

STUDENT MOBILITY SCHEME REPORT



[For participants]

Your experience can help other students when they are planning for their study abroad program. To make sure that prospective students have a chance to learn from your experience, everyone who has participated in the SMS program should complete a Student Mobility Scheme Report.

Upon completion of the form, please submit it to the office which handles the ACUCA SMS at your institution.

Please note that the information will be shared with other students who are interested in the SMS through the website.

Thank you for your cooperation.

[For coordinators]

This report will be posted on the ACUCA Website. We would appreciate it if you could email us the file electronically.

(Evan Jiang, ACUCA Secretariat, Email: acuca@mail.fju.edu.tw)

1. Name: Miss Nathamon Sunthikhunakorn

2. Home Institution— Payap University

Country: Thailand

3. Host Institution— Ateneo de Manila University

Country: Philippines

4. Study Period: from June/ 2012 to October/ 2012

5. How did you hear about the ACUCA Student Mobility Scheme? (Please Specify)

International Office at your institution, ACUCA Website, From Fellow Student, Others

Comment:

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6. What did you study and what kind of activities did you take part in while abroad?

I studied literature and foreign language which is French. During studying abroad, I joined several organizations of the university. Apart from joining multicultural activities of the International Student Organization, I joined the organization called Kaingin. I taught English for underprivileged Filipino children with the organization fellows every Sunday in assigned area in Quezon City. It was a great and memorable experience for me.

7. Was it difficult adjusting to life abroad, and if so what were some of the difficulties?

A difficulty for me must be about the language. Even though Filipino people have no problem in speaking or using English, the main language they use to communicate with friends is still Tagalog. Sometimes I felt like I was not part of them or close to them because I didn't know Tagalog.

8. What advice would you give to fellow students at ACUCA universities who are thinking of taking part in the Student Mobility Scheme?

I encourage fellow students at ACUCA universities to join the Student Mobility Scheme. It is great to be able to study under the new environment and new culture. It is challenging and it is a good chance to see the world. You will get experiences that you will never find from anywhere. All you have to do are to be open-minded and to enjoy the way of life in the country you choose.

9. Have you been changed in any way by the experience, and if so how?

Yes, I have been changed a lot in term of responsibilities that I had to balance my study and my leisure. My perspective in seeing this world is completely changed and I gain more confidence to live all by myself abroad. I was afraid if I was able to live by myself, especially in foreign countries. After joining the program, it assures my confidence about that. I have no problems in traveling abroad or living abroad anymore.

10. How do you feel about other Asian Cultures now?

Even though our countries are in the same continent, Filipino cultures are completely different from Thai cultures. I think it is because Philippines is a multicultural country. There are a combination of Spanish culture and American culture. Undoubtedly, the Filipino society is more liberal than the Thai society. We can talk what is in our mind. You can criticize anyone and people will accept that. I think it is rare in any Asian cultures because we tend to avoid saying “no” or saying what you think it might offend other people. I like it that way. For me, it shows sincerity and obviousness.

11. Any comments?

Below please attach a more descriptive account (300-400 words) of your experience with the SMS for possible publication to allow others to find out about the ACUCA SMS Program. Include such information as the type of study you did as well as the cultural experiences you had, and any other things you would consider interesting. Photos are required.

When I decided to be an exchange student in Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines, and my major was English literature. I took several courses about literature, such as classical drama and British literature, and one more foreign language course which is French. The study was tough, but it was not that hard if you worked hard on it. I had a hard time studying at first because I was not familiar with the English accent of instructors. With help of my Filipino classmates, I was fine and I was eventually familiar with the accent. I had no problem in studying since then.

As I was an exchange student, I got involved with many cultural activities. An international day was the most memorable event arranged by the university when I was there. What we did was to set performances that illustrate our cultures. The performance could be either singing or dancing. My friend and I were only two students from Thailand, so what we did was a Thai dance. Luckily, we brought traditional dresses with us before coming to the Philippines. International friends were amazed and we made them do the Thai dance with us. It was a wonderful moment that everyone had a good time.

Apart from activities arranged by the university, I went on a trip in the Philippines with my international friends. We went to several places, such as Puerto Galera, Palawan Islands, and Cebu. They were big trips I had while I was in the Philippines. The trip that I will never forget is a trip in Palawan Islands. My friends and I spent many hours on a small boat. It was a bad timing because it was in a typhoon season. Going to the beaches or islands during the typhoon season is not a good idea, but we were eventually safe. I know that most students prefer to travel by themselves. However, to have a tour guide is good sometimes. You will be able to learn a lot about the history of the country or the island along with having a great time on the island.

For me, the good point of being an exchange student is that you will have friends from all over the world. To exchange ideas with them in any topics were amazing. You will see that they think differently from us. However, there is no the best culture in the world. We can learn things from each other and pick the best things to use in your life. In my case, I was a shy person and I was afraid of saying what I think due to the culture I had been raised. After being with European, American, and Filipino friends, I am more confident. My Japanese friends are examples of being hard-working and punctual. Now, I know what to behave if I happen to live or work with people from these different cultures. My world is changed after joining this program. I feel grateful that I made a decision to be an exchange student and I am even happier that the country I chose is Philippines.

