
My Exchange in State University of New York at Stony Brook

HSU Che Jung

BENG4-ECE, Yr 3

My Blog

My host school – Stony Brook University is 60 miles away from New York City. Almost every weekend, I went to downtown for adventure. Times Square, Central Park, Empire State Building... There are so many remarkable attractions in New York. Walking on the street, I could easily feel that NYC is awesome and still improving!

My Pre-departure Checklist

Air ticket: it is cheaper to buy it earlier. Plus, try to find the student ticket since it is not only cheap but also provides more weight allowance for luggage.

Student Visa: it needs complicated procedures and takes quite a long time to complete. Thus, apply it right away after getting the admission letter. During the application, give as much information about you as you can; otherwise the US embassy can reject your application.

Just Arrived...

The airport that I arrived is JFK, which is one of the busiest airports in the world, and there are 6 terminals!

Fortunately, my friend who is also from CityU contacted the Christian Fellowship in Stony Brook University and they drove us directly to campus. Otherwise, we needed to bring the heavy luggage and take a two hour train ride...

The campus of Stony Brook is so big that I need a 15-minute walk for food. It is so different and inconvenient compared with CityU.

Orientation

There is no doubt that school will hold orientation activities for all exchange students. During the first meeting, school administration would provide useful information for visa, life on campus and upcoming activities. Most importantly, you will meet up other students who are from same country and all over the world. It is the biggest chance to make new friends and DON'T miss it.

My Place

The type of my accommodation is apartment. There are five to six people in one apartment. Each one has his own room while sharing one living room, one kitchen and two restrooms. Thus, it is really comfortable for living. But, the price is not tasty — around 1100 USD per month!

If you think it is too expensive, you can find the house for renting around the campus. They are cheaper but the quality and safety are not guaranteed.

Generally, it is pretty safe in residence, but don't forget to lock your room before going out.

My First Class

The class size in Stony Brook is relatively small — around thirty students. The teaching style is similar to CityU. That is, lecturer will teach the course through hand-writing on Board or PPT slides. However, the local students in class are really active. They keep asking questions during the class, and even after class is finished.

We need to learn from the local students their attitude!

People I Met

Unfortunately, I could not get into the social circle of local students. The first reason is language; my English is still not fluent enough to have a long chat with native speakers. The second and the most important reason is cultural difference. US males like to talk about American sports, especially American Football. Some other topics include exchanging the list of pubs which are good to go.

As a foreigner and a non-local student, I know a little from their sports and entertainments. Once joining the conversation, I found that I had nothing to share. Americans are kind, but they seldom opened a topic for the Asians. That is, they are NOT really interested in exotic culture.

Out of Classroom

On campus:

Student clubs: involving all kinds of stuff. I have joined some cultural activities such as The Korean Night. There were some fantastic performances and delicious food.

Sports Center: I played the basketball with local students every weekend since the recreation center of Stony Brook was new and facilities are well-constructed. Plus, I met some good friends there.

Off campus: Traveling

The location and communication of NYC are really convenient. I have visited the following states and cities during the exchange period:

- 1) Boston
- 2) Buffalo (Niagara Falls)
- 3) Washington
- 4) Chicago
- 5) San Francisco
- 6) Los Angeles

Money

Since living in New York, everything is more expensive compared with other states. I was really shocked about the price of food when I first arrived at Stony Brook. Plus, I seldom cooked, so I really spent a lot on eating.

To help save budget, it was sometimes good to share among friends food from malls and supermarkets and enjoyed meals together.

For me, the most costly part is the spending on travel such as air fare, hostel and admission fee for attractions.

For communication, try to book the ticket early and keep an eye on the price since there might be some discount activities.

Same way is applied for living, but location is another big issue. Please do not live far away from the place you always need to travel just for cheaper rent. It might charge you more at the end for other aspects such as higher transportation fee.

Goodbye

In the US, classes are interactive. I missed the atmosphere of the class in Stony Brook a lot after returning to Hong Kong.

The most rewarding part of my exchange experience is traveling in the US. Through trip planning, I learned how to manage the budget, and became more familiar with the geographical features

of the east coast of the US.

During the trip, I met some kind and generous local people like shuttle drivers. In the chats with them, I was pleased to hear that they know about Taiwan and think that it is a great place. What's more, they complained about the life in the US. Those talks are precious to me and I learned about the real part of the US and realized that Taiwan is actually wonderful in foreigners' impression.

The most challenging part is, of course, to use English all the time. Even for ordering a meal, I came across a huge barrier; however, it was the most effective way to improve English.

To live in the US, everyone has to be able to speak English well. Please try to brush up your English as much as you can before you depart for the US.

Home Sweet Home

Generally, I categorized my changes into improvements and drawbacks as below:

Improvements:

- 1) Affected by roommates, I clean up my room more than before no matter during the time in HK or in Taiwan.
- 2) Try to chat more with exchange students whenever I meet them.

Drawbacks:

- 1) Tend to spend more on eating and other expenditures.
- 2) Feel lonely in Hong Kong since some friends are gone while new people are in.

Sharing

Do not expect too much for American food, they are just burgers and fries. However, they are really tasty!!! Be sure that you have tried "In-N-Out" before you come back!

Actually, the big cities like New York and Los Angeles are pretty safe. It is not like the circumstance described or heard from news or articles. However, do keep an eye around you! My friends were robbed and punched on campus!!! ←So, be careful.

Overall Rating

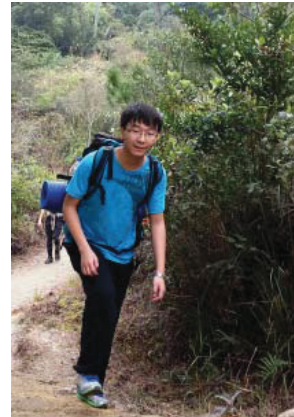
4 (5 = the most satisfied)



Student Ambassador Scheme

**Realization of “Cooperation” and “Persistence”
after Joining Adventure Camp**

LIU Junjie, Jack
BENG4-ECE, Yr 2



Being given the opportunity to be a member of EE Student Ambassadors is a great honor to me. However, I had some doubts about whether I can properly take the responsibility of being a student ambassador and get along well with other ambassadors at the beginning. The adventure camp offered me a wonderful chance to know myself better and make acquainted with my groupmates. This precious experience promoted my awareness about the importance of persistence and cooperation.

Cooperation

At the very beginning, we had to brainstorm and prepare ten necessary materials for camping. It was the first time for me to go camping and I actually had no idea about what I should prepare. One of my group mates had camping experience. Therefore he gave many suggestions. Every single member has his or her strengths and weaknesses. When we share what we know and cooperate with each other, we can achieve many things that we cannot do it alone.

Persistence

The camping was a mixture of exhaustion and surprises. We were required to march for 3 kilometers carrying all our belongings within twenty minutes, which I thought impossible. It was hard though I do exercise regularly. However, we finally made it. It was a surprise to me that I accomplished something I thought