

“What process did you use to find the institution that you chose?”

Nick: Went through the list that the program gave him, looked to see if any of the research they were doing was interesting to him, looked at the locations (for safer cities closer to urban centers like Mumbai) and asked Dr. Ansari where he thought would be best

Melanie: Talked to family friends about best urban cities to go to, they suggested Pune, New Delhi, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

“How did you prepare medically for India Trip?”

Melanie: Went to UHS for information on traveling to another country, Melanie brought allergy medications as well as cold and flu stuff, would recommend bringing multivitamins, vitamin-C, iron supplements

Nick: Got tourist VISAs, got healthcare through the university, for immunization Nick went to a travel clinic in his hometown, he received anti-diarrhea medication, Malaria drugs even though he wasn't in the Malaria zone, he could use it then if he traveled

Melanie- diet switch to a lot of carbs, starches, rich, potatoes,

“What was your experience with receiving the stipend check?”

Nick received his in two payments, first one halfway through. Came to India with 5,000 Rupees for spending cash while he was waiting to get his stipend. Nick exchanged it at his bank

Melanie brought US money and switched it out at the airport when she arrived, but she would not recommend that because the exchange rates were very bad. \$100 is plenty before you get your stipend.

“How did your experience go with traveling over over to India?”

Melanie said that it was hard to meet people before she went there, other than her professor and the one girl she was meeting at the airport.

Nick did not have any contacts in India before going, through the program he was able to arrange a ride with the institution to come meet him at the airport. Not having any contacts before you go to India is not the way to go though, you should have contact before you go there and you should know who you would go there with.

“What happened upon landing in India?”

Melanie's flight got in very early in the morning, but they have a plan to be picked up from the airport which was nice. Nick had someone waiting to pick him up, they were waiting at the airport. All scholars should have a contact at the university who will help you figure out who will take you to and from the institute

“What was it like living in India?”

Melanie lived on campus, able to walk to and from work. She had a TV, Telephone, small kitchen, but there were not any ovens.

Nick was staying in a hostel, it had a bed, bathroom, desk, with no internet, TV or refrigerator. It depends on your institution for what your room will look like. There should / will be someone to give you guidance about where you will be going and where your lab is. Nick had an orientation on his first day and met directly with his mentors after that.

“What were the labs like in India?”

Melanie: Major difference in facilities, labs are different in how they operate and the protocol. Major differences would be footwear. She was in a protein structure lab, she found it interesting that her roommate was in a lab where the lab shoes where flip flops were allowed, which is different than in US. Every lab most likely has different rules, so check with your mentor.

Nick: Needed to wear a lot intense coverings because he was in a lab testing HIV. Nick said the pace is different and it is different in the way the lab is set up, basically with who is in charge. Everyone answers to the PI, everyone talks to the mentor daily where in the US you don't talk to your PI that often.

“Did the electricity go out?”

Nick: All of the time, one every three hours at his institutions. Would not lose information though due to backup generators, but he wasn't used to it happening more frequently.

Melanie: Her lab had A/C, which isn't something always consistent.

“What makes the US Bose Program different than other programs?”

Melanie: It is cool because you get to pick the research that you want to do and find a mentor that you want to work with.

Nick: Handled HIV + blood from patients at the institute, not something that he thought he would've ever been able to do or thought he would be doing in a lab setting here or gain experience doing, he felt he could've been pushed a little bit more.

Melanie learned that this is what you make of it, if you don't ask for things, it wouldn't get done. If you want to take on responsibility, make it known and they will give you work.

“What was your lab environment like?”

Nick: His labmates were very helpful and nice and he did not work with his mentor/PI because he mainly worked with his graduate student.

Melanie: Her PI was head of the institute, therefore, she worked mainly with a postdoc who was very helpful.

Nick said the pace in the lab was different. Used to 9-5 with a lunch break in the US, but he realized that there was a lot more breaks at the lab in India, like tea breaks or going to seminars. He said he felt like he wasn't able to work at his own pace due to things like chai breaks every two or three hours. Nick mentioned how he had to learn all new lab procedures, and had to readjust what he have learned in his new lab. He advised being prepared to be able to adapt your style.

“What was your food situation like?”

Nick had cereal for breakfast w/o milk, ate at the Canteen on campus (was pretty cheap, like \$0.50 or 25 rupees), dinner he would usually have sandwiches and chips, he tried to go out to restaurants with people once a week.

Melanie had a food dining service where she could get all breakfast, lunch or dinner. She did grocery shopping for a good amount of food too so that she didn't completely convert to all Indian food. She said to be wary about where your food is coming from.

“What did transportation look like while in India?”

Used rickshaw mostly, Melanie said they are like a moped-taxi with a carriage in the back where you sit. Said they will try to rip you off, so you should know that you know the correct price before using one the first time so that they lower it. You will have to learn how to barter and haggle. Ask someone at the institute you're at how much the price should be.

“Explain how the communication looked while in India?”

Melanie used skype- there was not internet at the place she was living at, but she was able to skype in lab. 10.5 hours off of central standard time. Melanie's room had a phone, so she could make incoming calls but outgoing calls could not occur. There is a postal system, but receiving packages is hard actually do, so she suggested everyone try to bring all you need when you come the first time.

Nick used skype and email.

“What did you do for fun around India?”

They both said they traveled a lot. They tried to do something fun every weekend, like taking tours of the city, day trips to places like Mumbai and went trekking a few times. Melanie and Nick tried to travel together with US scholars, as well as Indian students who speak a language that was able to help them get around, they recommended traveling with locals for places like Mumbai or similar places where you have to travel by train. Plan trips with lab mates or people who know the area.

Transportation while in India is very cheap. They both flew to New Delhi, spent five days with that trip (2 days traveling, 3 days in the city) and mentioned that the lab can be open to letting you travel because they want you to see the country and all there is to see.

“Make My Trip.com” Melanie said that she found this very helpful for finding fun things to do.

“Did you get sick at all?”

Nick did not have use his health insurance. Melanie said to keep meds on close hands, make sure what you are eating is safe- meaning thoroughly washed.

“What were the frustrating parts?”

Nick said trying to meet up with other scholars because he did not have a cell phone, so communication was hard while trying to coordinate trips via email. Nick suggested for scholars to look into getting a phone while there.

“What were the best parts?”

Nick said for him it was the final day in his lab, when he was able to present his research in front of the board of directors, he said it was cool to have the board be able to see his progress and congratulate him.

Melanie liked the flexibility of her research best, she was able to change her direction of the project.