

## **Student Report**

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**Host University:** University of California, Santa Barbara

**Year of exchange:** Sep 2017- June 2018

At the beginning, I chose to be an exchange student at United States because of 3 reasons; strengthening my English skills, exploring American culture and meeting new people. At the end, it not just met my expectation but also went beyond it. In this report, it consists of 6 components; UCSB, studying at UCSB, accommodation, cultural exchange and travelling

### **UCSB**

UCSB is one of the most beautiful campuses because it's just right next to the ocean. It's also called a university town because most people come here for studying. The overall campus has been designed for students to go around by walking, biking or even skateboarding. It's quite really big so when I want to register the class, I need to consider the location of that class as well.

Library is really spacious and it is divided into 2 parts; mountain side and ocean side. Mountain side opens 24 hours for students to study. One fun fact of UCSB is that it's called UC, Santa Barbara but it's located in Goleta which surprises every exchange students.

### **Studying in UCSB**

At UCSB, the detail of each subjects and test are quite the same as Thammasat. However, the frequencies of exams are not the same. At UCSB, one subject may have 3 midterms and because of quarter system (3 months per quarter), you need to stay enthusiastic all the time to not fall behind the class.

There are less hours of lecture comparing to Thammasat but students will rely on self-study. You need to review the lecture every day and in some classes, teacher will require you to read textbook before going to class. One thing that I really like here is that every quarter, UCSB will hold student job fair event where students can look for interns or jobs.

### **Accommodation**

While I was studying at UCSB, I had been staying in an apartment called "Tropicana Villas". I chose the double room which means there are 2 people in 1 room and 4 people in one apartment. One feature of this place is that there is a heated pool in the middle of garden.

The most things that I love about living here is that they provide the channel that you can talk with people who are going to live here at the same time as you first and then you can agree to be their roommate/housemate. One function of this channel is showing their preference of roommate/housemate which really helps everyone matching their roommate/housemate a lot easier.

Moreover, this apartment is really close to university. It's only 10 minute by walking. Since it's the apartment not dormitory, the apartment doesn't close on US holiday or break.

## **Friends**

At UCSB, there are varieties of people in terms of nationality. Though I met only 2 Thai students here who has already been U.S. citizens, I found a lot of good friends. Most of my friends are exchange students and from organization that I join. One thing that I learned here is that students here are not really make friends in class but they rather make friends in the parties or organizations.

## **Cultural Exchange**

California is the closest state to Mexico, so it has been influenced by Mexican culture a lot. The most obvious one here is food and arts. There are plenty of Mexican restaurants in UCSB area and you can find Mexican style painting on the normal wall.

From what I see, people here are very friendly and out-going. They do party a lot so they have one party street called 'Del Pla Ya' where you can just walk along and got in any houses for partying. However, when it comes to exam period which is called 'dead week', everything will be silence and after that period passes, everything will resume.

Since I joined 2 organizations; Latino Business Association and International Student Inc, I had a chance to join plenty of festivals such as Super Bowl, Christmas, Black Monday, Easter festival, Memorial day, Halloween day and Cinco de Mayo.

## **Travel**

At first, I didn't plan to travel at all but I ended up travelling a lot which I was really glad that I changed my mind. The first trip was accidentally. Because of wildfire near UCSB and final exam cancelling, I and my housemate decided to go to San Diego for safety and better air quality. I did my first Kayaking at La Jolla which is the beautiful spot kayaking

The second trip was California road trip with my Thai friend. We went to Grand Canyon, San Diego, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Yosemite National Park. The most challenging thing in this trip was in the mountain, there is no phone or internet signal. Luckily, we planned about that before so we download Apps "Sygic" which helps us to not get lost.

The third trip was New York trip. In this trip, I learned that I should check the suitable weather of city that I would like to travel. I was in New York in winter so we spent most of the time in the cafeteria. One thing that we forgot to consider is the place that we stay. We stayed in good Airbnb but quite danger location so we couldn't come back late.



The fourth trip was Santa Catalina Island. This trip happened because one of my friends invited me to their conference. The challenging thing is that there is no internet or mobile signal in the side that we stay in this island and we need to live in the tent without electricity. Nonetheless, I was really impressed by the nature. I can saw hammer shark even I was on the peer and I found a reindeer near our tents.

The final trip was Portland and Seattle. This was the first time that I went travelling alone for 5 days. I chose this city because they have a good transportation and interested history. From what I saw, people in the city were very nice and willing to help. The things that I recommend everyone to do in Seattle and Portland are visiting Pike market and taking Underground tour respectively.

To summarize, studying abroad broaden my perspective and knowledge. I develop a lot of skills especially planning and communication. The most important one is I got last long friendships around the world.

