I chose to study in Italy because I thought it would be a cool place to visit and I had heard that Bocconi was a well-respected school. I found that applying for the visa was very tedious. The Italian visa office goes through each and every document so make sure every document is exactly as they have on their website. They also want very specific travel detail and insurance. Make sure you keep all the documents because you will need them when you arrive in Italy. When signing up for courses I suggest using the Beedie exchange database and also use the information Bocconi provides for you. The system is very similar to that of myschedule. When you are packing for Italy, I suggest bringing all types of clothes as it is cold in the winter and gets quite hot in the summer. Many students at Bocconi and in Milan dress business casual or with nice clothes to school. However, many students also wear regular clothes you would see at SFU.

When traveling to Milan I suggest getting a flight to a major airport in Europe such as London Paris Barcelona or Frankfurt then booking another flight to Milan as this will be your cheapest option. All three airports in Milan have public transport, bus and taxi access. Depending on how much luggage you have I would suggest taking the bus or train because taxis will cost double to triple of what it costs in Vancouver. When it comes to purchasing goods, I suggest always having cash on hand as not all places have debit or credit machines, but there will always be ATMs within a few blocks. I found that Milan was very comparable in price to Vancouver. Some things are more expensive, but others are cheaper, so I think it balances itself out.

Upon arrival the school has mandatory orientation and optional orientation. They also have an Italian language course that I suggest attending as it is a good way to meet people and learn the language. Furthermore, during the first week they will host club and social events that are a good way to get to know people and experience different areas of the city.

The accommodation situation is quite difficult as finding a place is quite difficult so work on finding a place as soon as possible. The university dorms are a nice place to stay and meet people however they are very far away from the school and the rest of the city. They have plenty of grocery stores so there is no need to worry about travelling a long way for food.

The courses are very different than that of SFU. You can either do attending or non-attending which have different requirements. Attending students are usually required to come to 75% of classes and get a more favourable work schedule such as a 75% final and 25% midterm. Non-attending students have a 100% final. In almost all classes it is lecture notes and textbook notes with no group work or practises.

The Italian culture is very interesting and different to that of Canada. People do not wait in line and they definitely do not say sorry. I found it a little hard to adjust as I had to be more brash then what I would be in Vancouver. The weather gets quite nice in the spring and many people will be outside drinking in the parks and by the canals.

There are so many places to visit in Italy and the rest of Europe. Within Italy you can take a train or bus to all of northern Italy and down to Rome. Visiting the south of Italy is very nice for weather and culture but a flight there will be required. Many small cities around Milan
are very nice such as Como Bellagio, Bergamo, Parma, Verona and Modena. If you want to venture outside of Italy this is very easy with two large breaks during the semester for midterms and Easter. There are many budget airlines that fly out of Bergamo. Going to other places with a group of people helps save on accommodation costs and also makes it more enjoyable.

Within Milan there is so much art and fashion culture. Many of the museums and galleries are very cool to visit. On the first Sunday of every month all museums and galleries are free to attend. Milan has very cool architecture and some world-renowned buildings such as the Bosco Verticale and CityLife. As everyone knows Italians love their soccer/football so attending an AC Milan or Inter Milan game is a must. ESN does many group trips and events throughout the semester to help with social gatherings and visiting cultural or historic places. Aperitivo is a must for everyone who travels to Milan.

The first few weeks in Italy were very difficult and it felt like you were on an island and very lonely. However, after the initial shock it was a tremendous place and the school does a very good job for people to feel included. I learned a whole new view on the world and how similar everyone is and how different they are at the same time. One thing that I wish I did was to experience more of the city. I also suggest travelling to different parts and trying the different restaurants as there is plenty of good food throughout the city. I suggest savoring every moment and really value all the friends you make because it all goes by very quick.

Old bridge Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was rebuilt after the war and bridges the Christians and the Muslims of the city.
The Rome Coliseum

Jardin Majorelle in Marrakesh Morocco. One of the homes and now a museum for Yves Saint Laurent.
Duomo di Milano at night. The major cultural and historic center of Milan. Started being built in 1386 and was not completed until 1965.