Without the Chui’s Excellence Scheme, I would have hesitated given the cost to travel to Europe, even before taking into account other necessary expenses. The financial assistance made a difference and I am sure I speak for all participants from HKU this year it made it easier for us to focus on performing well in the competition itself. I would like to express my gratitude for the gratuitous contributions from the Chui’s Excellence Scheme, without which my participation in WUDC was nearly impossible.

I served as an institutional adjudicator for HKU, and adjudicated on numerous rounds of high quality debate. The highlight was no doubt watching prestigious debate institutions such as Cambridge, Harvard and Oxford in action when I adjudicated their round in round 8. I learnt a lot from how they conducted themselves both in and out the debate. It was very interesting to hear their views on start-ups, and it is often in debates like these you learn of possibilities of the world. Indeed it is in environments like these you learn to appreciate diversity and understand each other’s point of view even if you disagree with them.

I also picked up a lot from conversing with my fellow adjudicators, coming from Canada, Australia and even Mexico, which will host WUDC in 2018. Indeed one of the adjudicators I conversed with was the next convenor of WUDC, from Mexico. No doubt there was a difference in culture between even how we perceive debates, but discussions were amiable and constructive, and it is very interesting to see how other university students understand debating as a competition.

Apart from the rigours of debate, I also appreciated the chance to visit various places in and around the Hague, which is where the tournament was held. I did not appreciate the coldness of the weather as much, but the views, the culture and the food was much worth my time. I spent time with locals talking about all sorts of issues and found we had a lot more in common than not.

As a junior I was always told you would only improve with match experience, and indeed this was true during the tournament. Nothing like participating in the most prestigious debating tournament in the world would improve you more in terms of how quickly one has to dismantle the debate, review what the debaters have said, and then give a fair adjudication. The next logical step is to give back to the team which trained me up, and this is what I intend to do. I plan to share experience with my juniors, of how top debaters and adjudicators conduct themselves, of how debate cases should be built after adjudicating some of the very best debaters in the world.

Speaking as a penultimate year student, I know my time as a university student and debater is limited. I am very glad I took the plunge in participating in this year’s WUDC, and it does serve a fitting end to my career as a debater. With succession in mind, I will hopefully be able to contribute in training the next generation’s debaters and let them shine in the WUDCs to come, representing HKU and finally winning the competition for us in the near future.

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