Candidates write about the anticipation and experiences of our annual International Business Consulting Trip in a series of blogs.

By Daniel Farmer, EMBA 2015

Europeans came to South America in the 16th century in the hopes of finding gold. The exploration was successful and ended with large amounts of the precious minerals that were brought back to the homeland. The expression that emerged following this great quest was to reference an abundance, or to imply a high value. This was worded as “That’s like Peru”.

Not so long after the negative inclination started to be used more commonly and the expression “C’est pas le Perou!” was founded. This was used to express a poor or unimpressive result. Now the interesting thing is that for 38 of us soon-to-be Executive MBA graduates plus guests, this expression will take on a whole different meaning and for us IT WILL BE PERU!

We will be arriving in Peru shortly and we will begin to appreciate the true meaning of this expression. We will close out this great adventure of our Executive MBA experience with a valuable amalgamation of knowledge and new relationships in addition to having the privilege of visiting a country that is referred to as place of great wealth. In our own way all seven teams are going to Peru as ‘Explorers’ in the hopes of finding our twentieth century version of gold. We might be going in with a more diplomatic approach than our ancestors but in the end we are all going to bring back some valuable experiences along with providing a strong report to our clients.

The feeling before boarding the plane is both one of accomplishment and one of adventure. We gather on this plane for one more adventure together, 38 of the top leaders from all around the Ottawa region, ready to graduate as a different group from when we first enrolled. We came together just 21 months ago as individuals representing the government, the private and the non-profit sectors, each of us bring a wealth of diversity and experience into the classroom. Today, as we bring our Executive MBA experience to a close, we reflect on our growth and our transformation into a single high-performing team.

Each of us have achieved a great accomplishment of balancing a full time job as an executive, a family life - with kids for a good portion of us - and a full-time Executive Master's degree all into the same 168 weeks as a most of our professional colleagues. We also thrive on adventure. The opportunity to bring our evolved skills into an international context will make this a lifelong experience that we will share with future generations. We look forward to Friday evening when we deliver our last report of our Program. Over half of the group has planned a well-deserved vacation and are extending experience in Peru to fully embrace the culture and challenge the ascension of Machu Picchu.

One once said “Life is like a box of chocolate, you never know what you are going to get”. We did buy the best box on the shelf by joining the Telfer Executive MBA program. The thing that no one could have expected is just how unique the taste of each of these individual chocolates would be. We now come out with a great appreciation of what we have accomplished, we also can relate to the alumni that spoke to us prior to our joining the program and had sat in our seats before us. We can only offer the experience we gathered from this program to the future cohorts but they will have to taste it themselves and embrace the wisdom of our Chocolatier Sophia Leong that made this program what it is today.