

REPORT AL RIENTRO DELL'ESPERIENZA DI SCAMBIO - A.A.
2014/2015

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Testo

I feel glad to write this short report about my second semester 2014/2015, which I spent in National University of Singapore, Singapore as an Exchange student.

Before to start talking about my whole experience I would like to explain the reason why I have started thinking to study abroad. When I decided to apply my candidature, I didn't have in mind the right place where to go. Everything started when I met some of my classmates, belonging to different countries in the world, who were attending the same master of mine. Those students, who after a while became my friends, had already been on exchange and the experience they had and shared with me totally fascinated me and I started to think seriously about going abroad.

Encouraged by the opportunity to take part in an such great adventure which involves new foreign students and intrigued by the hope on the possibility to go live in the opposite side of the world I looked through the list of universities my home university cooperated with. Obviously these motivations do not answer the question, wich I heard so many times that I can not even count it, why I have decided to choose Singapore. There could have been a lot of obvious reasons. I have acknowledged the institution for a long period of time, for its international renown and competence in the design field, also the fact that it would definitely improve my English because it is the first language of the country and moreover my awareness about the level of dedication, perseverance and seriousness required.

But actually, nevertheless, It was a gut feeling first of all that have driven me. Since I just entered the university world an anecdote made an impression on me. I remember I have known of a friend of mine who has taken part to the World Architecture Festival of Singapore. At his return he told me of being in the city he defines as the best one he have ever seen, a perfect merge of traditional aspects with the pulsing metropolis energy: this is the particular story that over the year had gently nudged me, I have always wanted to be part of it.

PREPARATION

This phase starts from the moment when the international office in my home university told me what to do and how and when do my paper work. I tried to get more informations from the students who had already been on their exchange and asked them about future things I needed to handle. Thanks to the combination of the support that my classmates gave to me and the competence of the Exchange Office all my questions were well covered. After I were provided with the list of requirements I had enough time to manage the required documents to complete the application package. I was just worried about the level of my English, because even if the master course in Product Service System that I am still attending is teaching entirely in English I was aware that there will be such a big different to live alone in a country where nobody would be able to understand my own language. So I started to force me to speak in English everytime I had the opportunity to improve my skills for daily use and to avoid the language shock.

Once the approval was received from the NUS, my colleague Shi Ting Zhang and I were required to fill in different forms providing a lot of personal data in order to be ready to leave our country and arrive in Singapore with all the documents needed. The whole system was well organized, but I have to admit that when you have to face with such a strong bureaucracy as the singaporian one, some inconvenience may happens. Despite all the small uncertainties, everyone was willing to help, providing clear answers and addressing me in on things to do. For this reason I would like to thank every person involved in the process that welcomed me with open arms.

ACCOMODATION

The accommodation part was very well managed by the host university. We were given option of staying in the dormitory as well as offered help in finding a private accommodation. Another option is to come to Singapore without having any flat or room and search then there for a room. By this way it is better if you know other exchange people, which are also still looking for some place and share with them the apartment and split the high cost of the house.

As others students have done, I chose to take the accomodation in dormitory because its environment was an unique experience in itself as there were people from so many different cultures and countries living all together in one building.

Before the semester starts, you have to select a district among many in which go to live and personally I chose Prince George Park. - ith hindsight I would like to stay in Utown, a totally new area inside the campus, because it is nicer, closer to the design district and it offers better services ranging from recreational activities to practical things like a convenience store opened 24/7.

However I spent four months in PGP and I do not regret my decision. In fact, even if it is far away, and it is equipped with fewer services, thanks to the internal system of transportation (which includes three bus lines), you can reach any area of the campus in a short time and after a few weeks you are able to organize yourself and figure out how to handle it.

There are only single rooms in the dormitory but you can choose if stay in an apartment with a small living room, one bathroom and one toilet, or you can stay in the corridor and share with all other people on the same floor the bathroom and the toilet that are cleaned every morning.

The rooms were cleaned and provided with all basic necessities i.e. furniture, internet and curtains etc. Anyway the dormitory administration was very cooperative and was always there to help for any needs.

The kitchen was shared by the whole floor and it was big enough to accommodate all of us, but even though it was a place where one could always find nice people to talk to and to learn new traditional dishes from, I really suggest to eat in food courts provided by the campus that offer you a really good and cheap meal for lunch and dinner, so you do not have the grocery and storage issues.

One other advantage of the dormitory was that local students were aware about my condition and they made every effort to put me at my ease.

ACADEMICS AND LEISURE TIME

As mentioned, before to arrive in Singapore even though I had great expectations when I saw it with my own eyes it amazed me. I am not surprised at all that nowadays the National University of Singapore is placed first in the Asian universities ranking. It is new and modern school, well resourced with technical equipment and cutting-edge facilities. The big classes like the auditorium are very nice and comfortable, but also the other lecture rooms are comfortable.

There are very interesting communal areas and 24/7 opened places where to study and enjoy your time without any problems, it is less complicated than in my university.

I liked very much that there is a free gym, swimming pools, tennis courts. Sports activities are the most disparate and I often used them. From rugby to basketball you can sign up for tournaments, being part of a team or just have fun playing frisbee in the large lawn in the heart of Utown and all over the campus.

The NUS is separated in different faculties. There were lots of very well structured courses offered which I could have register for. I tried to chose the same courses I would have in the second semester in my home university, to cover the program for that period and fortunately I was able to develop a service design project. In mostly every course it is obligatory to be present and you are allowed to miss the lessons only three times, but most of all being in class along with so many international people from different countries of the world, having discussions, presentations and listening different perceptive and ways of thinking was an experience worth.

MY OPINION AND CONCLUSION

I will conclude by stating that this was undoubtedly a unique and life changing experience for me. Every moment was full of learning and fun, immersed in one of the most beautiful culture on Earth. Actually I am really sad that it already ends. It was such a great experience, I met so many people and had such a great time with them and to be here that I can only recommend everyone to take that step. Singapore by itself is amazing, from the Supertree Grove with its atmosphere, Marina Bay Sands and its incredible view and the Sentosa beach to the alleys of Chinatown and its tasty food. And if this is not enough the five months that I spent in Southeast of Asia allow me to have great adventures with incredible friends in breathtaking places such as Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, feeling lucky to be able to appreciate some of the world wonders. Thank you all!

Autorizzo al trattamento dei miei dati personali ai sensi del Decreto Legislativo n. 196/03 da parte del Politecnico di Milano.

Firma _____

