IT University Travel Report

Host University: Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Colombia

Study Programme at IT University: MSc in Computer Science

Activity: 10th International Conference in Computational Logistics, ICCL 2019

Period: September 30 – October 2, 2019

Motivation for attending the conference

Based on my bachelor thesis, my supervisor encouraged my fellow student and I to write a research paper and submit it to the International Conference in Computational Logistics. Fortunately, the paper was accepted by the programme committee for presentation at the conference and for inclusion into the special issue for the Lecture Notes in Computer Science. Our research deals with reducing CO_2 emissions from the train operation. In the paper we propose a decision support tool for energy-optimising railway timetables based on behavioural data.

Preparation for the conference

When the paper got accepted by the programme committee, comments from the reviewers and Springer had to be addressed for the paper to be published. Another requirement was that the paper had to be presented at the conference by one of the authors. Therefore, we had to prepare and practice a presentation. Key points from the paper was picked based on the audience mainly consisting of researchers. In addition to the presentation, I was selected to be chair of a conference session. I therefore had to prepare an introduction and relevant questions for each talk presenting during the session. It was also my job to manage the time and invite audience questions.

My time in Colombia

The conference was spread out on three days. Each day we were at the university from around 9 in the morning till 5 in the evening. At the conference we were listening to interesting talks. In the evenings we went out to experience new parts of Colombia's rich culture and Colombian cuisine. This

was a great opportunity to talk to researchers from all around the world and expand my network. The conversations and the talks during the conference gave me deep insight into what researchers are trying to solve and how they are trying to solve them. This combined with the valuable feedback I got from the researchers after our talk, will contribute to improve my research in the research project and master thesis. My time in Colombia gave me personally a unique experience of a country I would not have thought about visiting. Furthermore, I discovered how intriguing the research community is. Academically, I realised how my bachelor's in software development and master's in computer science can contribute to the research community.

Arranging the trip to Barranquilla, Colombia

The process involved in arranging the trip to Colombia was not that complicated. The people behind the conference recommended a hotel and gave several tips how to get around in Colombia. They also arranged some trips in Barranquilla.

Expenses and Financing

Be aware of what the main transportation method is in the country you are visiting. In Colombia it is mostly by car. Therefore, we had to put aside money for taking a taxi. Though, taking a taxi was cheap in Colombia. Travelling this far, we also wanted to experience some of the Colombian culture. We therefore also spent money on going to museums and food markets.

Recommendations for other students:

If you get the opportunity to write a research paper or just attend a conference, I will undoubtedly recommend you do it. It is a great experience and you learn a lot from listening to dedicated researchers, and it is a good opportunity to expand your network.