

Exchange Program Testimonials

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United state, Austria, Italy, France, Australia, Canada and many other countries are list of countries that most of student participating in exchange program would choose as their first choice for their destination. This norm is also true in my university – Thammasat University. The majority of our student chooses to go to those countries mentioned above, but except one. After consulting with my professor and number of seniors and also my parents, I decide certainly that Singapore will be my first and only destination for my exchange program. Surprisingly, I am the only student who chooses Singapore as my destination for exchange program; nevertheless, my choice is embraced with several of sound reasons. And, one of the reasons behind my choice is attempting to discover the secret of successfulness in this small but Grandeur country. Many questions arise within my head before I arrive here at Singapore; what kind of aptitude and attitude that lead small fishing village to become ***jewel of Asia***. And, how can they achieve this enormous success only within one generation of people period. This kind of question brought me here in Singapore with quest for learning and discovering.

Generally speaking, every expectation is always subjected to uncertainty. The same happened to me as soon as I arrived in Singapore. I expect no cultural shock or need for lots of time and effort to find my own feet in Singapore. However, Things turn out to be quite different from what I expected. First thing that I need to familiarize as fast as possible is Singlish accent. Communication problem become huge obstacle for living alone in Singapore. Traveling to any places happen to be difficult task for me, despite of excellent transportation system. Normally, communication problem should not last for long. Once you get used to it, it quickly became your daily life routine. But, the only problem is I never get used to it. Even at the end of semester, I still have some problem listening to some Singaporean accent when I have conversation with them. Thus, I always ask them to speak slower and clearer especially during the meeting with my group on project.



Hanging Garden, Sentosa Island Singapore

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After the first few weeks in Singapore, I start to believe that I already get used to the way of Singapore. But, after the semester open, I realized that I was totally wrong. True Singapore life began and I learn it in each of everyday in my school life. I will talk more about life in SMU in following of this journal.

Another thing that makes Singapore different from other nation is that it has many nationalities, race under the flag of Singapore. There are so many ethnic group resided in Singapore with Malays, Indian and Chinese as a majority group. I can see numerous of culture variety here and understand the way they lived together. Of course, I have problems adapting into this multinational society and have to learn a lots of real life lesson before I can settle down into Singapore society. But the most important, People in Singapore live together peacefully and harmonious, while they still preserved their own culture and did not lose their feet to modernization and globalization process. I admired this multinational harmony and the way Singaporean government organized and overseen this tranquility. Why I admired Singapore in this point? Because it really hard to unite people from different ethnic, race, belief, culture and religion together as a whole. Even my country –Thailand, which has less variety of ethic group still encounter a worrisome problem in creating harmony among people in the country. There might be a number of reasons for this harmonious condition, For instance, wealthy economic, high standard living, government regulation and many other reasons. Above all, I believe that it is high degree in sense of nation that creates tranquility in this country.

Those points mentioned above based on my perception during the first few weeks in Singapore. But after that I start to realize and understand Singapore culture more and more; cause and effect, history and transformation of their society.

Most of the remarkable experience I received began after the semester start. And most of them have a root related with the SMU.



Indonesia, Bintan Island

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On the first week of fall semester in SMU, I immediately realized true taste of Singapore culture; Work hard and play hard. I put lots of effort and struggled to pass this week. I have to reorganized my schedule and manage my workload by dropping two out of five modules I registered before. Studying here is quite different from my home university; In Singapore, I have to stand on my own feet and cannot expect to rely on others. I need to learn to take care of myself and have responsibility to my own work. But, in my home university, the study style is tilt toward interdependent style between students and tends to be more soothing than SMU. To be frank, there were lots of hard times during first two weeks of semester. However, from my own opinion, I think this is the right way for university education. Because highly individual and self dependent learning style will teach you to be mature. I received a chance to adjust my mindset into more grown-up character. I learn how to balance between study and life outside campus. Too much stress can reduce your effectiveness and block your idea with wall of anxiety. I have to admit that I feel very insecure during this period, but every problem has its own solution. After a while, I cross over that feeling and start to look forward on the good side of life again.



LEaRN Scholars, Singapore Management University – Temasek Presentation

Talking more about SMU life, facility and learning system in SMU is excellent. I was impressed by SMU library and their internet based curriculum. It was very convenience for SMU student to enjoy their study, even though; it was quite complicated and took some time for me to learn how to use it. I can find any information available in the world through SMU library. They even have Bloomberg channel for us. I also fascinated with their campus. SMU campus is considered to be very innovative, modern and hi-tech for me. I spend some time discover around the campus and enjoy using their facilities; Gym, Library, Study room and so forth. These facilities help student a lot to balancing their study and relaxing. Beside of great campus, SMU also have variety of CCA for their student. They encourage student to experience lesson outside the classroom through these CCA.

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Unfortunately, I did not participate in any CCA due to my commitment for study and community service. Anyway, Those CCA is very interesting and I always want to join their activity occasionally.

Another important matter that I want to mention is student in SMU. Friends are always important, no matter what are you doing or who are you. Luckily, I am quite sociable, so I have lots of friend in SMU. I also met various students here in SMU; there are lots of international student studying in SMU and most of them are scholars from many institutions. Working with student here is great experience for me. They are very sharp and smart. I always learn something new while working with them. I have no doubt about their quality and their academic excellence. However, I found some disturbing issue with student here in SMU. All of them are good student, but also ambitious too. Consequently, there are very competitive ambiances in the classroom or even group project. Competition is compulsory for any good society and it also encourage people to continually improve themselves. But, too much competitive can harm the overall environment. May be I felt this way because of the cultural difference between Thailand and Singapore. Anyway, this is not an important matter in studying in SMU. Having a chance to take part in SMU education system is one of the most precious experiences in my life.

Apart from life in campus, studying in Singapore offer me a chance to participate in countless activity outside the campus. They organize many events to help exchange student like me adapting in Singapore life, For example, Jalan Jalan Makan trial, Movie night, City tour and many other events. Living in the hostel also gives me good experience because there is a mixture of student living in the hostel. It is a good chance to know and make friend with them. Having lots of friend make my life in Singapore much easier. I also have an opportunity to learn about other culture in depth such as Indian culture from my apartment residence and Japanese culture from my roommate. This is a kind of experience that you cannot find anywhere except here. I can experience foreign culture from inside perspectives by living with them every day. I know more about their history, economic, social norms, religion or certain belief and their characteristic. Because of this close relationship, my close friends are not Singaporean but exchange student from same scholarship with me.



Bintan Island, Indonesia – Lagoon resort

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Not only friends in the hostel, I also have host family program to help me fitting in Singapore lifestyle. From the bottom of my heart, I love my host family and I feel very lucky to have them as my host family. They are vital part in my life during exchange program in Singapore. They look after me and give me good suggestion for almost every aspect of life in Singapore. They are warm and happy family, and they give me a feeling of family without hesitation. To be honest, I think that they really view me as their family member. I appreciate every single thing that they have done for me. They always came by my hostel and bought me some foods, and have some conversation about my study, my project. They always ask me whether I want to travel around or not, and offer to bring me there for traveling. They even invite me to their friend's wedding in Malaysia. They also knew lots of things about Thailand. They can speak simple Thai conversation, and that make us more close and familiar with each others. Above all, I want to sincerely thank to the organizer of this host family program who arranges this excellent warm-welcoming program.



Singapore Zoo

Last but not least, I have learned numerous lessons both inside and outside the classroom. And this exchange program provides a chance to travel around this astonishing country, but not only travel to the physical place but instead travel to the ocean of culture, experience people idea and lesson of life. From all the experience and memory, I sincerely gratitude this opportunity; which provide me an opportunity to broaden my vision, acknowledge cultural difference and answer my question of Singapore life-time successfulness.