

Exchange Student Assignment

Rina Wada

Fall, 2016

My Exchange Student Life in San Diego

In late July, I went to the airport with great excitement and a little bit of worry about my new life in America. Not only that studying abroad was my dream since I was a junior high school student but also I expected to experience the difference of educational environment, culture and customs in foreign countries. Therefore, I was really delighted and excited about it. After taking a long flight, finally I arrived at San Diego where I would stay for half of the year. There were some wonderful memories of my life in San Diego that I would like to share.

My morning in San Diego usually starts with a piece of handmade peanut butter bread and hot oatmeal. It was easy to make and I enjoyed it almost every day for my breakfast. American food was delicious but sometimes it was oily and high calories for Asian people to eat. Fortunately, we had host parents who always made fresh and tasty food by using local organic ingredients for us. Moreover, I enjoyed making American food and desserts such as casseroles, vegetables salads, tuna burgers, chocolate chip cookies and pumpkin cake with my host mother on weekends. Also, I tasted different kinds of international cuisines with my friends in San Diego. For example, we went to Japanese restaurant to eat California Roll which was an American-style sushi that traditional Japanese rice roll combined with some materials

like crab meat, cucumber and avocado.

For study, the circumstance was totally different from Taiwan. I had to finish plenty of homework and review tomorrow's materials for classes every day. In the United States, students were required to ask questions and participate actively in class. Also, many works were done by group work so that you needed to cooperate with your teammates to finish it. At first, it was not easy for me to express my opinion completely by using English sentences during the group talk, but my teammates were all really nice and helpful people. Thus, I could overcome that problem and felt free to communicate and share ideas with my team members. Moreover, class schedules in America were not tight compared with Taiwan. Classes were separated by many days and it only took one hour for each class, so we can concentrate on our studies rather than taking two or three hours of class per day in Taiwan. In addition, there were various kinds of physical education courses in our college and I took rock climbing class in the fall semester of 2016. It was thrilling and a good experience for me to climb at the climbing wall and outside on real rocks. I learned some climbing knowledge and techniques from this class and made new friends who loved climbing. Besides, most of students in America were individual and hardworking. They were encouraged to think and solve problems by themselves and tried their best to participate in class to get good grades. From my experience, even if someone could

not come to the group meeting at school due to some reasons, they would contact all group members by email and take responsibility to finish projects until the end. Their attitudes toward study influenced me a lot and it encouraged me to put more effort in my studies.

San Diego was very good place for people to live and I love it so much. The weather was warm and comfortable which was around 12-25°C in winter and it was not humid like in Taiwan. My home was located on the city of La Mesa and it was situated on a little hill. It took me almost 30 minutes to walk to the trolley station which was a main public transportation in San Diego every day. I was tired of walking such a long distance, but I felt truly worthwhile when I saw a magnificent night view from the balcony every night and I was extremely happy to stay in this wonderful place. Furthermore, I enjoyed joining many local activities in San Diego which were hosted by college, community, and international organizations of our university. For instance, I experienced a short city tour, international conversation class, Halloween costume party, and sporting events such as American football, baseball, and basketball. The most memorable activity that I went was a haunted house in Halloween season. I never went to a haunted house before in Taiwan and it was new experience for me to try. The house was decorated by many awful things with cold and weird atmosphere. Ghosts who had zombie or scary monster's makeup on face would suddenly scare and

chase visitors. It was scary to enter in a dark room, but I enjoyed the time and atmosphere in there with my friends. All events were enjoyable and it was great environment to meet and get close with new friends through these events. The most important thing was that I experienced American culture by participating in plenty of activities and this made my student life more exciting and colorful.

In San Diego, I made lots of friends, including local students, Taiwanese classmates and people who came from different countries such as Germany, Vietnam, China and Japan. Moreover, I spent many times with my Japanese and Taiwanese roommate. It was good to have a bunch of friends, but sometimes I need to face up to the culture differences. It was common to have a culture conflict between people and sometimes it made me confused or unhappy. There was not one correct answer to solve this problem, but I realized it was important to tolerate and respect different culture's acting and thinking. Also, I learned how to be myself and be brave to express my feeling and thinking to my friends. Furthermore, I found interesting cultural differences in America. For example, most people preferred to use "excuse me" when they did something wrong instead of using "sorry". The English textbook which we used in childhood in Taiwan taught us to use sorry for doing some mistakes so that I was surprised people in USA would not frequently use this words and it took me time to get use of it. The other interesting fact was that if you sneezed somewhere, people

who near you would say "Bless you!" to you. This was related to their culture and history to bless someone. It was a fun and warm experience that you could not have in Taiwan.

The time passed so fast that I could not believe my exchange student life will finish after 4 weeks. Many memorable and wonderful experiences that I had in San Diego make me want to stay longer in here. Everything which included studying, communicating with local people, accepting culture difference were not easy for me, but I learned lots of things from this experience. I do not regret the time and effort to prepare for IELTS test and many interviews needed for becoming exchange student in my university life. Besides, I not only appreciated my parents who always supported me but also people who encouraged me to chase my dreams when I was disappointed. I am really happy about that I could obtain this opportunity to study abroad and I realized sometimes it was important to explore and experience the world by your own self. In addition, I believed that my English speaking ability has improved by being in touch with people who come from different places. In conclusion, I enjoyed every moment that I spent in San Diego. A half year was too short for me, but all the experience I got while studying abroad was very worthwhile and unforgettable. When I back to Taiwan, I will share my experience with my friends and recommendation to students in Kainan who want to study abroad.

FOOD

Breakfast



California roll



Casseroles



Pizza



Chocolate chip cookies



Thanksgiving chicken



STUDY

My favorite spot at SDSU



Working on a project



Showcased our project and we won the first place!!



FRIENDS

Cerebrate friend's birthday



Picture at potato chip rock



Halloween



HOST FAMILY

Welcome party at home



My lovely roommate



Cutting Christmas tree



At Hotel Del Coronado



ACTIVITIES

Short local trip to La Jolla



Football game

Christmas Luncheon



Basketball game

Rock climbing

