of internationalization.

At the end of July, a further delegation of 14 faculty from TUC-N visited Braude.

With Erasmus+, opportunities are available to spend time teaching and training at an institution of higher education abroad. In the past year, Dr. Samy Abu-Saleh of Braude's department of Mechanical Engineering and Dr. Linda Weinberg of the English studies Unit paid short visits to TUC-N:

Dr. Sami Abu-Saleh:

I was invited to visit the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in April 2018, as a guest lecturer in the Mechanical Systems Department. As part of the Erasmus+ exchange project, visiting lecturers teach for 8 hours during the one-week visit. The rest of the time is dedicated to meetings, research discussions and seminars, learning more about the institution, the city, the country and the people. Socializing with faculty members leads to interesting conversations and a variety of future collaborative opportunities. In addition to my lectures on mechanical elements and strength of materials I also gave a presentation about Braude College and our program for international students, and talked about Israel, about the Galilee and Jerusalem. This is an important aspect of the visiting lecturers' contribution to the development of Braude's internationalization process and helps to kindle interest in our country and our institution, so that students and faculty from the host institution will be encouraged to apply to participate in the program.



Visiting the Machine Elements Laboratory with one of Prof. Marius Pustan's assistants.

I found Cluj to be a really interesting city and my hosts were very welcoming. One of the faculty's graduate students was assigned to us as a guide and we visited the Turda Salt Mines and also went hiking in the mountains. The beautiful scenery of the countryside complemented the city of Cluj which, despite its generally relaxed atmosphere, is a pretty dynamic place, teeming with students from the many universities and offering a wide variety of cultural and sporting facilities and activities.



Hiking in the mountains with Johnny, (Ph.D. student, member of the research group of Prof. Marius Pustan.)

My experience of Erasmus+ is of an excellent program which provides the spark for developing new relationships between institutions and, most importantly, between individuals. I believe this personal relationship forms the basis for future successful collaborations. The opportunities for students to study abroad is one that we can encourage through these personal relationships, in both directions. Knowing the institution and the people there can ease the process that students go through in choosing what to study when they participate in an Erasmus+ exchange, and will help us welcome those students personally when they arrive at our respective institutions.

I strongly recommend the Erasmus+ program and hope that more faculty members from Braude will enjoy the benefits that it offers.

Dr. Linda Weinberg:



In October, I was invited to the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in Romania by Dr. Cristina Campian, Director of the Erasmus Office, and Dr. Sonia Munteanu, Senior International Relations Officer, to learn more about the process of internationalization as experienced in their university, about the IRO's structure and activities,

From my meetings with Dr. Amalia Meleg, Director of the IRO at TUC-N, Dr. Sergiu Stan, Erasmus Coordinator in the Mechanical Engineering Faculty, and with Professor Carin Barleanu, Vice Dean of the Machine I was able to learn much about the process that students go through on arrival at the university and in sorting out their study program. There are many opportunities to be explored and the university is very keen to expand cooperation between our two institutions, with both exchange students and faculty, for teaching and for research activities. During my visit, I was able to share a little in the experience of incoming Erasmus+ students when I met with two Braude students, Omer Dagan and Roi Shamai from the Department of Mechanical Engineering. They spent the winter semester at TUC-N, and now that they are home, they are happy to meet with other students contemplating following in their footsteps. They share their experiences later on in this newsletter.



Erasmus+ is not just about work, the social aspects are equally important, giving participants in the exchanges the opportunity to learn more about the local culture and environment. My hosts ensured that I experienced a wide variety of cultural activities, from the numerous and very good cakes and coffee shops, to the Salina Turda salt mine, the Transylvania Philharmonic Orchestra, and even a basketball match between U-Banca Transylvania and Ironi Ness Ziona - the Israeli team lost this match, and it was a very loud and interesting experience sitting among the local Romanian supporters!

This visit was educational both in professional terms, relating to internationalization in higher education and developing and promoting exchange opportunities between our two institutions, and in cultural terms. Romania is still less than 30 years after the painful revolution and the fall of communism. The progress that has been made is clearly visible in this vibrant city, teeming with young people and maintaining its old European flavor despite the best efforts of the former communist regime to erase its historical features and cultural heritage. This visit was a wonderful experience and I highly recommend participation in an Erasmus+ exchange.

STUDENTS ABROAD:

Studying abroad is a central part of the Erasmus+ program. Participation in the program has been shown to have a positive effect on later job prospects. It also provides the opportunity to improve language skills, gain self-confidence and independence while becoming immersed in a new culture.

Omer Dagan and Roi Shammai are 3rd year students in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. They spent the winter semester of 2018-2019 at the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca:



While the early stage of our visit was challenging, in the end, everything worked out well. It is a good idea to check the available courses carefully before you go, and you really need to take advantage of the assistance from the IRO staff. We can't thank Dr. Sonia Munteanu enough for the help she gave us in sorting out our courses, liaising with the various departments and lecturers so that we were able to set up our schedules, and in rearranging the Romanian language course so that we could take part. Her assistance in those early weeks really made the difference for us. The university is spread around the city in various buildings to the Machine Building, the faculty to which we belonged during our stay, is in one part of town, but students who choose courses from a number of faculties should take this into account both in

terms of where they choose to live and in creating their schedules, to make sure there is time to get from one building in one part of town to the other.

It is a good idea to make contact with the lecturers of the courses that you want to take before you go, and to arrange to meet with them. Although the courses are given in English, some things are not in English, such as presentations or lab instructions, which is why you need to be in touch ahead of time.

The university offers dormitory accommodation in 3 parts of town according to the faculty you are studying in. For mechanical engineering, the relevant dorms are in the Marasti area, which is relatively far from the center of town, but only 10 minutes

walk from the faculty. The cost of the dorms is 600 Lei a month, including bills, for a room for two people. Most of the rooms are for 4 so it is not guaranteed that you would get one for 2. In our case, most of the exchange students lived in those dorms. If you chose ahead of time to live in an apartment, you should start looking before you go, because there is great demand for apartments (there are 11 or 12 universities in Cluj), but you can make use of a local agent to help you find somewhere. In our case, moving from the dorms to a private apartment was really worthwhile: the vicinity to the city center and to public transport was excellent but it is a totally personal decision.

The university's buddy program helps the international students from the moment they arrive and we strongly recommend that future students make use of this service – the buddies are able to answer all sorts of questions, and they are only too happy to help in whatever way they can. This also helps with building up social contacts and to join in with all the social activities such as trips and all kinds of social events organized for the international students.



Most of the older population does not speak English, so we also recommend that you learn a few words of Romanian, not just for practical purposes, but also as a polite gesture towards your hosts – even if it's just good morning, thank you and so on.

The ERASMUS students' organization in the first few weeks organizes a large number of activities and parties, and we strongly recommend taking part in as many of those as possible in order to build up your social contacts with other international students. Also, it is a good idea to sign up for the Facebook group before you arrive in Cluj and also the WhatsApp group. The organization offers trips to tourist attractions in Romania and the demand for these is great so if you want to join in, you need to buy your tickets as soon as possible.

There are a lot of students in Cluj, so there are lots of good bars and clubs. Public transport is good, and for students under the age of 26 it's free. You can also use Uber and Taxify for taxis – in other words, it's easy to get around and it's not expensive. If you live in the center, everything is nearby – entertainment, public transport, shopping, restaurants.

In general, in terms of culture, this is a really special experience. You are exposed to a wide variety of languages and different cultures, among both local and international students, and this is also an opportunity to act as ambassadors for our country. Many students know very little about Israel, and most of what they do know is gleaned from the news, so this is a very special opportunity. In our case, as the flights to Israel are very cheap, many students wanted to fly to Israel during the Christmas holiday and we were able to act as a useful source of information about Israel for them.

We're really talking about a once-in-a-lifetime experience, from every aspect and we warmly recommend to all of you who can, to take this opportunity to get to know new people, different cultures and extraordinary student opportunities, to learn about things that you don't get exposed to during your studies at the college. As ME students, learning 3 different programming languages was not a simple challenge, but we are very satisfied with the results and our achievements. The exchange program can also provide added value to the student such as developing future business connections.



Dvir Herskovitch, a 4th year student in the Electronics and Electrical Engineering Department, spent his 6th semester at the University of Bari in Italy.

While this might sound a little surprising, for me this was absolutely my first time abroad and it was a great experience! I shared an apartment with several students from different countries, and during the semester, I made a lot of new friends from all over the world.

Bari:



Bari, the capital city of the province of Bari and of the Puglia region, with a population of approximately is on the southern Adriatic Coast of Italy. It is the second most important economic centre of mainland Southern Italy after Naples. It is a well-known port and also a university city. There are many museums, art galleries and medieval churches in the city, which is divided

into four regions, including the walled old city. There are many restaurants and plenty of night-life and of course there is the beach. Bari University, was established in 1925, and has close to 50,000 registered students in 12 faculties. The university was renamed for alumnus Aldo Moro, (Prime Minister of Italy in the 1960s and again in the 1970s) who was kidnapped and eventually killed by the Red Brigades in 1978.

Settling in:



The university creates a WhatsApp group to help students find accommodation. There is also a Buddy Network which includes Erasmus graduates, and this is really helpful as these students understand what it is to be an international student just arriving in a foreign country. The Buddy Network also arranged trips all over the country for the international students, which was fantastic.

What I should have done was to have a SIM card set up before I arrived, it's not easy to manage without a phone. Also, you must make sure to take enough money with you to cover your first month of expenses, just in case, and until all of the procedures for arranging the grant are completed. There were a few hitches which I had to deal with. For example, their spring semester began before our winter semester had ended so I had to go early. Also, signing up for courses took a while, and it is very



important to align your schedule. Make sure to check the courses that you want to take are available and that they are given in English - I signed up for three courses, only one of which was taught in English, so I found myself studying courses that were taught in Italian. It was interesting, but not easy!!!! The lecturers were helpful, and even though this was not what I expected, I still had a wonderful time.

There were a variety of activities and events arranged for the international students, and I prepared some Israeli dishes for my friends for Independence Day. I found that people were very interested to learn about Israel.

Bottom line:



For me, as a first-time-abroad experience, this was just amazing. Having met and made friends with people from all over the world, I now find myself listening to world news, something that I was never interested in before. It's now far more relevant for me. I feel that my cultural knowledge has grown and that studying abroad has really broadened my horizons. Academically there were a number of challenges and I would have

liked to have had more of a choice of courses to take, so if you are thinking of becoming an Erasmus exchange student, you should check the courses on offer carefully first. Personally, however, I would do the whole thing again even if there were no suitable courses to take!!! In preparation for studying abroad, I strongly recommend taking part in the English conversation groups that the English department at Braude offers. It would also help to have some very basic survival Italian to help you along in the early days.

I'm happy to share more of my experiences with students thinking about applying for an Erasmus+ scholarship. You can contact me via the IRO.

In the next issue of the IRO News:

- Profile: Visiting professors
- News from the field: Students and lecturers abroad
- Focus: Wroclaw University of Environmental & Life Sciences
- To contribute to the IRO newsletter please contact:

Editor: **Dr. Linda Weinberg**, linda@braude.ac.il

Production Assistant: **Keren Berkovitz**, kerenb@braude.ac.il

Graphic Design: **Dr. Zvi Orgad**, zviorgad@gmail.com