

WIL MAGAZINE

February 2023

HEC PARIS MBA WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CLUB MAGAZINE

LEARNING TO DARE: TODAY'S POWER WOMEN OF HEC PARIS



ALLYSHIP, CONVERSATIONS WITH OVERACHIEVING WOMEN OF J22 & S22,
SPOTLIGHT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROFESSOR YANJIE GU & MORE!

WIL MAGAZINE

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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

HEC Paris MBA

WIL is an official professional & social club within the HEC Paris MBA.

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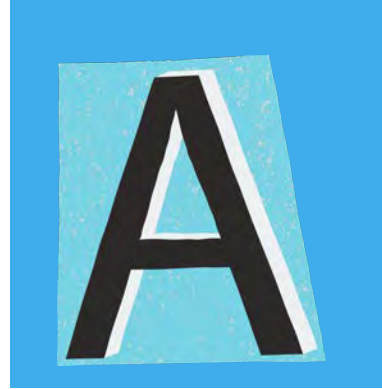
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EDITOR'S NOTE



We are excited to share the Winter Edition 2023 of the WIL magazine. With this, we also pass on the leadership to the S22 team. We want to congratulate and wish them all the very best!

Dear Readers,

In this edition, we wanted to reflect on the experiences of some of the most inspiring people we have met and interacted with during this MBA. Our mission is to recognise and celebrate the risks they have taken, their journey and highlight their achievements.

Further, in this edition, we feature some of the efforts made by the WIL Club to continue making HEC Paris a more inclusive and diverse environment. Through the events held in 2022, we focused on supporting our fellow women in their journey of finding internships, full-time job opportunities, re-locations and above all a balance in our day-to-day lives.

We hope that the stories shared will help - us especially at HEC Paris - to transcend age, race, and gender and help each one of us face unique adversities, experiences, by the common wisdom we have all gathered.

As we say our goodbye as the leadership team, we look forward to the new WIL chapter and the many joys we know it will bring!



Aparna Raturi
Editor-in-Chief

THE MEANING OF ALLYSHIP

NICK'S JOURNEY TO SUPPORTING GENDER
EQUALITY

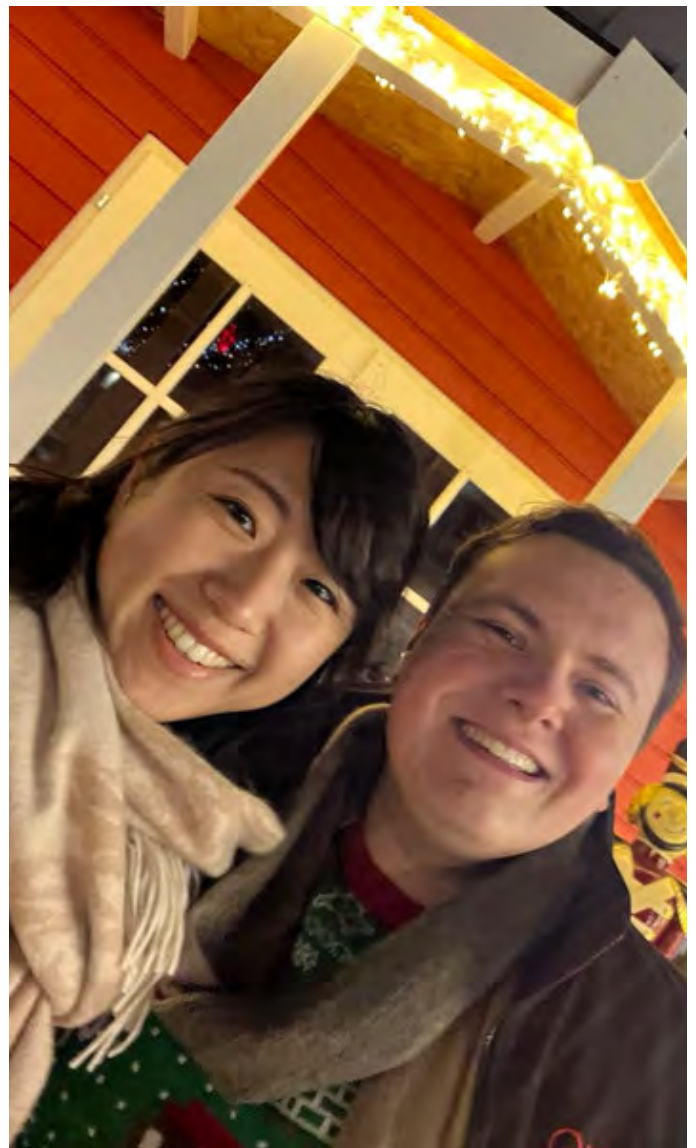
BY NICHOLAS TAYLOR



NICHOLAS TAYLOR (S22) is a guest editor for this edition of the WIL MAGAZINE. He is part of the MBA class of 2024.

I wasn't always a feminist. Despite having many positive influences, it took me years to realize my unconscious biases, and far too long to start advocating and become truly supportive of women.

I was very privileged to grow up in a household of strong women. My mom has been a role model for me all my life, both in her brilliance and her deep caring. Although we didn't always get along, my older sister still was a big inspiration growing up. However, despite their influence on me, I didn't really appreciate their struggles as women until I was much older, and I was certainly not supportive of women.





"I was very privileged to grow up in a household of strong women."

Growing up in the US, I was constantly surrounded by gender stereotypes. Whether it was in a cartoon or a school storybook, it was consistently implied that men were stronger and better leaders than women, and that women were emotional and better as domestic support. Teachers would pick boys to be leaders, and girls to be helpers, and showing emotional vulnerability was a "girly" weakness to be avoided. While outright discrimination was condemned, seeing these images and behaviors so regularly, normalized them, and as a result, I internalized some of this subtle misogyny.

It wasn't until I was in undergrad that I began to understand my privilege as a man. Unlike the girls in my friend group, I could walk safely at night, I was prioritized for leadership roles, and I was taken more seriously by professors. There was even a moment where I repeated word-for-word the same answer as a girl in the class, so we could see what would happen. While her answer was dismissed as incorrect, I was genuinely praised by the instructor for my insight. These differences were becoming all too apparent, and I felt like I had to become better.

At first, my "allyship" was about not being a bad guy. I became more conscious of what I said, and I tried to become more of an active listener. However, the more I questioned myself, the more I realized I needed to improve. The trouble with unconscious bias is that it is, well, unconscious, so it took time and a lot of self-reflection to understand and unlearn some of these behaviors. More importantly, it took a lot of practice! You don't always realize some of your habits like interrupting people or unconsciously favoring other men like you. I also made a lot of mistakes throughout this process, and while that can be discouraging, eventually I became a lot better at taking the feedback and improving.





By the time I started my career, I felt like I had put in the work and was now supporting women. I was mindful of my unconscious biases, and I was receptive to feedback on where I could improve. While there were systemic issues, I thought that I could make an impact by role modeling inclusion. However, as time went on with little impact, I began to realize that this was the bare minimum.

Around me, I was still seeing these same systemic issues that I used to participate in. It was normalized to only have one or two women in a large project or meeting, and they were often ignored. Meanwhile, these women being dismissed were some of the smartest within the company and who could probably contribute the most insight. Their career advancement was also similarly ignored and neglected.

Personally, it hurt as these women were, and still are, some of my role models and mentors. However, it was also professionally demotivating to see the business continue to hurt itself by not taking advantage of these talents. Eventually, one time when a close friend was venting about how men in her company don't speak up or advocate for women, it finally dawned on me that I wasn't doing nearly enough.

At first, I tried making some subtle changes as I wasn't very confident in my ability to directly improve the situation. I started by messaging some of the women who were quiet or couldn't get a word in during meetings. As they wanted, I would intervene to give them a chance to speak, and usually that would help integrate them into the discussion.





As I got more comfortable, I began to gently remind leadership to include certain key women in work calls and provide feedback on inclusivity, and I would try to advocate for the inclusion of the high-potential younger women in highly visible projects. Not everything worked well, and I am still learning how to better support inclusion and equality.

Since arriving at HEC, this has become even more important to me. The women in our program are so exceptionally talented and kind, and it is so inspiring to see all the good they bring to world despite the systemic challenges. I have no doubts they will continue to create amazing things. Being surrounded by such amazing people makes me want to be a better ally.

Reflecting over my journey, I have really learned how important it is to listen and to be open to feedback. As an ally, you are constantly learning and are likely to make mistakes, and you need this feedback to improve, and not all the feedback will be direct. Nobody is perfect, so it is important not to get disheartened and to instead learn to be better.

I have also learned and am still learning how to use my voice and my privilege. It takes practice, but it gets easier, and I can help others improve as well. While I still have a lot more to improve and become better at supporting women and overall equality, I am optimistic that we as men can take more accountability to achieve gender equity.

NICHOLAS IS A VALUE DRIVEN LEADER WITH STRONG PROFICIENCY IN FACILITATION, LEADING CO-CREATION, AND PURPOSE & TEAM BUILDING.

HE IS A PASSIONATE ALLY AND OFTEN WISHES HE COULD DO MORE TO HAVE MORE WOMEN HAVE LEADERSHIP ROLES.





MEET ROSHNI MOHANDAS

MBA S22

A MOTHER, A SUPERWOMAN & AN MBA STUDENT

BY KATIA JIMENEZ



When it comes to an MBA's student life, most of the time we struggle deciding in which social and academic activities we should participate in. It's common that at first we feel overwhelmed by mixers, parties, and of course, quizzes and homework.

While there is no method for knowing how much of our time we should spend in each group of activities, usually the objectives we have (self-exploration, international experience, job, summer internship, etc.) define how we distribute our time and prioritize.

However, managing the workload with parenthood can be even more challenging. Would balancing social and academic life still be our main concern? Would our priorities change? How can one reach a perfect balance between parenthood, studies, and life? And overall, what support systems would we need during the MBA journey?

To answer some of these questions, we interviewed **Roshni Mohandas, mother of a beautiful daughter, an entrepreneur, an HEC S22 MBA Candidate and the VP of Impact Project for the 2023 MBA Council.**

Roshni, what were your thoughts about combining motherhood with an MBA before coming to HEC Paris?

For me, managing my professional and personal life is an on-going balancing act. I was fortunate to have my mother as a role model. Along with raising two kids she not only pursued her career, but also passionately pursued her academic goals.

My husband is also extremely supportive of my professional ambitions; while the decision to do an MBA was hard, it was the support system at home that gave me the confidence to take the final call.

Do you still think the same? If your opinion has changed, what were the reasons for that?

Absolutely. I strongly believe that if one is not satisfied professionally, it does impact your personal life and vice versa.

This belief has been reinforced after interacting with multiple women leaders at various HEC events and forums.

Plus being a parent teaches you a lot about managing priorities and patience in abundance.

How do you balance your role as a mother and the role of an MBA student?

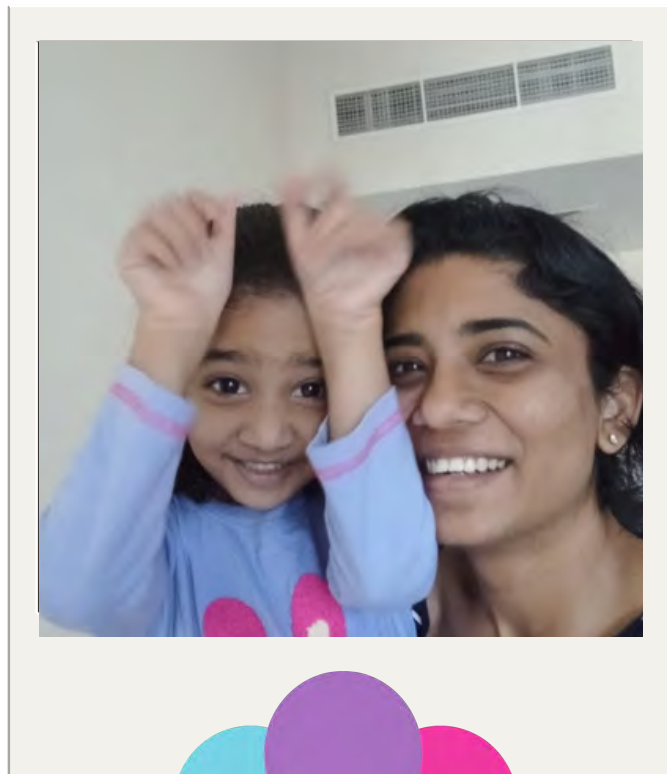
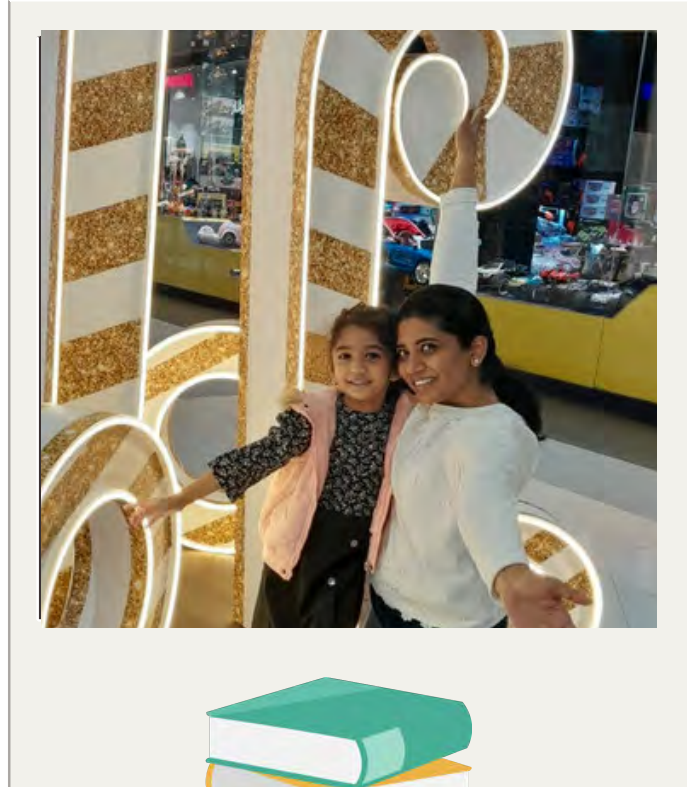
The reality is that there is not going to be any perfect balance between the roles for the next 12 months. To make sure that I do stay emotionally connected with my daughter over this time, I have developed some routines like speaking to her at fixed times during the day, being updated with her kindergarten events and virtually attending parent-teacher meetings.

None of this makes up for not being present in a child's life, but I do hope that technology and a wonderful support system of friends and family will carry me through the rest of the MBA program.



What is/are the most difficult challenge(s) that you had to have a student-life balance during this first term in the MBA?

Our family is based out of Dubai, and I live on campus. My husband travels extensively for work, and makes sure he is home on weekends, but there was a time when that was not possible. I was in the middle of the term and couldn't fly back either. It was a new situation for all of us. Thankfully, our wonderful friends pitched in and made sure Isha (my daughter) had a good weekend.



What are your expectations for this (work-life balance) for next Term since we will have a more classes and probably less free time?

With less time and more things to manage in terms of courses and internship application... I do realize that it is going to be tricky. So, this term I hope, my family can visit me more often.



POWER WOMEN OF THE MBAT 2022

MANAGING THE LARGEST MBA GATHERING

BY KARLA PONS



**Ana Karen MARTINEZ, J22
Chief Operating Officer**

What did the MBAT mean to you in terms of “leadership”?

MBAT is a critical event that requires the work of many people to ensure a great experience for all participants. Therefore, for me there was a leadership opportunity with every single member of the MBAT core team - no matter what role they had. We acted as good critique partners for each other. This allowed us to see mistakes, identify gaps, take ownership and find solutions to improve our work.

What was the most challenging part of your role, and how did you overcome it?

I was in a very particular situation; I had been selected to be the COO of the team a few months after the original core team (S21s) was formed, as this position had been saved for J22s. This essentially meant that I had to be the right hand of the CEO. I had to make sure that the VPs were doing their respective roles. A key part of my job was making sure there were no clashes among them and no misalignment within the different departments.



Two of the main challenges I had were:

1) Adapting: Integrating to the team that was already working towards a clear objective was not easy. On top of that, I also had to deal with the different situations that came in throughout the process and come up with best possible solutions.

2) Communication: the MBAT delegation was big, and we had to make sure that decisions were communicated clearly.



Do you consider the MBAT team reflected gender parity values and respect for women’s ideas (active listening and implementation)?

The dynamics of the MBAT core team made no distinction on gender. All voices were heard, and all opinions were respected. Nonetheless, I do feel that there’s more work to be done in terms of parity as I was the only woman in the top position.

Having said that, I won’t say that gender was something that affected my performance.



If you could give any advice to the new MBAT team (what you wish someone would have told you before starting the journey), which one would it be?

I would advise the new batch to take this event as a good challenge. It will take tremendous amount of time and effort so be prepared to say “no” to other exciting events or social gatherings.

There will be moments of tension and fatigue in which you will have disagreements between other core team members. Nevertheless, it will be one of the greatest experiences of your MBA journey. You’ll come out equipped with learnings and unparalleled satisfaction, forming meaningful friendships along the way.

What is one funny, happy, and sad experience about the MBAT? (Take this question as seriously or hilarious as you want!)

One of the happiest and most satisfying moments was the first day of the MBAT during the opening ceremony, I saw our hard work materialise in that instant.

The place was packed with more than 1200 participants from 13 top business schools from across Europe all gathered to finally be part of this event. Our team had relaunched and organised this gathering after 2 years of absence due to the COVID pandemic.

The event was full of emotions and excitement. Participants were hyped-up, encouraging and cheering for their teams, celebrating together the official beginning of the MBAT!





Marion KHEIRALLAH, J22
VP of Sports

What did the MBAT event mean to you regarding “leadership”?

MBAT is the largest student-led MBA tournament in Europe and gathering more than 1200 participants for 3 days of activities. It was a life-changing experience that taught me to always manage expectations.

After months of planning, managing to run 25 sports events simultaneously on and off campus was a successful challenge for me and the 3 other members of the sports team - each one of us coming from a different part of the world, spanning from Latin America to India.

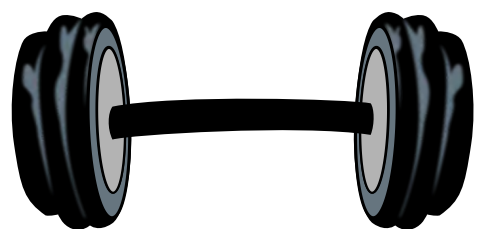
Indeed, prior to the event, I had to coordinate with the administration, the sports department, external referees, equipment providers, secure facilities for off-campus sports, prepare the schedule and ensure I thought of every single need or problem that could arise.

During this decisive weekend, I had to make sure that all events started on time, participants showed up, volunteers were on duty and that scores were well recorded. I became better at project management, problem-solving and working under pressure.

What was the most challenging part of your role, and how you overcame it?

The most challenging part was to be ready to react to any emergency during the 3 days, running back and forth to solve problems (participants not showing up, schedule changes, missing equipment, coordination with volunteers, tracking down scores) while moving around the 340-acre campus. In my team, the workload was split for efficiency and each member was responsible for specific tasks.

At times, I felt overwhelmed by the issues coming up and I made sure to tackle each one of it at a time, while trying to delegate some easier missions to volunteers.



Do you consider the MBAT team reflected gender parity values and respect for women's ideas (active listening and implementation)?

Yes. As the only woman in the sports team, I was lucky to plan the MBAT alongside respectful team members who were open to feedback, willing to cooperate and share their insights while taking part in this collaborative adventure.

What is one funny, happy, and sad experience about the MBAT? (Take this question as seriously or hilarious as you want!)

Funny: Being operational at 6AM, I was then so tired and worried that things would go wrong that I particularly enjoyed the parties, even more in these conditions. These were the best parties in the MBA for me!

Happy: Hearing that students from other schools are having a great time, and that even some MBAT participants met their current partners during the event.

Sad: I was so busy running around that I didn't get to watch my friends competing!



If you could give any advice to the new MBAT team (the one you wish someone else would have told you before beginning the journey), which one would it be?

Make sure to not overload yourself on the 3 days of the MBAT, to cheer for your schoolmates and to have a chat with participants from other schools.



PROFESSOR YANGJIE GU PITCHES HER BRAND OF SUCCESS

BY NASHEED JAMAL



Professor Yangjie Gu is the Research Chair of L'Oréal, Beauty tech. In addition to being an Associate Professor of Marketing at HEC Paris, she is a wife and the mother of two young boys. I recently sat down with Professor Gu to discuss her academic career and her advice for MBA students. Our conversation has been abridged for space and clarity.

First, congratulations on being selected as one the Poets & Quants 40-Under-40 Best MBA Professors for 2022! What do you enjoy about teaching?

Thank you! it was such an honor to receive this award, I would like to thank the student community for the nomination! Regarding what I like about teaching: first of all, it's...sharing knowledge.

SPOTLIGHT ON

As part of my responsibility, I select all information that I think is important, organise it, and then transmit to those who are in need – I find this process very stimulating. Sometimes, it's not only a one-way transmission. It's a two-way exchange that I find very rewarding. The challenge is that the students' needs constantly evolve, and I must somehow accommodate to the changes to improve this learning process. That is also very rewarding.

Also, I get to know people from different backgrounds, like you. It is eye-opening to meet people from various industries and backgrounds and I find this fascinating. Especially, given that it takes place here in France, since we are a very homogenous population if you think about it – nearly everyone on the streets speaks French only.

The teaching opportunities that allows me not only to see you, "*the learners*" – as I would not call you students – and "*the practitioners*", for example guest lecturers. I have the opportunity to get to talk to them as well as well as exchange ideas.

What I like about teaching is - 'it's sharing knowledge'



You teach both MBA and PhD students. How does your approach differ for these two groups of graduate students?

It's very different. For MBAs, we focus more on application and business cases. My goal is to help them understand the logic of technical information but the focus is on how they apply this knowledge to real-world cases. For example, I am teaching a marketing research course where I focus more on how I can use this tool to solve some important and relevant business problems, and communicate the business recommendations in a plain English (instead of rather technical) to managers.

The PhD level needs a totally different skillset. It's more focused on how we can do something to advance our knowledge in the field to help each other.

SPOTLIGHT ON

It's a totally different way of thinking. For PhDs, we build on each other's and previous scholars' research to find gaps and how existing research can be improved to understand the field comprehensively. Because of this, we need a lot of technical and theoretical support, so I can encourage my PhD students to think more about theoretical contributions.

MBA level is more about downstream, whereas PhD is more focused on the upper stream – it's a different part of the supply chain.

You are the only female professor who teaches a core course during Term 1 for the S22 MBA students. How has the landscape in academia evolved with respect to women since you started your PhD at the London Business School?

I'm very fortunate to be in academia because if you talk about evaluation systems, what do you evaluate? As academics, you evaluate your research output, that in our case is publications. And, if you think of most of the top tier journals, the review process is a blind review process. Therefore as long as you are able to produce good quality research, you are fine. So, in that regard, I feel like I'm very lucky and I feel there is a lesser bias against female faculty, if any.

At HEC Paris, we also care about gender balance, and give many opportunities to female faculty. It is true that I'm the only female in your Term 1.

One explanation could be that it is a selection bias. But if you see Marketing, females tend to teach in Marketing. We women love to take the challenge to teach in core Marketing in the MBA program. For example, another core marketing teacher, Anne-Sophie Chaxel, will teach in the January intake – she is also a woman, so maybe depends on the subject and availability of staffing as well.

For your core course, you integrate guest speakers from the HEC alum community. What tips do you have for HEC MBA students aiming to expand their professional networks?

Alumni network is so important, it allows you to see more people. I think that is the starting point. I also think we offer a lot of career events. It is becoming even more encouraging because now placement is much better than before, and our group is growing which allows more big companies to come and pitch their jobs.

Another thing, when you talk to recruiters, you need to get prepared before talking to them; do a lot of homework learning about these companies.



SPOTLIGHT ON

Recruiters, are human beings as well, and when they interact, they look for key words that will fit their needs. So, it proves advantageous if you can pick the right keywords by talking to them. Be ready to identify your strengths and differentiators based on your past experiences and fit them into these keywords.

*"Whats your next step?-[Laughs]
Being a successful teacher.
I hope that I become more
inspiring!"*

What do you foresee as the next step in your career? What do you hope to accomplish?

[Laughs] It's hard to say. Being a successful teacher. Teaching a topic that is interesting, trendy, and important. I hope that I can become more inspiring. Inspire more audiences like you, I think that's super rewarding. If you see LinkedIn, I'll give you an example. Seven years ago, when I started, we saw the LinkedIn title (for HEC students), and last year I revisited the title. Wow! Some of them evolved a lot and it's so rewarding. In the future, if I stay at HEC for maybe 10, or 15 years, I can invite them back to give guest lectures. So, when you have this level, it's so rewarding.

I think that is my future – doing something important, not only teaching but also researching, being worthy, and being able to deliver necessary knowledge and information.

What advice do you have for non-French HEC MBA students hoping to work in France upon graduation?

My advice if geography is your priority, is that you need to be convinced why France is the place that you want to stay. Because you want to avoid ending up in a situation where you're disappointed in your location, it will spill over to your job or vice versa. So, if you say that a job, certain sector, or title is your priority, you need to convince yourself. Would you compromise on a location that you are not passionate about?

When you are looking for a job, think about what your priority is. What's your strength? Think about the decision tree. Where do you want to put the most significant weight on? I did a conjoint analysis in my market research class – it's about the job, it's about the promotion opportunity, it's about the location, it's about salary, it's about self-worth.





Maybe you are working in a sector that is not very well paid, but you feel like you are important. You will like using your skillset and that you think people will value you. In the end, it comes down to what would make you happy. For me, I truly believe happiness is the goal that guides our decisions.

If you are only driven by transactional factors, only talking about title, salary, or being a good soldier and doing something that you are not passionate about, you will not be happy.

Try to see what will make you happy. I know we're in a group where everybody is an overachiever. By the end of your life, what is important? What will make you happy? And you do backward decision-making.

So, what makes you happy is the most important. What's your priority? What are you passionate about? What are you're good at? When you're good at it, you're passionate about it. But that doesn't mean you should not step out of your comfort zone. Try to challenge yourself in small ways every day, embrace risk and make changes in your life that can lead to real personal growth.

"our group is growing, which allows more big companies to come and pitch the jobs."

WIL WALL OF MEMORIES



01

LADIE'S NIGHT IN - ONE OF THE MOST FUN DATE NIGHTS WE HAD! A KARAOKE NIGHT WHERE CELEBRATED & SANG LOUD AND CLEAR.



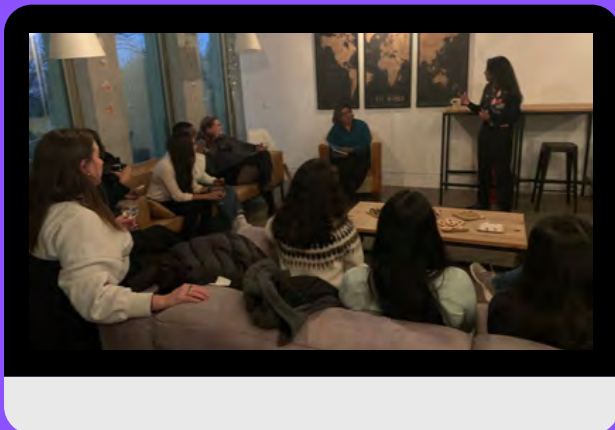
02

SEEING OURSELVES AS LEADERS, A ROUNDTABLE HOSTED AT LE CHATEAU WHERE WE MET FEMALE STALWARTS WHO ARE ALREADY CHALLENGING THE WORLD. THEY SHARED WITH US THEIR LIFE STORIES, THEIR HOPES AND DREAMS.



03

FIRESIDE CHAT WITH PROF. SHAHEENA JANJUHA-JIVRAJ WHERE SHE SHARED HER EXPERIENCE AS AN ENTREPRENEUR AND INSPIRED US TO LEVERAGE OUR ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET TO ADDRESS COMPLEX CHALLENGES.



WIL WALL OF MEMORIES



04

PANEL DISCUSSION AROUND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT THE J.P. MORGAN OFFICES IN PLACE VÉNDOME. A SELECTION OF STUDENTS FROM THE MASTERS IN MANAGEMENT, MASTERS IN FINANCE, MBAS AND EXECUTIVE MBAS FROM HEC PARIS WERE PRESENT AT THE EVENT ORGANISED AND MODERATED BY ANNA SAFARYAN – VICE PRESIDENT WITHIN J.P. MORGAN CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK AND HEC PARIS EXECUTIVE MBA CANDIDATE.

05

VISIT TO THE L.E.K. CONSULTING PARIS OFFICE WHERE PARTICIPANTS ENJOYED AN AFTERNOON OF INSPIRATIONAL WORKSHOPS, DISCUSSIONS WITH WOMEN LEADERS AND NETWORKING. CASE CRAKING, WIL STYLE!



06

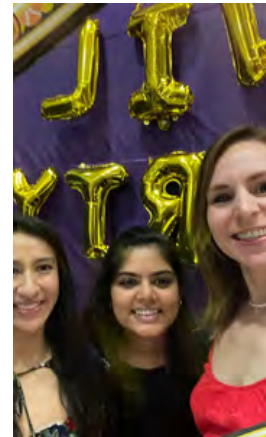
WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT GUSTAVE! THESE NIGHTS WERE SPECIAL! MOST OF US GATHERED TO SHARE NOT JUST OUR ACHIEVEMENTS BUT OURS STRUGGLES AND OUR FEARS!

HAVE SOME IDEAS? SEND THEM OUR WAY HERE.



PRESIDENT'S FAREWELL MESSAGE

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the J22 WIL team for the energy, dedication and work that went into putting together over 10+ events throughout our term. From D&I to industry-specific initiatives, we worked alongside different clubs across the MBA & corporate partners to successfully highlight the importance of making the academic & business world more inclusive.



Further, the WIL magazine was put together by the team alongside guest contributors and interviewees. Editing, proofreading, double checking every single comma has been a collective effort for which the whole team deserves a shoutout.

In addition, I would like to give a special thanks to the One HEC J22 Council for their support - it would have been impossible to do any of this without you!

I wish the upcoming leadership team the best for their upcoming term and look forward to continuing to see them advancing the mission of the WIL Club.

BY ANA ARIAS NAVA

