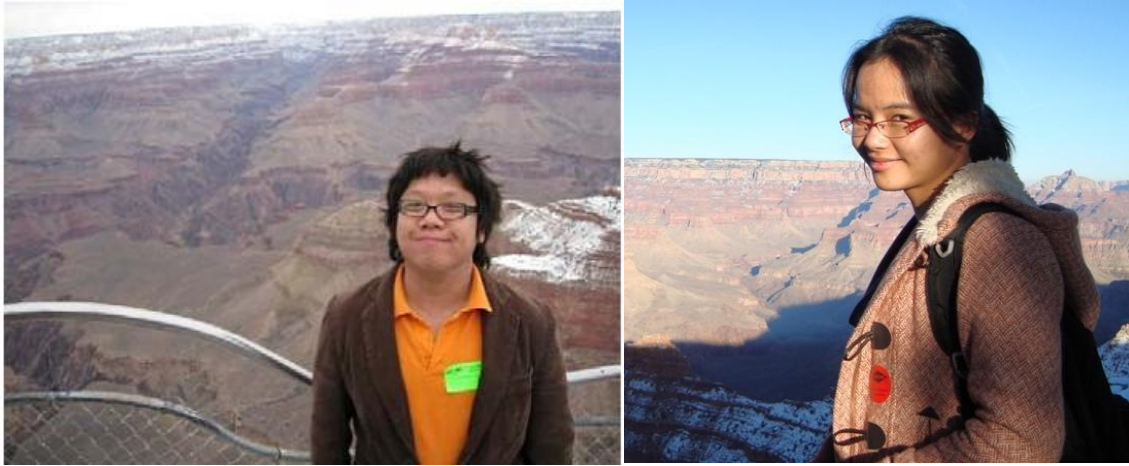


University of California, Riverside



After having a chance to join an exchange program offered by Thammasat University and be an exchange student at University of California, Riverside (UCR) for one full academic year, I have experienced so many interesting things and I can certainly say that studying in the US was a completely different world.

Learning atmosphere was quite different from what it was at BBA. The students were less competitive, many of them skipped the class quite often (for good reason though; they needed to work part-time), while the others came and just sit-in the class without saying anything. However, for the students who were eager to learn, I found out that the professors always encouraged students to ask and answer the questions. Therefore, the clever students (more specifically, Chinese-American students) tended to lead the discussion and interacted enthusiastically with the professors. I strongly believe that American-style of learning gives more freedom to the students; they are free to choose how much knowledge they want to gain from the classes. Questions were more than welcome if asked, and students were free to skip class if they wanted, it was their choice.

For my study life at UCR, although the learning culture was different from us, I could adapt myself well and enjoy learning new things from UCR professors who gave a lot of knowledge and experience which helped me to understand U.S and the world better.

About examinations, most of the exams were multiple choices. The students were get used to be tested in multiple choice format or true -or-false format. In some courses like auditing which a nature of the course was not suit for multiple choices exam, the professor would allow an open-book exam or even take-home exam in order to give the students a chance to gain better grade. The exams were somewhat easier than BBA exam in a sense that professors did not ask for too specific answers. In contrast, they aimed to test more on the knowledge that could probably be applied in the future career.

For the classmates, UCR has very diverse student backgrounds; Mexican-American, Chinese-American, Native-American, Korean, European etc. As the class continued and I had participated in many group discussions as well as group projects, I found myself gaining a lot of knowledge regarding different cultures and business practices in different countries all over the world. Therefore, having diverse classmates not only gave me a chance to meet new people with different backgrounds but it also widened my vision toward a current business world.

For the school activities, there were so many clubs for students to join in. I was a member of investment club and accounting club when I was there. The president of investment club was very active, she invited many personnel from big and famous firms to come and talked about how they achieve their career goals. Moreover, there were many finance case competitions held by the club encouraging the members to learn more about how to actually invest and succeed

in real-life businesses. I think those kinds of activities play major role in shaping the students to get ready for a real business world. For the accounting club, there were many events held up to update new US accounting principles and other issues regarding audit professions.

Living here, I experienced real student life. There was no one kept telling me to start reading book and no one cared whether or not I skipped the class; I was on my own. In the first quarter, there were times that I skipped classes, forgot to hand in homework, or wrote the worst-ever report at the last minute before a deadline. However, after two months, I started adjusting to the changes and taking full responsibility for my life. I cooked my meal generally twice a day, I read books and did homework at least an hour a day, and I spent weekends enjoying my life with new friends. Life styles and traditions of American people amazed me; however, when we had a chance to chat and get to know each other, we ended up being good friends.

To conclude, one-year experience at UCR was full with treasured moments; whether good or bad ones. All in all, for me, life in the US and at UCR was so fun and wonderful. I met a lot of new people and also had a chance to experience new things that I never imagined or knew before. I learned a lot, before I even realized. Someone said that “Money can’t buy experience” and I got plenty of wonderful experience that money can’t buy from this exchange program. I am sure those memories are kept and will be kept for my whole life. Now, I am looking forward to exchanging abroad again since I realized that there are so many things that I have not yet learnt and that the whole world is waiting for me.
