

## Ilham Fadhillah

### Boston University, United States

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[ilhamfadhillah4@gmail.com](mailto:ilhamfadhillah4@gmail.com)

At the time of registration, I was in my fourth semester studying Industrial Engineering. I had **no notable professional background** at that time in terms of working professionally, so what I emphasized in my essays and interview was my experience in **executing an international level business case competition**. I argued that my experience in managing a team to succeed at an international level enhances my critical thinking skills and adaptability, which is something very important if I want to succeed in studying abroad. I signed up for IISMA in the hopes that I can get a unique experience in studying abroad. I believe that Boston University, my destination, is a place where I can **discover the vast knowledge** that the world can offer while experiencing life as a global citizen. I also believe that the fully-funded nature of the IISMA program allowed me to focus on maximizing my time abroad without worrying about living costs. IISMA also gave me plenty of opportunities to give back to my fellow students so that everyone can experience the world as I did.



During pre-departure, the most notable obstacle we faced was the **lack of clarity regarding the next steps**. We were supposed to prepare the documents for our departure, such as the visa and the supporting letter to apply for the visa. Initially, there was no clarity on what to do next, the information came very late near our departure. Thankfully, the host university and the IISMA team provided **ample support when needed** so that we can get our visa on time. Our host university, Boston University, also provided **a lot of support** in finding our housing. All exchange students are allowed to apply for on-campus housing, which, even though it is slightly more expensive, is very safe and comfortable. The housing includes a room and a mandatory dining plan, which is all that we need as exchange students. All in all, though the **process was a bit rushed**, the pre-departure period ran very smoothly and we got all the help that we needed to start our study abroad.

Being in Boston, a city that is notable for its abundance of high-quality education institutions, is **a life-changing experience** for me. Being in such close proximity to world renowned institutions such as Harvard and MIT has had nothing but positive effects on me and my friends. The sheer reputation of the two universities drew so many amazing people, one of them was Pak Budi Gunadi Sadikin, our Minister of Health. It was by chance that we found out the minister was visiting Harvard and was going to give a talk about how Indonesia handled the pandemic. **The talk was inspiring**, it gave us a behind the curtain look on how devastating the pandemic was and how the ministry handled the pandemic. We wouldn't have gotten the chance to attend that talk if not for IISMA, which allows us to be in the same proximity with these amazing people.

Boston is also a very diverse city, which is one of the reasons why I chose to go there. I wanted to experience life as **a muslim in the US**, and I did that by mosque-hopping. Visiting various mosques there and attending prayers was eye opening, it gave me a view on how muslims abroad live as a minority, and it made me **thankful on how easy it is to be a muslim in Indonesia**.

After the program, I couldn't wait for a chance to share my experience and help others have the same experience as I did. I started small by **sharing my experience** with my fellow students in my department. I **helped them with the preparation** that they need to apply to the program in the future. The international office at ITS also **helped in providing a platform** for me to share to a bigger audience, to other ITS students. I also had the chance of working with the IISMA team to help manage and organize the program, a chance that I never thought I'd have.

After IISMA, I also applied to several companies for internships. During the recruitment process, I found out that a lot of companies highly appreciate **the skills and adaptability** of someone who has studied abroad. The experience shows that we can adapt to new environment and that we can thrive no matter where we are.

