

To: Scott R. Sturzl, CPSM, C.P.M.. CPSD
Vice President, Education ISM
Vice President, CSSL
A.T. Kearney Center for Strategic Supply Leadership at the Institute for Supply
Management TM (ISM)

Dear Mr. Sturzl,

I am writing you today with the hope this letter will shine light upon the robustness of my recent attendance at the International Federation of Purchasing and Supply Management's (IFPSM) 16th Annual Summer School held in Salzburg, Austria. Let me first acknowledge the extreme generosity of the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) for funding my trip. I am truly honored to have had this wonderful opportunity. Having been said, in the following letter I would like to emphasize four profound contributions that this trip made to my future as an academic: (1) constructive and concise criticism of my research, (2) the development of my professional network, (3) learning about others' cultures and finally, (4) seeing the latest and most innovative research conducted at different leading global universities

Perhaps the most valuable experience that an academic-in-training (such as myself) can have is an experienced forum of talented scholars to criticize and scrutinize the theoretical, as well as the practical implications of one's research. Well, the summer school certainly provided that. Perhaps first I should digress for a moment, and address the format of the summer school. The school comprises of 5 days of presentations. Predominately the presentations are of students' research but among those are methodology sessions as well as guest faculty from various Universities presenting their research. I was fortunate enough to be the first student presenting, directly following a guest faculty member's presentation. Luckily enough for me, the faculty member's research was tangentially related to mine, this allowed for a wonderful discussion. My presentation was welcomed with a genuine encouragement of the ideas and methods, a critical analysis of my propositions as well as tips and constructive criticism for future presentations. Having the wealth of knowledge in the room allowed me to think more

critically of my work and generate follow up questions that further advanced the direction of my research.

Perhaps an overlooked component of academic colloquia is the valuable network building that occurs. Collecting together a group of academics, all of whom have similar interests, in the same venue is an exciting opportunity for a young scholar-in-training. The summer school was particularly rich in this regard from a diversity perspective, as I was one of two American Ph.D. students. The others were quite geographically dispersed, some coming from as far as Kenya, but predominately from one of the European countries. This provided the delightful experience of developing a pool of newfound colleagues from which I can draw and collaborate in the future. This allowed for not only the ability to gain valuable insight into my ideas as well as the academic phenomena that I wish to learn about, but also to further spread the knowledge among the academic community. From the summer school, I can now say that my network is now 20-plus academics more robust.

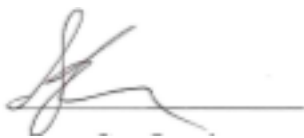
Quite interrelated to the previous point is the cultural diversity that I was exposed to through the summer school. As I noted previously I represented 50% of the American attendants at the summer school. Having had the opportunity to speak to and interact with my cohorts from Kenya, Italy, The Netherlands, Germany and many more, I was able to broaden my horizons and learn about other cultures. Not only other cultures but also how other Ph.D. programs are structured in those environments. Additionally, I hope that the reverse is true, that my cohorts also learned much about my culture and how our programs are structured in the USA.

Finally, through the summer school I was afforded the opportunity to view, first-hand, the most cutting edge research from many of the leading universities world wide. I'd like to now, discuss a few of these research projects. The first project that stood out was one that looked specifically at the case of an insolvent supplier, or a supplier that has a high probability of going insolvent, and the risks that these suppliers pose to a firm or project. Essentially, this research focused on the importance of supplier relations in order to prevent or assuage these financial hiccups within a project. A second example was a presentation by a visiting faculty

member, which examined the chronology of supply chain and purchasing management. This work looked at the managerial contributions that have been made in the domain as well as propositions as to the future directions of the field. Great food for thought indeed! A final piece of research that stood out to me was one where, the methodologies of common purchasing managers' indices were examined for their efficacy and application to practice. This has tremendous implications for research as most managerial decision-making looks to these common indices for guidance. I took many great ideas from this forum and hope to use the work in my own research.

In closing, I wish to emphasize that this summer school was a magnificent opportunity that I will forever be grateful. I cannot thank the Institute for Supply Management and the International Federation for Purchasing and Supply Management enough for continually enhancing the growth of the profession as well as the academic activities that support it. Without both of these wonderful organizations our profession would not be as advanced as it is. I look forward to applying for the grant next year and hopefully attending the 17th Annual Summer School!

Sincerely,



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