National Taiwan University Exchange Report

Partner university: National Taiwan University
Country: Taiwan
My major: Criminology
Term of exchange: Fall 2015

To start off, I really want to say that going on an exchange is one of the best decisions I have made during my university years. No matter it is to Europe, Africa, or somewhere else, exchange is an opportunity that will broaden one’s view and make one more independent and mature during the process. While having the opportunity to experience a culture more in-depth, one get to meet and build bonds with like-minded people around the world who also enjoy going on adventures and exploring the world. What is more exciting than setting off to the other side of the globe, knowing you will come back with myriad amazing stories to share. As for me, I chose National Taiwan University (NTU) as my exchange destination for many reasons. Since it is my experience, not me, that is the focus of this paper, I will not waste time talking about myself.

Preparation for exchange

Since going on an exchange means you will be staying in the host university for at least months; I think doing a thorough research on the school's background,
residents, surrounding, history, and courses is crucial during the preparation period. Fortunately, I only applied to one university, so I only had to do research for one school. However, it was still a time-consuming process for that NTU has quite a few websites and programs. Therefore, as cliché as it can be, my suggestion is to start the research and planning as early as possible.

As for packing, there is not much difference as of a normal trip to abroad. As for traveling, you can find English information on Google easily. Most places you visit will also have English signs to direct you. As for the cost of living, the accommodation and food are pretty cheap in Taiwan. You can literally get a decent meal with many side dishes for only 70 NTD in the campus.

Additionally, one thing I think should be noted beforehand is the situation of Hepatitis B in Taiwan. From my understanding, this disease used to be popular in Taiwan; many local Taiwanese still have it. Its virus is transmitted through blood and body fluids. Therefore, it is recommended to avoid foods and drinks sharing just in case unless you are vaccinated already.

**During Exchange**

As for my situation, I have a place in Taipei, so I do not know much about the school dormitories. However, I had visited them and their conditions are pretty decent. Among the dormitories, Prince House, also known as BOT, is the best one in my
opinion. While I am sure the dormitory is a great place to make friends, there were also quite a few events held by school such as the Orientation and the Welcome Mixer Party. They were great opportunities to befriend with other exchange folks.

The next big event followed up was the Club Days. I strongly recommend everyone to join some clubs. Not only that they are great sources to connect with the local students at NTU, they are actually one-of-a-kind opportunities to learn a variety of things for a shocking low price. Personally, I joined 3 clubs alongside my studies. They are Martial arts club (實戰武道社), Harmonica Club (藍生口琴社), and International Finance Club (國際金融研習社). For my Martial Arts club, I was able to learn Tai Chi and Muay Thai under award-winning masters during the whole time I was in Taiwan for 500 NTD only. It is unbelievable. As for my Harmonica club, from knowing nothing to being
able to play a couple songs, I picked up the skills quickly for that I was taught one by one. This club charged me 500 NTD for 17 weeks as well (cost of harmonica not included). And for my International Finance Club, I joined it because I find economics classes in school are often theory-based. This club invites guest speakers to teach practical knowledge on the stock market, economic trends, and investment tips. All three clubs I joined held at least one class per week and their fees are incredibly cheap. Once again, I recommend everyone to take good use of these club resources.

In addition, due to the education system at NTU, the local students usually take a lot of credits, sometimes even up to 25 in one semester. Although disregarding the number of credits you take on, the tuition fee stays the same for exchange students, I do not recommend taking on too many courses. The exchange time goes by quickly, make sure to leave yourself some free times to explore places in Taiwan, enjoy the culture, and join clubs. Besides, you can go on a short trip abroad during the exchange time since Taiwan is very closed to Hong Kong, China, and Japan. There are also many attractions and spots to visit in Taipei including Tamsui (淡水), C.K.S. Memorial Hall, Elephant Mountain (象山), National Palace Museum, Yangmingshan National Park, Presidential Office Building, and of course, Taipei 101. Thanks to the convenience
brought by the metro system of Taipei (MRT), you can go to most of them within half an hour from the NTU campus. The MRT staffs are usually good sources for directions and all kinds of information. With their help, getting around Taipei became that much easier for me.

As for specific classes to take, “Introduction to Geology” is an interesting class that will take you to the Southern Taiwan for 4 days. I personally think this class is a “must” for those who want to understand Taiwan more at the same time enjoy a pleasant trip. Additionally, if you have a certain degree of Mandarin proficiency, taking classes taught in Mandarin in your own department will open up a new network of connections and allow you to be more active within your faculty. There are usually quite a few events and teams within each faculty. Take law school as an example, there are faculty-based basketball, baseball, and volleyball teams. Furthermore, during the term of my exchange, law school, along with seven other faculties, also hosted an eight-faculties formal ball dance event. It will be way easier for you to receive information about these events and teams if you have connections with members of your faculty. All in all, do not hesitate to make friends. The local students are usually very friendly.

**Reflection After Exchange**

Exchange is a unique opportunity that allows a busy student like me to continue my education while enrich my experience. As a student, I find this opportunity valuable and not to miss. Aside from what I learn from the clubs and lectures, I would say my biggest gain from the exchange is the friends I made and connections I built. It really is a unique opportunity to befriend with like-minded people from around the globe who are
passionate for life and eager to explore the world. In short, apply for exchange and you
will not regret. And if you are already thinking about a destination, NTU might just be the
right school for you as it was for me.

Yangmingshan National Park hot spring
School Ball Dance

C.K.S. Memorial Hall
Geology Class Field trip

National Palace Museum