

Travel Opportunities and Global Experiences at the UB School of Management

Podcast was recorded on 4/11/24

Eric Raine:

Welcome back to another episode of the UB School of Management podcast. I'm Eric Raine, and I'll be your host for today's episode, along with Patrick Lageraen, who will be co-hosting and joining us as a guest. With us in the studio today is Srikrithi Krishnan. Sri is a dual degree MBA student who is also earning her master of public health with a concentration in community health and health behavior. Today, we will be discussing the travel opportunities provided through the School of Management and the impact it has had on both Sri and Patrick as part of their MBA experience. All right, well, Sri, thank you very much for coming into the studio and joining Patrick and I today for this episode. We've been really excited to have you and come in and kind of talk about your experience with travel. You and Patrick recently just got back from a trip that you were both on, so we're excited to kind of have a conversation about that. But could you start by just telling us a little bit about your background and the degrees you're doing here at UB?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. So my name is Srikrithi Krishnan. I am currently a dual degree student, so I am doing my MBA with my Master's of public health, and in public health I'm doing a concentration in community health and health behavior. My background, I am born and brought up in Buffalo, so I did my undergrad here at UB as well. I did a BS in public health and a BA in psychology, and then I didn't have enough credits to stay a full-time student, so I added two minors and I did a minor in addiction studies and sociology.

Eric Raine:

Wow. Cool.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

But... What was the rest of the question?

Eric Raine:

It's basically just the rest of your experience here at UB and, yeah, what you're doing here.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. Okay. So I started kind more in the sciences and then I knew I wanted to continue in public health, but I wanted to bring a managerial leadership perspective to the field of public health, which is why I really considered doing the MBA. I didn't come in with a business background at all. I think I took one business class in undergrad and I dropped it within the first two weeks. So it was just an interesting perspective and given that I kind of want to stay in public health, but really bring that managerial level experience into it, I thought the MBA would be helpful going into my career after school.

Eric Raine:

Absolutely, especially with so many different things in your experience with undergrad. There were a lot of things that you bring to the table that's unique to the MBA program. Because I think a lot of times people that are considering MBA programs might have come from a business background, but all three of us have noticed in the MBA program here at UB is sort of this mix of people with so many diverse backgrounds, areas of interest, and even what you just talked about is another perfect example of that amazing diversity of background. I know even Patrick has a unique background. So Patrick's co-hosting today, but he's also a guest because of his travel experiences and some of the things we're going to be talking about in today's episode. So how about you Patrick? I mean a little bit about your background here.

Patrick Lageraen:

Sure, yeah, great to share from the guest perspective. So I'm a second MBA student graduating this semester. Very excited. I come from a little bit of a blue collar background. I was an automotive detailer, an automotive mechanic, I used to climb water towers and inspect a paint application. I worked in yachting for a year aboard a super yacht, we went down to the Caribbean and now I came back to UB I think because I want to be more on the business side of that world, so yachting and shipping, mostly in sales and charter brokering. So that's the eventual goal. But I think those experiences of traveling the world and having a multinational family have made me appreciative of other cultures and other parts of the world, and I definitely see that for myself in the future, and that's really why I've been trying to utilize and take advantage of these Global Programs while I'm here in the school.

Eric Raine:

That's really cool. I mean, from my own perspective, I'm also a dual degree student like yourself, Sri, and I came into the pharmacy program and I was kind of thinking that I was leaning toward wanting to take a non-traditional path into pharmacy and maybe more geared towards the industry side. And so between the three of us, I think we share that, that we wanted to be able to engage in the business and leadership and management components, and what better way to do that than here at the School of Management? And for those that are listening, the three of us are all in the same cohort, so we're all second year MBA students. So kind of what we're going to get into...

Srikrithi Krishnan:

He's got a month until graduation.

Eric Raine:

Yeah, I know. I'm excited for you guys. I'll be at graduation, but my graduation is next spring.

Patrick Lageraen:

One more for you.

Eric Raine:

Yeah, one more year. But yeah, I'm really excited for both of you and I think you both have really bright futures, especially with the things that you've been involved with already. So obviously today's episode is focused kind of on the opportunities that students are able to engage in, not just here at the school, but outside the walls of the school through travel. There's another episode that we have up for the podcast that focuses specifically on Global Programs. So we'll get into a little bit of Global Programs today, but also some of the other travel opportunities. So the really cool thing is at the time of recording this episode today, both of you just got back from United Nations in New York City for a trip last week. So could you talk to us a little bit about what that experience was like and how it came to be?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, so definitely. So when I was registering for classes a year ago now, I saw that they were offering a one credit for MBA students, like UN sustainable development goals class. So immediately I was like this is what I want to do because the whole reason, like I stated, that I wanted to do the MBA is because I wanted to bring management and public health together, and I think the sustainable development goals, for anyone who doesn't know, is goals set forth by the United Nations on how to bring peace and

prosperity for people on the planet, not only now, but for the future and going forward. So the SDGs are supposed to be something that we achieve by 2030, and some of them are like no poverty, education for everyone, things like that. So I knew immediately that I wanted to take that class because I thought this was the perfect opportunity to learn about those. To me, these are public health things, so to learn about that in a business perspective.

Because up until now I've really been doing my own work of bringing the MPH and the MBA together, but I thought this class would be the perfect opportunity to really see that and not have to do it myself, if that makes sense. So I signed up for that class literally a year ago. Looked forward to it, loved the class itself, but the part that I guess I was most looking forward to is the travel. So there was an optional travel component to go to New York City to visit the United Nations, and we did go to a few other places as well, but we got to do a tour of the UN. There was a person there that really... I think we were on the same tour, so our tour guide was really informative in telling us about all the different things the UN does, got to experience an earthquake while we were there.

Patrick Lageraen:

Yeah, wow.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So it was just, I think, overall a really good way for me to get a preview of exactly what I want to do in the future.

Eric Raine:

That's really awesome. How about you, Patrick? I mean, taking what you just talked about with your background and some of your interests with School of Management, what was that trip like for you?

Patrick Lageraen:

Well, I guess my primary motivation for taking it was more of a personal reason rather than a professional growth reason. I like to think of myself as a pretty globally minded person and in my future career, which will be maritime where I'm traveling all around the world and dealing with local governments of all these different countries, having that base knowledge of not only where the countries are, but what language do they speak, how does their government work, is going to be really

useful for me, so I felt like learning more about the UN and just getting that base knowledge would be valuable, and I think it was.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

And actually going off of that, my parents and my sister were born and brought up in India and moved here, so I think growing up I always kind of had that global diversity kind of culture ingrained in me. So this is something that... Maybe that's why I ended up in public health. I don't know. But this is something that, speaking to what you said, I think was a great opportunity for me personally as well to kind of learn more about different cultures. And even when we went to the United Nations, I think everyone there or everyone that we saw speaking to each other, they were talking in French. So none of the workers spoke to each other in English.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Interesting. But they all spoke English.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, they also...

Patrick Lageraaen:

And that's because English and French are the two main languages of the UN, which I did not know.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

No, I had no idea.

Patrick Lageraaen:

I never knew that.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I chose the wrong language in middle school. But it was really interesting to see how if they hypothetically were assuming not everyone that comes to the UN knows French. So if they ever wanted to talk about the group they're leading or something like that, they're able to just code switch so quickly, which I thought was awesome.

Patrick Lageraen:

Speaking of languages, what I thought was really interesting was how when the different countries interact in the different chambers. So there's the five main languages when they're actually in session, I'm not going to name them all because I'll probably get it wrong, but if a country comes in with their own language that isn't one of those main languages, they have to provide their own interpreter. And these are people vetted that will translate other languages into their language and then vice versa.

Eric Raine:

Wow.

Patrick Lageraen:

So everybody's conversing with each other in their own language, and then it's being translated in real time. It's fascinating.

Eric Raine:

Especially to bring so many countries to one place under one roof to try to drive towards goals that are being put forth, especially over the longterm. You're talking about some pretty longterm initiatives and also some heavy lifting. I mean, there's a lot of work to be done under these goals, and it's like, how do you get everyone on the same page? Some countries might have different priorities depending on what they have going on economically or politically or whatever the case may be. So walk us through what the trip was like, like how long you were there, what you did when you first got there, how much time did you spend actually physically at the UN, and then maybe some people that you met while you were there?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So the trip itself started on Thursday evening, so we went to an alumni networking event. So a bunch of UB alumni, BS or MBA or whatever it was, they all came to this bar, and it was a really great opportunity just to meet different people in the city, kind of learn about what the different opportunities are. I think New York City is so vast and broad that sometimes it can get really confusing. Like, do you only work for the big four or what do you do? So there were a ton of people that we met, lots of different opportunities. So that was Thursday night, and it was a good way to kind of ease into the trip, I feel like.

Patrick Lageraen:

I agree.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

And then Friday was just like, you're going the full day.

Eric Raine:

I imagine it was quite the agenda because you want to do a lot while you're there, right?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Definitely.

Patrick Lageraaen:

And we did even more, which I'm sure you're going to get to.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So we started bright and early Friday morning. The first thing we did was go to the UN. So we were actually staying in a hotel literally next door to the UN. So we crossed the street, and we were there, like an hour early, actually. We ended up all getting checked in, and the tour is the first thing we did. It took about, I don't know, an hour-ish maybe.

Patrick Lageraaen:

To do the tour?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Yeah, roughly.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I think the tour was about an hour. And then the UN has a really dope gift shop, so I spent my own maybe hour there. No, but they had really cool, just different trinkets, and they also have a store where they have items from all across the world.

Patrick Lageraaen:

That was cool.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So yeah, so it was really cool to check out. It's made in different countries, so you can buy anything there as well. And then we had the opportunity to meet with Felipe, who is a UB alum. No, he's not. Is he a UB alum?

Patrick Lageraaen:

Is he?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I don't think he's a UB alum actually.

Eric Raine:

He's from Spain.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, sorry. He's from Spain, but he met Dorothy.

Eric Raine:

Right. So there's a connection to the School of Management.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yes, absolutely. So he met Dr. Siaw Asamoah somewhere abroad and got connected with our school. So we had a chance to meet with him and talk about what the UN is doing, how different aspects of business tie into the UN. And so it was a really great opportunity to learn more because the tour was really great to learn about the United Nations as a whole, but I think that this one-on-one, which, as far as I know, no other groups really get, the one-on-one is a great opportunity to ask specific questions. And I know the School of Management just signed something recently with the UN.

Eric Raine:

I was going to ask.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Yeah, they're an official partner of the UN.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah.

Eric Raine:

Wow. And that's the first of its kind, right? Or something like that?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I believe so, definitely within SUNY, I think.

Patrick Lageraaen:

New York actually.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Oh, New York.

Patrick Lageraaen:

The first in New York, I think.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. So that was really cool too, to have this opportunity after that also being announced. So we did that. And then after the UN, we went to Google, which was a totally different type of amazing, I remember telling...

Patrick Lageraaen:

Pretty much the opposite.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I told someone on the trip, because I was so looking forward to the UN, I was like, "You know what? Nothing is going to top this. This is the first thing we're doing, but this is it." And then we went to Google and I was like, "You know what? Nothing is going to top this. This is the second..."

Patrick Lageraaen:

It just keeps getting better.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So we got to eat at Google, which was its own type of amazing.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Yeah, it was amazing. So it was on the 11th floor of their... So it was on the 11th floor. It's this big cafeteria where everybody in the building goes to eat together. It's kind of like C-three at UB, the Crossroads Culinary Center where it's like this big buffet, and then they have all the different food areas, and you go around and you could pretty much eat as much as you want. So it's probably not a good idea to eat there every single day at work, but they do.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I think it's a great idea.

Patrick Lageraaen:

But yeah, it was pretty cool because nobody has to leave the building and there's something for everybody. So no matter what sort of dietary restrictions you have, it's all in-house.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Absolutely.

Patrick Lageraaen:

And I was talking to the guy who was showing us around, and I asked him, what's the motivation for having this? And it's basically, it's a perk for the employees because they don't have to leave, but then on the other side of it, if you think of the benefit for Google, when they're making their employees work nine, 10 hour days, it doesn't feel so long when you have everything you need under one roof.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Definitely.

Patrick Lageraaen:

There's the benefit for the employees and then also the benefit for Google.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

And then there were families there, there were dogs there. So it honestly...

Eric Raine:

Like at work?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, at the cafe. It was awesome.

Eric Raine:

That's so cool.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah.

Eric Raine:

I didn't even know about the Google experience that you guys were doing so this is really cool to hear about.

Patrick Lageraen:

Neither did I.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I was going to say neither did I. Yeah, it was awesome. So that was the first thing we did at Google, which I think really set them up for success. So we ate and then we got to talk to a UB alum who works at Google about his experience, how he got there. I think these kind of jobs, it's so easy and fun to be like, "Oh my God, I want to work at Google," But how do you actually get there? So he was telling us about how his journey got him to where he is, the challenges that I think exist working at such a large company.

It's really fun in theory, but again, you really need to learn to advocate for yourself because that's one of the biggest things they said is there's so many people that work there, if you're not advocating for

yourself, you're going to drown. So it was really interesting to hear about all of that, which I think relates to any job, not just Google, but any company that there's X number of employees that's more than, I don't know, a hundred, 200. You have to learn how to vouch for yourself.

Patrick Lageraen:

For sure.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So we did Google and then we got to kind of do a mini tour as we were walking out. The coolest things. They have exercise rooms, they have massage rooms, nap pods, a game room...

Patrick Lageraen:

A rooftop that you can go up to and look out at the city.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So it was so cool.

Patrick Lageraen:

All Lego building area.

Eric Raine:

Really? Wow. They thought of everything.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

And there's snacks everywhere. They have scooters to get around the building. And I think this is technically their old building. So they recently opened a new building and I want to go there next because I want to know what else they have.

Patrick Lageraen:

I asked him an interesting question, which was, with all of these distractions around, how do you make sure that employees are actually being productive? And he basically said that they don't. No one's really tracking you. You're not billing hours as if you're a consultant. Basically, if you're being asked to do a task

and you get it done, then it's all good. No one's checking on you. You just get done what you need to get done and that's it.

Eric Raine:

It's interesting too because it almost seems like the approach in that type of work setting is that if people are less productive but more energized when they are doing productive work, it allows them to be able to even put more energy into the work they're doing, and therefore the efficiency comes from the balance in a way.

Patrick Lageraen:

But not every company has the luxury of being able to have that. A consulting firm can't do that. They have to bill client hours. It's firms that have their own internal service or products that actually have the freedom to do that.

Eric Raine:

I think it's also cool to hear how a trip like that in a single day provided through opportunities with the School of Management allow you to go and represent UB and learn about what's going on at the UN, but then at the same time go to a corporate setting, which, like you said, it's very different, not like the UN in a lot of ways, but at the same time, Google being such a large company with so much diversity inside the company, it is like a corporate version of the UN in a certain sense, I guess you could say, right?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, definitely. Yeah. I mean, it's funny you say that because it leads us into, after Google, we actually went to Santander, which is...

Patrick Lageraen:

Is that how you say it?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I think so.

Patrick Lageraen:

Santander?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Oh, I don't know.

Patrick Lageraaen:

I don't know.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

My co-worker's Spanish, so when I said it, she was, "Santander," And I was like, oh, I've been saying it wrong.

Patrick Lageraaen:

It's probably more of the right way to say it.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

But we went there, which is, they're a bank and they're focused on sustainable financing. So like you said, it's really interesting to see, honestly, the three totally different types of companies that we visited. And the bank was mainly focused on... I think he was talking more about how they finance things like wind energy.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Green renewable energy.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. Patrick honestly probably knows more about this than I do, so if you want to talk about it...

Patrick Lageraaen:

Yeah, he was just talking about all the different projects around the US, like the new wind farm off the coast of Virginia, there's one off the south coast of Long Island, and basically how they're financing it, who's actually paying for these. And then one of the questions I asked was, how do these returns compare to normal investments? Why would we even invest in this stuff? And part of the reason that people do it is government subsidies. There has to be... It's the chicken or the egg. What comes first?

The government subsidy has to kick it off, but then eventually it'll become profitable. But also apparently even without that, they're making pretty decent returns on these projects.

Eric Raine:

Well, especially because I would imagine venturing into new space about green renewable energy, there's a lot of unknown, there's a lot of ambiguity, there's a lot of good intentions, but from a banking perspective or finance, they still have to know that if we put X number of dollars into supporting this initiative, even with all the good reasons to back it, if it's not going to be profitable or if it's not going to end up bringing some type of value downstream over a certain period of time, it's not sustainable, which is anti the whole idea of the sustainability component. So that's really cool. I mean, those three things all in one day... I mean, I think it's one of those things for people listening who are thinking, okay, School of Management, I'm interested in getting the business and leadership and management components of my career path, like both of you have mentioned. Just knowing that even in a single, quick trip like this, there's just so much to be learned and the door that was opened was made possible through being a student at the School of Management.

Patrick Lageraen:

And that really speaks to UB's alumni network because this wouldn't have been possible without those connections in New York City.

Eric Raine:

For sure.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Definitely. And I think this will probably come up later, but I know I'll forget it. So I'm saying it now. Oh, I think I was going to say when I was starting the MBA, in my head I was like, yeah, everything is finance, accounting, et cetera, and I think that Global Programs is really a great opportunity to learn about all the different aspects of business that exist because I don't realistically see myself going into a finance job in itself. It might be a part of whatever I do, but it's not going to be all I do. And coming in was like, this is it. This is what business is. It's accounting, it's books, it's math. And I think my first trip, which we can talk about later, but my first trip was a very quick study into, that's not all it is, and this trip really solidified that for me because I was able to kind of tie in public health, I think.

Eric Raine:

Yeah, for sure. I think it seems that the trip that you just took talking about the UN and going to New York City was really well timed with your previous experiences because as we're focusing today's episode on travel and the opportunities outside the walls of the School of Management, Global Programs is another massive component of that type of opportunity, which you both have taken trips with in different capacities. So let's switch into that and talk a little bit about what those experiences were before taking this trip to the UN.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. So my first trip that I went on with Global Programs was actually two Costa Rica. So Global Programs has kind of two sectors, one is domestic and one is international. So the international class was learning about small businesses and specifically for us, I think it was women-owned businesses, and there was a travel component. So I took that class spring of 2023. And in the class in itself, we were basically consulting with a small business. So ours was a chocolate producing factory actually, or not even factory, it was just a small business. And we were kind of helping them with their marketing and their commercialization, which at the time I was like, I think we're very lucky both in the US and Buffalo at the School of Management to really have all these resources available to us that we don't realize that some of these things are not available to so many other people. It's like something as small as, "Here's a schedule of your Instagram posts," Could help a company so much. So that was what we started with. And then there was an optional travel component over spring break, so this trip was longer. I think it was seven or eight days. And we got to go to Costa Rica and really immerse ourselves in the culture. So we stayed with host families and my friend and I, the host family that we stayed with, it was a mom, it was just a woman, and she only spoke Spanish. So they told us from the start, they were like, "Yeah, maybe brush up on your Spanish." And I was like, "Yeah, it'll be fine. Who doesn't know English?" And I got there and I was breaking out my eighth grade Spanish skills.

Eric Raine:

You're like, there's no English.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, no English. So that in itself was a really great way to kind of learn the culture because we could not communicate with her if we were not speaking in Spanish. Similarly, we got to... Our host mom at

least didn't have a car, so we had to learn the roads, which in Costa Rica, if anyone listening ever does this trip, there are no street names. So you literally will be like, "Oh, turn left at the house with the watermelons."

Eric Raine:

Wow.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

My friend was much better with directions than I was. So that was also a really good way to learn the culture. But within Costa Rica, we did a lot with nonprofits, small businesses. We got to visit... Actually our big project while we were there was consulting for a small nonprofit that was really for women and refugees. And we broke into three groups and each of us had a project, and the project that I ended up doing was how to teach people who are coming here how to do an elevator pitch, which, I mean, you both probably already know, that is ingrained in you on how to do an elevator pitch or how to pitch yourself in general is one of the first things we learned in entrepreneurship. And it was so interesting and kind of almost humbling to see how grateful they were for this kind of information. So we spent, I think, two or three days making an entire presentation. And also, again, it's in a different language, so you have to make sure you're not using really difficult words that are not translatable.

But the end result that we ended up giving them was really just like, what do you highlight? What are the main things to say? And they were so grateful for it. And even now, this past spring break, the group that went to Costa Rica, one of the professors messaged the group that went last year and said they stopped by this, it was called Fundación Mujer, and they stopped by and they were talking about how they're implementing what we presented on or how helpful it's been to them. And it really just kind of ties back to, we have so many resources that we don't even realize them as resources. We just expect it to be available to us. And it was very, very cool, interesting, so many words that I probably can't think of, to see how these seemingly small items to us can have such a big impact on a business internationally. So it was a very cool experience. We also did fun stuff. We got to explore the city. We went to the beach one day. Very exciting.

Eric Raine:

Yeah, sounds like a great trip.

Patrick Lageraen:

That's really cool.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, it was awesome.

Eric Raine:

So the project that you did then in class, was that related to a company that you would've interacted with at all on the trip or are those separate things?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So for us it was separate. There was one group that, the company that they worked with in class, they actually got to meet some of them when we went to Costa Rica. But I think logistically it just wouldn't have made sense to be able to visit every company that we worked with as a class. But there was one group that did get to meet them. I don't know if they changed it. I think they change the groups every year, so I don't think it's the same businesses, but I think the places that they visit... There's a coffee farmer that we visited in Costa Rica, and I think that stays consistent, but the groups that you work with don't. So I think it changes up.

Eric Raine:

And it sounds like from the things that you're describing that you got to do and help these businesses with are things that you were learning real-time in the classroom shortly before you went on the trip, and then you're actually having real-life case examples where you're taking the hypothetical classroom learning and you're applying it to things where you're pretty much immediately infusing value even in some of the simplest forms, and then you also are then seeing the impact that it's having as a result of that.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Absolutely. Yeah.

Eric Raine:

That's amazing.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Exactly what you said.

Eric Raine:

So the Costa Rica trip, that was over the spring break, and that was for a week, and that was through Global Programs. Have you done other Global Programs like trips or have you talked to anyone about future opportunities for that kind of thing, or was that...

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, so I actually wanted to do... There is the Global Programs trip to Africa, they go to Ghana, and that's actually pretty medically focused from what I've understood. There's a healthcare focus, I should say.

Eric Raine:

Perfect.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So that was a class that I was really interested in. I couldn't fit it into my schedule last semester, so maybe next semester, we'll see. But that, I think, would be really cool. They also, I think, switch off on doing a trip to India.

Eric Raine:

Oh, wow.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Which I wanted to do selfishly because I want to go back to India. But I think that would also be really interesting. But I think Patrick's also done one, but I haven't done any other ones of my own.

Eric Raine:

I mean, even just mentioning the fact that those other opportunities exist in general, like India and Africa to Ghana. I'm somewhat familiar with the trip to Ghana because I know through the pharmacy program, there were people that I know that did the trip to Ghana. And like you mentioned, it's pretty

medically focused. I think they're doing vaccinations and health clinics and lots of different things that are really medically focused.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

And I think within the school of public health, there's actually opportunities for students to count this class towards our internship opportunity. I don't know all the details of it. I will say I took and experienced the 50 class, which is the domestic aspect of it. I took the Boston class. We didn't travel for it, so it slipped my mind. But that class was really interesting to kind of learn about the differences between entrepreneurship in Buffalo versus Boston, but the travel for that didn't end up happening.

Eric Raine:

I see. And even just comparing that on the experience, the 50 with the domestic component, you're talking about taking experience from Western New York and Buffalo is a pretty large metropolitan area, but compare that to Boston, pretty different in a lot of ways.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, definitely.

Eric Raine:

So yeah, going to Patrick and kind of talking about your trip, I know yours was more recent. It was over this past winter break. So tell us about your experience there.

Patrick Lageraen:

Yeah, I mean, to your point about there being so many different programs, we're really kind of spoiled for choice in the School of Management. You just can't do them all even if you wanted to. A little bit annoying. So our trip was set up a little bit differently. Our class component... Or I guess it's the same. Our class component and the trip component were kind of in their own silos. So the component we did a project with... There were four different projects with different companies and they focused on a different region in Southeast Asia. So ours specifically was Indonesia. And then we went to the optional trip component of the class, and then we did different site visits and then different cultural experiences while we were there. We were in Singapore for seven days and then Vietnam for six days. That's really cool. So that was half of our winter break there. And then the benefit, which a lot of people took advantage of, is you're already over in Asia and you have two weeks left until school starts.

And so I know some people who went to Thailand, I stayed in Vietnam and did a couple of things that were on my bucket list, so I definitely took advantage of being over there already. And then while we were there, a couple notable site visits that we did in Singapore. We did all sorts of things like from insurance companies that are from England but are operating in Singapore. We went to CMA CGM, which is a global shipping company, and we saw their Asian headquarters and all the screens tracking the ships around the world.

Eric Raine:

Which is that maritime tie in your interest, which is really cool.

Patrick Lageraen:

So that was my favorite site visit.

Eric Raine:

For sure.

Patrick Lageraen:

Naturally. And then in Vietnam we went to a bag factory, believe it or not. Not that any of us are probably going to work in textile manufacturing, but it was just really... I guess I would classify that more as a cultural experience because it's really eye-opening how people work overseas and the amount of money that they work for. And it was actually eye-opening in that they actually pay their workers more than the average wage. And so people want to go work in textiles because they get paid more than they would working on a street stall or working on a farm. So it was aspirational to go get to work in a factory over there.

Eric Raine:

Wow, that's really cool.

Patrick Lageraen:

It really changes your perspective.

Eric Raine:

And that's a lot in one trip. You got to go to a lot of different places. I am curious a little bit about what the bucket list items were that you were able to cross off. I mean, not only are you able to go and do something through School of Management, have it be educational, but given the fact that you've traveled so far and you're doing it over break, where I know, like for Sri, you said it was over spring break. So I mean, you're leaving class on a Thursday or Friday that week before, and then you're back in class that following week on the Monday. But with your trip, this allowed you to be able to buffer that time a little bit and really maximize the travel.

Patrick Lageraen:

I was pretty strategic with the way I picked my flights. I left on January 2nd, I had an eight hour layover in Helsinki, Finland, so I got that kind of northern, Scandinavian, European experience. Then I went to Singapore. We were on the class trip in there and then Vietnam. And then I myself flew up to the north of Vietnam, the capital, which is Hanoi, and then I went to Heilong Bay, which is that big bay in the South China Sea with all the limestone mountains.

Eric Raine:

Wow.

Patrick Lageraen:

It's pretty famous. It's been on my bucket list ever since I saw the Top Gear episode when I was 10 years old. And then on my flight back, I got to stop in Japan for eight hours. And so I got a little bit of that super East, far East Asian flavor.

Eric Raine:

Wow.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

That's amazing.

Patrick Lageraen:

Yeah, really cool.

Eric Raine:

I mean, that's definitely maximizing the opportunity.

Patrick Lageraaen:

For sure.

Eric Raine:

Yeah.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Oh yeah.

Eric Raine:

Thinking about that, I think the takeaway is that even just in a couple of these individual experiences that you both had, it was just a target rich environment for opportunities to learn and experience culture and see what different things go on from a business perspective. Because obviously you have that lens with the MBA. You're taking classes where we're talking about strategy and operations and lean manufacturing, and then you're over in a textile factory halfway around the world and you're like, wow, this is what it looks like to implement these types of things.

Patrick Lageraaen:

It's amazing. And let's give an example of that. So after we left Santander or Santander, we went down to the World Trade Center, saw Wall Street, saw the bull, and then when we came back, we went through Chinatown and we got to see how that sort of Chinese culture, but in New York City, is, which was pretty interesting.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

It was like you were in a different... You didn't even realize it was New York City.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Right. Yeah, exactly.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

It's crazy.

Eric Raine:

I mean, for the number of things that you did, even just in that New York City trip, I'm calling it the UN trip, but it was a lot more than even just the UN trip, being in New York City and being able to do all those things. And to your point, Patrick, about alumni and networking and UB's reach around the world, I think that speaks back to even what you mentioned about someone who connected to the School of Management who is overseas, and yet they have this impact in the UN. It just speaks volumes to UB's reach. I know on my shoulder here, I'm wearing a UB zip-up, and we have our Centennial logo on some of the swag that we get from UB, and to think that our school, the School of Management, we're now past the a hundred-year mark. And then you just think about the number of people and the impact that they've had, not just to the Western New York community, but also to the globe is really cool.

Patrick Lageraen:

To support that point, at the Centennial celebration, one of the honorary guests, I forget his name, but he's the president of Grab Asia, which is their version of Uber. And so he came here and he was honored at the Centennial celebration, but when we were in Asia, in Singapore, he gave us a tour of their headquarters. That's something that we never would've been able to do unless the UB School of Management had this alumni connection.

Eric Raine:

So we've talked a lot about what you did on the trip. I'd be curious to share with listeners here, what motivated you to, and I know we may have touched on it a little bit, but really what was the motivation around wanting to take time out of your schedules and take on even, we'll get into talking about the financial impact because obviously these trips do cost money, these are flights, pretty long flights so they can get expensive. You stayed with the host family, but in other cases you might stay at a hotel and things. But what motivated you to want to dive into these types of experiences?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I think for me, when I was an undergrad, I never traveled, I never studied abroad or anything like that, and I was always kind of raised with the mindset of school first and then you can travel, enjoy, do whatever, so I never even considered the idea of traveling and getting to see new places while learning. So initially when I signed up for Costa Rica, I wasn't even a hundred percent sure I was going because the trip is optional, so it's a great way for people to be able to participate and you still learn about Costa Rica

and the culture in the actual class component. I wasn't sure I would travel. But then, and I know we'll get to finances, but I was able to get scholarships and stuff to help me go, and it was really then that I learned, yeah, you can combine travel and fun and learning at the same time.

So for Costa Rica, it was the opportunity to really go internationally and learn about different things. And I think for New York City, I've already mentioned it, but I think the United Nations was really the main focus. And when you said you call it the UN trip, that's what I thought too, so it was honestly a happy surprise for me to learn that the UN was just a part of it. I thought that was going to be the entire trip, and I was like, yeah, I'm going to walk out of there with a job. But I think going there and being able to learn about that, but then go to these other places as well, it just gave me a lot of, I guess, insight on the different career paths that exist and how you can make business. And for me specifically, public health really fit into many different niches, so that was kind of my motivation for it.

Eric Raine:

How about for you, Patrick? Not to put you on the spot.

Patrick Lageraen:

Yeah. So Global Programs in general. I noticed a gap in my own knowledge. So what attracted me to the Asia class, and then I'll get to the New York city part, was just that I didn't really understand it. I didn't really know much about the countries over there, but I wanted to know more. And what it gave me is this foundational knowledge where I can go and read news articles or do more research on my own and then actually understand what I'm learning. And so I would say it's noticing a gap in my knowledge and then seeking that out, and that's, I guess, what motivated me to be on the New York City trip as well. Yeah.

Eric Raine:

I think that's really cool, especially because you kind of identified, for each of you, you both identified these reasons for why travel might make sense or that it could be an opportunity to take, but then you actually acted upon it. And I think that that's, for me, that's something that I'm learning from both of you today talking about it is sort of like if you think of these things or you might be interested or you just aren't necessarily sure, but these opportunities do exist. And then if you really take action on it, look at the benefits of the things that you can learn from it, and not just what you take from it, but what you

give to the process and what you're able to do as far as bringing value to the table for the places that you go to.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. And I think definitely for the international component of it, I just don't think those are things that you'll learn in a classroom setting. Even the experience of 50's, yes, it's a different type of networking, and I think you gain a lot of connections obviously with UB people, but I think the international component or aspect to it is just like, you're not going to learn that in a class. No matter what global class you take, I think the opportunity to learn the things that we did, I just don't think you'd get that anywhere else.

Patrick Lageraen:

And not to undersell the academic part of these travel experiences, but one of my primary motivators and takeaways has been personal growth. So that's travel skills, and then just understanding of different parts of the world and languages and culture. That means a lot to me.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Definitely.

Patrick Lageraen:

And I'm really grateful to have had these experiences.

Eric Raine:

That was actually going to be the next part of what I wanted to ask both of you was, now that you've been through these experiences and you reflect on them, and whether it's most recent as just this last week you got back or over breaks over this past year to year and a half, what would you say, if you were to distill it down to maybe one or two key things, would you say are the takeaways from, "This is what I got out of this experience."?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

That's a really good question.

Eric Raine:

I know it's probably hard to summarize it too because it's so multifaceted, but for people that might not know because I think hearing your perspectives on what your takeaways were might change the way that people help identify the opportunities to say, "Maybe that's a takeaway that I could find through this process too," Or at least get those thoughts moving in that direction.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I think there's kind of two main things for me, I don't know if it'll be a sentence each, but one is the networking aspect of it. I think that the connections I've made through the people I've met, I just think I could reach out to any of them on LinkedIn or email and say, "Hey, I met you at Costa Rica or New York City, would love to talk more about your experiences." I think that in itself is a huge, huge plus. And then I think the other thing for me personally is, I've always kind of been a homebody. Like I said, I'm born and brought up in Buffalo. I still live at home. It was kind of a cool experience for me to go somewhere new. Costa Rica was definitely very different. And I think even New York City, whenever I've gone to the city, it's been with my family.

So when I am with my family, I'm very type E, I'm just going wherever I'm told to go, and I think this trip was a really cool opportunity for me to take the lead in that I've been there. So I was able to say, "Hey, I know how to get here. I know I can lead us." Yeah.

Patrick Lageraen:

Thanks, by the way.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I think that was a cool opportunity for me to really get out of my comfort zone. And I know for Costa Rica, definitely my first day slash night there, I was like, "I cannot do this." I was like, "I'll quit the trip. I need to just go home." And I was like, "It's okay if I lose a scholarship money, I just need to leave."

Eric Raine:

It forced you out of your comfort zone.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, I was so, so uncomfortable. And I think after that first maybe 18, 24 hour period, I was like, this is such a cool opportunity that so many people don't have. And the things I learned, I've already said it like

10 times, but the things I've learned will just never be beat, so I think getting out of the comfort zone was a huge plus for me.

Patrick Lageraaen:

I would say the same exact thing. I love that you talked about comfort zone. When I went to Asia, I had this four day period where I didn't really know what I was doing. What am I supposed to do now? Where do I go?

Eric Raine:

Like, how did I get here?

Patrick Lageraaen:

It was very much just a sense of shock and, "I don't want anything to do with this. I'm going to go back to the hotel. I'm going to watch my TV." So it took a while, and then I started opening up to it and I started experiencing the culture and then the food. And later on in the trip, I started getting emotional at random things, like having these profound realizations, but it takes some time. But that was a big...

Eric Raine:

Is there an example of that? It sounds really interesting.

Patrick Lageraaen:

I guess for me it's in Vietnam. It was having grown up, learned all about the Vietnam war from the American perspective, and then learning about it from the Vietnamese perspective and learning how things really went down to a degree and just sort of adjusting all of my preconceived notions of that, and that was pretty emotional for me.

Eric Raine:

Wow, that perspective, yeah.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Yeah. And I guess my key takeaway from that was that culture shock happens, but now I'm prepared for it. So when I go to someplace in the future, I'm going to do more research, but in the right way. So I'm going to be better prepared for what to expect when I get to that location. I like to describe it as a beta

term. So I have my preconceived notion of a place, then I have what it's actually like after going, and then the difference is the beta, which I've assigned it. But then when I look at future trips, I can apply that same beta to it. It's not going to be the same, but at least it's going to prepare me better for what's going to come.

Eric Raine:

Yeah, for sure. Especially, it's fascinating to hear how you were in completely different parts of the world, and you're there on the first couple days and you have this sort of overwhelming sense of, "I am really outside of my normal environment, but I'm also going to be here for a little while." And then you come to terms with, "Okay, I can't just turn around and drive home thousands of miles away." And then you start to realize, "You know what? It actually was just in my mind more than anything else." That wasn't the reality. It wasn't like you were facing a situation that you were under true duress or anything like that.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. And I think you said it really well, and you want to go back to your hotel and watch Netflix. I think especially post-pandemic kind of, like post lockdown, I should say, it's so easy to just isolate yourself and to just say, I don't need to talk to people. I don't need to do XYZ. And even for me on the New York City trip, which is very close to home realistically...

Eric Raine:

And you've been there.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah, and I've been there. I was like, yeah, I think it's time to go back home, sit in my hotel. I'm grateful that I had Patrick and a lot of others on the trip who were like, yeah, we're going to go to see the fountains for the Twin Towers, or we're going to the Charging Bowl, and things like that, which I've gone to before, but like I said, it was always with my family.

Eric Raine:

Yeah, it was because they were going because you said you wanted to.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So it was so cool to actually do those things and talk to people more. I think it's just so easy to go in your own bubble, and it's harder, in my opinion, to now come out of that and to really make yourself do things.

Patrick Lageraen:

It is.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

But it's worth it.

Patrick Lageraen:

Because when you guys asked me to go, I thought about it and I'm like, do I really want to go do this? Because if you guys weren't there and I was there alone, I wouldn't have done it.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Oh, no.

Patrick Lageraen:

I would've went back to the hotel and just hung out. But I'm so glad that I did it because look at all these things that I got to learn and experience.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Exactly.

Eric Raine:

And I think then that, to your point about future potential, is I have this process that I can rinse and repeat. I know what I got out of it. Even if there's some hesitation or let's say it's a different part of the world that you're really unfamiliar with, like you haven't even studied or learned or read about and you're just there and you're like, "Okay, I'm here now." You have a process because of your travel experience, and that will benefit you not just in a professional capacity, but even just in a personal capacity with traveling with family or friends in the future, I'd imagine.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

And I think we also got to meet... Patrick and I are both MBAs, but there were MS accounting students, there were undergraduate students. I know on the Costa Rica trip we had accounting, we had finance, there were just a lot of different majors too that you would never probably meet if you were just here, and I think, maybe you also understand as a dual degree, sometimes it's hard. You feel like you kind have one foot in each school. For me at least, it's hard. I think our cohort has done a really great job of making everyone feel included, but in the school of public health, you don't know a ton of people, and so it's really easy to just be like, "Yeah, it's fine. I'll just go watch Netflix." But it's fun once you do it. I think it's great.

Eric Raine:

I think it's kind of ironic in a way too to experience something with people from another program here at UB. You may not have interacted with them here in Buffalo, but you somehow interacted with them a couple thousand miles away from home.

Patrick Lageraen:

That's interesting.

Eric Raine:

You know what I mean? That you kind of got that far away to be able to be like, okay, this is just us, and then all of a sudden you're like, well, you're just like a stone's throw away here right in Buffalo.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I know.

Eric Raine:

So that's probably another maybe takeaway is that there's so many different people from different areas study just right even here at UB in Buffalo. So kind of going off of that, another thing I wanted to bring up and ask you about, and I know that you've talked about it in other capacities, and I know that it's really interesting experience for you, but I'd love to just hear about it and maybe some listeners that don't know about it, is meeting the vice president of the United States. And you've been involved through the school, and that's really another travel opportunity that ended up happening because you traveled to Washington D.C. So could you tell us a little bit about how that happened and what that was like?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. Honestly, it was all a whirlwind and it's still crazy to think about. So the vice president came to the University of Buffalo first, which is kind of how I even got that connection. My old office that I used to work for called me and they were like, "Hey, we're looking for a student who's interested in sustainability." She was coming to talk about climate change and things like that, and they were like, "Is that something you'd be interested in?" I don't know anyone who's going to say no to that, whether you are or not.

Eric Raine:

It's like, can you say no?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So I was like, "Yeah, absolutely." So that was a very short turnaround. They told me about a day and a half, two days before she came. So I had the opportunity to introduce her when she came to UB. And then it was, honestly, I tell people this all the time, I blacked out. I barely remember any of it. I have video proof of it, which is how I know that it happened, but it was a very surreal experience, and I never in a million years would've thought that I got another opportunity to do that. So that happens in September, and then in October, I got an email from her office, which candidly I thought was spam.

Eric Raine:

I would too. I'd be like, "Oh, this can't be."

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I'm on Punk'd right now. But I got invited to her house in D.C. to go to a Diwali celebration, which is an Indian holiday. It's called the Festival of Lights. So she was holding or hosting a party for that. And so I got the invite I think about a week before.

Eric Raine:

That's a pretty quick turnaround.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Oh, absolutely.

Eric Raine:

Again, it's another one of those things where I can't say no to this.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Exactly. Yeah. And I remember I had an accounting exam on the same day, and I was like, "Hi, Ian, I have this opportunity."

Eric Raine:

He said you better have a really good reason to...

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So that was planned. And then actually two days before, or one day before I left for D.C., but two days before the event, someone from her office, I met her when she was here, her name is Opal, she called me and was like, "Hey, do you want to introduce the VP again?" And I was like, I don't understand how this is happening, and I also don't understand how anyone's going to say no to this. So again it was a very short turnaround. But this intro was more based on growing up in the culture or the two cultures that I kind of grew up with in America. So American culture, Indian culture, and how I kind of navigated that. So that was a much more... It was just a totally different setting. Obviously it's still professional and you're still representing yourself in a very professional way, but it was an opportunity for me to talk about how I grew up and my culture background of it. So that party, that reception was mainly all Indian Americans or Indian people. So I felt it was just much more, I guess, relaxing in a way.

So that was a super cool opportunity. I got to meet the surgeon general, which was awesome. I got to meet the girl from Bridgerton who's Edwina in Bridgerton, if anyone watches that. But that was a very cool opportunity. It kind of like, again, networking, but also I went by myself, and so it was very daunting to be the, then, I think 22 year old, or 23 year old who's just in this giant place. I think everyone except me had a plus one. Trying to go up to people and be like, "Hi, it's so nice to meet you." So that was fun. And then in April of 2023, I got an invite to again go back. This one was for Earth Day. So this was kind of a mix between when she came here and when I went there the first time because it was climate related, but it was still in D.C. So that one, actually, more students from UB got invited. So there was some people I knew and it was a totally different group, like audience.

So that was a really good opportunity to kind of network with people again and just talk about my career goals this time and not so much my culture. And then in October of 2023, same thing, I got invited to go

back for Diwali, which was, again, really cool. No introduction this time, but it was awesome because this time I was a little less nervous.

Eric Raine:

You got to experience it more.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I got to... Yeah, exactly.

Eric Raine:

Rather than be focused on the task at hand, right?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

A hundred percent. And there were actually people there that were there the previous year and they were like, "Oh, hey, I remember you." So it was nice because I still, again, didn't go with anyone. So it was nice to be able to essentially latch onto people and network as a pair and how people always say to do that. So very, very cool opportunities. I mean, it's so surreal to me to think about. I pinch myself when I think about it, but it was just honestly something that kind of, I guess, fell into my lap in a way, but it has opened many...

Eric Raine:

But you seized the opportunity when it came.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. I mean, it's one of those things where, like I mentioned, it's really easy to isolate and be like, "Oh, that's okay. I don't think I can do that," Or not kind of believe in yourself, but if you do it, it's a very cool opportunity.

Eric Raine:

Absolutely. I think that I'm finding a lot of similarities in the way that you described the trip and that experience and going to D.C, especially repeated opportunities, and the opportunities that come from traveling through the School of Management, through Global Programs and the New York City trip, especially given the fact that you ended up going back there with students another time. And it's kind of

similar in a way to how things went in New York City where you're like, I've been here, I know this, I can kind of show you and lead the way. And then you had the chance to do that over again. And you've also had sort of a case study in what Patrick was talking about where you had an experience and then you took that and you applied it to a future experience, which ended up being going back for a second time the following fall. And your perspective was a little bit different like, "I know what I'm doing. I got this. I'm going on my own, but that's okay and I'm going to make the most out of it."

And I think that that really speaks to obviously your willingness to seize the opportunity, like I was saying, but also take previous experiences through travel and being put into a place where you're maybe not so comfortable, but then realizing that, you know what, as long as I can get over that initial sort of activation energy, [inaudible 00:54:27]. I got to put a little bit into this, but if I trust the process, I'll get over that hump and I'll be able to really get a lot out of it. So that's really, really cool.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Definitely.

Eric Raine:

So talking about your professional trajectory then, and kind of bringing this back towards your dual degree and Patrick and your interests after school. Do you feel that this has changed the way that you look at opportunities to travel outside of school where maybe it's going to be something more in a professional capacity or just in general?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. So I think Buffalo is, and I know we'll discuss this, but I have a fellowship that is really focused on Buffalo or Western New York and kind of how you can contribute to the economic vitality. So I think Buffalo is kind of my home in the sense that I'll probably end up here and I love it and there's a lot I want to do in Buffalo, but I think, especially trip like Global Programs, the DC experiences and especially I think the United Nations, has really opened my eyes to the global opportunities that exist. And that's not to say I'm not going to turn into a... I don't know. I'm not traveling, I'm not jet-setting every other weekend, but I think kind of looking into what opportunities exist professionally to administer help in these different countries.

Because for me, even what I want to do in Buffalo is very focused on health equity, and I think when you look at it globally, like Buffalo in itself, there's so much health, so many health inequities that exist, but if

you zoom out, it's worldwide. There's health inequities everywhere. So I think going on these trips really helps me see what exists where. And obviously I've only done two of them, so there's a very small scope of what I've seen, but even with what I've seen, there's so much that can be done. So I think for me professionally, I think these trips are really helpful to, A, meet these people that currently work in these places, and hopefully once I graduate, I can reach out and say, "I'd love to work with you on XYZ." But also it gives you an idea of what is there to be done. And once you see these problems that exist in different areas, you're also kind of able to see how or to what level they exist in Buffalo.

So for me, I think being able to see these issues, learn about different ways to address them and then be able to implement that in Buffalo is something that I would love to do and I kind of see myself doing. But also, again, considering that global perspective and seeing how you can address it from where you are right now.

Eric Raine:

Yeah, that's really powerful. I mean, it's similar to what we were kind of saying anecdotally earlier, where it's like you traveled a couple thousand miles away to meet people that are right here in your backyard. You do the same thing on a trip like you've been describing where you're like, we have some of these same challenges that we're facing in our local community, what can I do as someone who lives and takes part in this community to be able to not just impact things locally, but then expand beyond that to the challenges that are outside of just Western New York as well?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. So I grew up in Williamsville, which is a very... It's a bubble. I always say this. I definitely didn't grow up knowing about the challenges that exist in Buffalo. There's so much like food insecurity, healthcare inequities, and...

Eric Raine:

Access to healthcare

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Access, yeah. Access to healthcare is... The east side, the west side of Buffalo, they struggle so much, and until I started my fellowship, I didn't realize any of that. I was like, oh, the quote-unquote biggest issue is you have to drive 20 minutes to get somewhere, which also is not a big issue at all when you go

to these other places. So I think kind of getting that experience and being able to learn about it is really important.

Eric Raine:

Especially from a public health perspective on the one side of your dual degree. And then on the MBA side it's, well, how can we tangibly affect these things that we are identifying and then implementing strategies?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Exactly.

Eric Raine:

So it's really cool. I think it really ties together your dual degree experience with opportunities to be able to learn in the classroom, but really stretch outside of the classroom as well. So shifting into a little bit of the technical structure of how all these trips happen, when to apply, it's quite a process in and of itself. It's easy to talk about them retrospectively and say like, "Oh, yeah, I signed up and then went on this trip," And then we talk about the trip, but there's a lot that leads into the how do you even sign up?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Definitely.

Eric Raine:

I know for people listening that might say, "You know what? Travel is something that I'd really like to do if I come to UB School of Management, but I, like others, I can't afford to go. It's expensive. I can't pay for my flights," Or whatever the case may be, on top of the other reservations that might exist. So for both of you, if you could talk about, maybe in general terms, just how did you approach that big barrier to entry to the travel from a cost perspective?

Patrick Lageraen:

Well, I think the one thing that Global Programs would want me to say first is that the trips are subsidized. And so they take the total cost of the trips, the hotels, the food, the transportation, all that, and then the school puts in some money, and so what you see as your trip cost is not what it would be for you trying to do it on your own.

Eric Raine:

Sure. Makes sense.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Yeah. Some of that comes from having a roommate instead of having to have your own hotel room, but it is definitely reduced to what you would pay trying to do one of these trips themselves. Considering how I paid for it. Well, I was lucky enough to get a scholarship for the Asia trip, and so that was a special scholarship from one of the emeritus deans of the School of Management, John Thomas. He provided funds that paid for my flight and for the trip costs. So that was all of the in-person components. And so I did have to put in some money myself, but that really just covered food and other incidentals.

Eric Raine:

Some of the extras. Sure.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Yeah. That I experienced on the trip.

Eric Raine:

But I think it's important to point out the fact that there are these types of scholarship opportunities that do exist where it's worth trying and worth looking into and seeking that type of support to be able to learn and travel and do these things without taking on the full cost yourself, which in some cases may be the case. But what about for you? How did you go about tackling that challenge?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So I think I mentioned this earlier, but when I started the class, I wasn't sure that I'd be traveling, mainly because of financial reasons. And so I said yes on the form we had to fill out, and I didn't realize...

Eric Raine:

Like kind of in the hypothetical.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. I didn't realize it was binding. So we were getting close to booking the trips, and I was still like, yeah, I think it'd be cool to go. And then I was like, "Hey, Naomi, I don't know if I'm going to go." And

she's like, "What do you mean? We planned this trip." Yeah. So that was when she actually told me about the scholarships that exist in the School of Management. So kind of the same thing. It was a different scholarship for me, but I remember Naomi saying that they have X amount of money to give to students, and if you apply for this scholarship, depending on how many people apply obviously, but they're able to give money to each student.

Eric Raine:

And they want to support students.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Exactly.

Eric Raine:

That's what it's there for.

Patrick Lageraen:

Exactly.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So I applied for a scholarship, and so I got scholarship aid from the School of Management, and then I also... It's the Western New York Prosperity Fellowship that is currently the fellowship that I'm in, and that is a fellowship generously funded by the Apprentice family. And the whole point of it is really to help students that they see this potential and to contribute to Buffalo. And this is post-graduation. So all of us in the fellowship have some sort of vision or idea, entrepreneurial vision to contribute back. So it's really an investment more than it is like a scholarship or fellowship. But within that, we have an enrichment fund, and this is, aside from the money that you're getting for school, it's a lump sum of money that is meant to help you with these types of experiences. So there's no specific category, it doesn't have to be used for X, Y, Z, but we have to apply for it. It's almost considered a scholarship or a fund, but you talk about how this is going to contribute to your experience as a fellow.

Eric Raine:

It's almost like you're pitching to say, okay, if you invest X dollars in this experience...

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Exactly.

Eric Raine:

This is how I'm hoping it might make a downstream impact.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Exactly. Yeah.

Eric Raine:

Cool.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So I was able to apply for that, essentially talking about how this would contribute to my career, my career in school and professionally after I graduate. So I was able to get money from that as well to help contribute to the trip. So like Patrick said, I think I paid out of pocket for incidentals and stuff like that, but that was for Costa Rica, I used my enrichment fund, and then actually same thing for the New York City trip. I didn't apply for any scholarships through the School of Management for that. But again, I was able to use my enrichment fund for that. And like Patrick mentioned, I think it's important to note the amount of money, the class fee for that trip, you don't realize how much you're getting from that. I know we had to book how we were getting to New York City separately and incidentals, but the hotel we stayed at was...

Patrick Lageraen:

Yeah, I was going to say that too.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So nice. And I got really lucky I didn't have a roommate.

Patrick Lageraen:

Nice part of town right next to the U.N. I did have a roommate, but for the price of the trip, I would pay at least double that if I was staying in a hotel on my own. And that doesn't even include any of the company visits or the food.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

No, definitely.

Eric Raine:

And it's a great bang for the buck though, it sounds like.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

A hundred percent.

Eric Raine:

And obviously things change year to year, different opportunities come up. This podcast isn't necessarily the platform to talk numbers and dollars and cents on it, but I think the takeaway is really that you both had unique approaches to offsetting costs to be able to make the most out of a trip that you otherwise might not have been able to do if you were saying you had to pay the full load the whole way yourself.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. And I think one thing I wanted to mention earlier that I forgot is these kinds of trips are really a great opportunity for you to get that experience of, let's say, study abroad or just going internationally without committing to a full semester or a year abroad or XYZ. I mean, the New York City trip was two, three days, Costa Rica for me was a week, yours was I think three weeks.

Patrick Lageraen:

Yeah.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

So these are really great opportunities for you to get small doses of breaking out of your comfort zone, which then you can translate into larger and go somewhere for a semester or for a year or move entirely. But it's a really great opportunity to ease your way out of it while still... Oh, yeah, go ahead.

Patrick Lageraen:

And similar to that, I repeatedly said that the benefit was I got to experience Asia, or wherever in the world, with the guardrails of a class. So I had the faculty showing us around, telling us where to go. We still had freedom, we were still off on the weekends, but they were there.

Eric Raine:

Exactly.

Patrick Lageraen:

So now if I did another trip to that part of the world on my own, I'd feel totally comfortable. But it was really nice having those guardrails during the first experience.

Eric Raine:

And I think that it just goes to show that there are so many resources, and you brought this up earlier, and even other ways, but the School of Management provides so many resources, and at the end of the day, they really do want to invest in student experiences regardless of what path you're on for the future. Because even just sitting at this table, the three of us represent three completely different paths. Though we share a lot of the same vision as far as our future with leadership and management, our goals from the School of Management, but we're going to end up in so many different places, doing a wide variety of things. However, these types of experiences are similar for even the two of you sitting here, and I'm sure it probably goes the same for other people that were on the trip with you, that if they were to be asked these same questions, they'd have their own unique versions of how they kind of took things from it.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Definitely.

Eric Raine:

So to kind of wrap up, one of the things that we like to do, especially because people that are listening to this podcast episode, are considering the School of Management, or maybe they're going to apply or they have offers from a couple different schools and UB is one of them and they're like, "Okay, let me make this decision," For what's best for them and their future, what advice would you give to students, not just from the travel perspective, but from just your overall experience with the School of Management?

Srikrithi Krishnan:

I think just do it. Just show up, put the deposit down or send the application in. I think I mentioned this before, but I don't have a business background by any means, and I never thought I would. So it was definitely a daunting, scary thing for me to come to the School of Management, but I think the benefits I've gained out of it are just tenfold compared to what I put into it. I remember I met with someone in the School of Management and the application deadline for the date, it comes in waves, but the one that I wanted to apply for was in two days. And I was like, I feel like this is a sign that I shouldn't do it. But then I was like, you know what? I still have two days, that's like 48 hours. And I just was like, yeah, why not? Let's try. Got in, and I think the people I've met, the experiences I've had are just something, I know I keep saying it, but I just never would've gotten it anywhere else.

So I think just do it, just throw your hat in or whatever they say. The worst that happens is you get an MBA or you get some sort of degree, and...

Eric Raine:

Its pretty good [inaudible 01:08:10].

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah. Exactly. The best that happens is you get that along with so many other experiences.

Eric Raine:

Absolutely.

Patrick Lageraen:

Yeah, I mean, considering or thinking about trips, I would say that you can't even imagine how it's going to affect you, and I promise it'll surpass all of your expectations. So if there's a trip opportunity, do it. You will not regret it, and you'll be a better person for it. And then thinking about UB, I would say pay attention to the vibe that you're looking for from different schools because different schools will have very different vibes. So UB is probably going to feel very different from the Harvard School of Management, just as an example. But if you want a vibe where people take it seriously, they care about learning and exploring these extracurricular activities, but we're not snobby about it, UB is the place to go.

Eric Raine:

And I feel like faculty treat us as students like their colleagues in a lot of ways, and it's like they're friends to us in a lot of ways, and you get to know them on a deeper level.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

A hundred percent.

Eric Raine:

And even if you travel with professors, I know both of you probably had professors or you mentioned faculty being on the trip with you, that's just another thing. I think that's an added layer to even the travel experience.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Yeah.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Yeah.

Eric Raine:

Well, I appreciate you taking the time to come in today.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Thanks for having me.

Eric Raine:

It was also fun to have Patrick here as a co-host and as a guest on this episode.

Patrick Lageraaen:

Thanks very much.

Eric Raine:

And I think for those of you listening, take this as a sign to just maybe research and learn a little bit more about what travel looks like through the School of Management, and that outside of just travel, there's so many different types of networking opportunities and clubs to join and things to do. But I think the

thing that kind of rings true from what you both were talking about here is the fact that you really just got to jump in. And you both seemed to experience that in your travel where you had some hesitation, but once you got over it, it was one of the best things that could have happened, and I think likewise probably for also making a decision to just come to Buffalo. So thank you both. Appreciate it.

Srikrithi Krishnan:

Thank you.

Patrick Lageraen:

Thank you.

Eric Raine:

I hope you enjoyed this episode. Again, we were speaking with Srikrithi Krishnan, a dual degree MBA MPH student here at the School of Management. My name is Eric Raine, I've been your host along with Patrick Lageraen. Thanks for listening.