![A green tag with white text

Description automatically generated]()

**Role Play**

**The Scholarship Negotiation:**

Role of Committee Head

06/2024-6916

This role play was written by Pallavi Punvani, Nicole Adarme, Adnane Benitto, Marc Hochar, Jakub Kaplan, and Howard Zhang, INSEAD MBA Alumni, under the supervision of Martin Schweinsberg, Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour at ESMT Berlin, Horacio Falcão, Professor of Management Practice of Decision Sciences at INSEAD, and Eric Uhlmann, Professor of Organisational Behaviour at INSEAD. It is intended to be used as a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation.

The authors gratefully acknowledge funding from the Hoffmann Institute.

To access INSEAD teaching materials, go to <https://publishing.insead.edu/>.

Copyright © 2024 INSEAD

Copies may not be made without permission. No part of this publication may be copied, stored, transmitted, translated, reproduced or distributed in any form or medium whatsoever without the permission of the copyright owner.

Instructions

1. Carefully read your role instructions on the next page.
2. When ready, the student with the role of the prospective MBA candidate should email the student with the role of the head of the scholarship committee and begin negotiating. *You must conduct your negotiation with your partner entirely over email*.
3. When you have reached an agreement (i.e. negotiated a final scholarship amount), the prospective MBA candidate should forward the entire email exchange to the course instructor, copying the head of the scholarship committee.

IMPORTANT: Please remember to attach the completed Outcome form to your email or copy/paste its information at the very top of your email message to help us prepare for the in-class debriefing of the exercise:

In case of questions please contact your course instructor.

Good luck!

Confidential Information for Montaha Faddoul

You are Montaha Faddoul, Head of the Scholarship Committee of Vandelans, a top tier business school with campuses in Singapore and France. Vandelans is highly sought-after by prospective students for its multi-campus format, unparalleled diversity, academic leadership, and strong global alumni network. This last year Vandelans was ranked the world’s number one global MBA program by the Financial Times, and the number of applications has risen dramatically. For the last 10 years, you have prided yourself and your team for the selection of the best and most deserving candidates to receive the school’s limited number of scholarships. Today your associate director passed you a special case concerning a scholarship decision for Ria Mehta, a female Indian national who was recently admitted during the last round of applications.

Ria Mehta graduated with distinction from a university in New York with an impressive 3.99/4.00 GPA and has 6 years of professional experience working in finance at Black Hills, a top tier investment bank in New York. She however received 650 on the GMAT, a below average score by the standards of an elite business school (average test scores for your MBA students are typically close to 700). Vandelans took particular notice of her ambitions in social entrepreneurship in South Asia. She expressed interest in creating her own education technology company, which would address the problem of the lack of education material in local languages through the use of automated authoring processes that she pioneered with a team in India. This is exactly the kind of leadership and innovation that Vandelans looks for in its students.

Ria Mehta originally applied for a need-based scholarship and was denied by your team. Since receiving her rejection notice, she has requested the committee to reconsider her scholarship application. It was at this point that her case was forwarded to you. Overall, you are impressed with her profile and her persistence. She is scheduled to begin her MBA in September, and requires an immediate decision on her scholarship application. She has not yet paid the deposit amount to secure her position in Vandelans’ MBA program and is not obligated to attend. You do not know whether she has been admitted to other business schools or what financial support she may have received there.

In terms of Vandelans’ student demographics, there are certain considerations that influence your outlook. First, the candidate is female. Her admission to Vandelans will help the gender balance in her cohort, which currently stands at 70% in favor of men. The gender balance is important for its implications on the viewpoints shared in the classroom and for its impact on how the MBA program is ranked. In recent years, the school has had an increasing number of female students, and your team, together with the admissions committee, has been working to continue this trend. The second consideration is nationality. Vandelans is known for having the most diverse student demographic in the world. This is one of its most attractive features as one classroom can offer perspectives from as many as 95 different cultural backgrounds. The scholarship team is therefore eager to extend offers to candidates coming from countries that are absent or underrepresented at the school. The countries with the largest representation are India, China, America, Canada, and Lebanon. This effectively disqualifies Mehta from diversity scholarships based on nationality. With these considerations in mind, you are deciding whether to offer her a women’s scholarship. On average, these are worth €20,000, but can range from a mere €2,000 to a full scholarship value of €75,000. Thus, you have the authority to make an offer that falls within this range.

Given her profile, you do not want to lose this candidate to another business school. Any agreement up to and including a full scholarship is preferable to losing this candidate. Since Vandelans has limited funds dedicated to scholarships however, the more reasonable the offer to secure her participation in the program, the better. A low scholarship value commitment for Mehta will allow Vandelans to also offer scholarships to other students who show similar promise.

The negotiation is over the scholarship amount only. Ria Mehta’s admission to Vandelans is not in question, and as head of the scholarship committee you only have authority over scholarship funds. Remember: If you do not reach an agreement in the negotiation, you could potentially lose a worthy candidate for Vandelans’s MBA program. You will now negotiate with Ria Mehta over email, as you are located in Singapore while she is based in India. She will initiate the email conversation. Please reflect on the value of the scholarship offer you plan to extend.