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## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

**Your Name:**

**Name of Study Abroad/Exchange Program:** International Summer Institute at SNU

**Quarter(s) of Participation:** Summer

**E-mail Address:**

### 1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

If you arrive on the check-in date, you can go straight to the dorms! Otherwise, stay in a hostel anywhere in Seoul for about \$12-25/night--the subway is very convenient, though you may want to keep in mind that SNU is closest to Nakseongdae Station.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt? The orientation introduced us to our professors and took us around the campus; it didn't help too much besides give us more time to bond, because it was too much to take in all at once.

### 2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure :small classes with a maximum of 30 students in each class.
- instruction : given primarily by lecture and discussions
- teacher/student relations : teacher are
- grading/exams : most exams were essay or free response questions; grading is generally pretty lax as long as you show a general understanding of the material
- administration : Staff is very nice, accessible, and willing to help; many are previous program attendees (and current college students), so they can probably answer most of your questions
- library, computer, and classroom facilities : Can be a little far from the dorms (where most people will stay). SNU is a huge campus, but on a positive note, there is a free school shuttle that runs before, in between, and during classroom instruction hours

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

Many of the professors have or are teaching in the US, and are very knowledgeable about the subject they're teaching. Some may be duller than others, but discussions and lectures were generally very interesting.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

Culture and Society of Korea, International Relations in East Asia

**d.** How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

Students at UW are encouraged to dive into multiple different disciplines, and the study abroad classes certainly helped me do that. The classes mostly have no prerequisites, so it is a chance to learn whatever you have been curious in but never had the chance to at UW due to schedule restraints.

### **3. HOUSING:**

**a.** What housing options were available to you?

1. Live on your own.
2. Living on campus in dorms

**b.** Which did you choose, and why?

I chose to live on campus in the dorms, since I don't have family there. The social part is probably the best--I was hanging out with people before classes even started. The RAs are also accessible around the clock any time you need them or if you have any problems, which is great when you're in a foreign country. Moreover, the cost was not that expensive for the the added convenience factor of being near classes and friends.

**c.** What would you recommend?

Definitely dorming--everything is much easier, and you will have an easier time meeting people and making friends. Living off-campus is mostly for those who have family there, and the little bit that you might save is not worth everything you're giving up.

### **4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:**

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The campus is huge--it sounds exaggerated, but it's 1-2 times larger than UW. There are many full-time students there working on your studies, but it is generally hard to meet or get to know them (but not impossible!). Because you are concentrated in the same dorm and in the same classes as fellow ISI students, you will mostly end up interacting with them. Everyone was friendly and seemed willing to go out

### **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

Korea is very safe, and you don't have to worry too much about theft. But make sure that if you're going out (especially for drinking or partying), always go with friends.

### **6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

**a.** How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

Kind of just went outside my room on the first day, and there was already a lot of people meeting each other on the floor. By the first night, we had all gone out to eat together, played icebreaker games together, and went to a bar on campus together. Other people you meet will generally be quite outgoing, so it isn't too difficult. The ISI staff also organizes a lot of field trips, which are also great for meeting people.

**b.** Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.

(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

I'm generally pretty accepting of different attitudes and mannerisms, but when it came down to it, there were enough people around that I could switch to hanging out with different groups when it was too much for me.

## **7. FINANCIAL:**

**a.** What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

They give us the chance to make a Korean bank account (which isn't normally possible). The best way is to take money out through a global ATM (I had a fee of \$5 each time I withdrew money), and then put most of the money into the Korean bank account, so that you can use a card and make it significantly more convenient.

**b.** How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

My rent was 800 paid before the trip; if you are looking for a cheap place off campus (or after the program), it'll be about \$15 per night for a dormitory bed, depending on location and quality. Food is extremely cheap on campus, with full meals+free seconds going for \$2-\$4. Eating off-campus can be more expensive depending on what you have (especially BBQ), but it really varies. Transportation is also extremely cheap, costing about \$1 per subway ride and \$.75 per bus ride. The only time it can become expensive is taking the taxi (necessary after 12am, because the subway closes). Overall, assuming you will be buying things, going out, trying different foods, and enjoying the nightlife, I would recommend about \$1200-\$1500 in spending money for a month, before rent.

**c.** Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Nightlife adds quite a bit to the cost, since clubbing+transportation+drinks+food afterwards can often cost \$60+ for a single night. Girlfriends are also unexpected expenses.

**d.** If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any problems? If so, how did you address them?

I had no problems. You do have to pay for the tuition and fees before the financial aid comes in though, so keep that in mind! As a side note, the program offered scholarship opportunities for children/siblings of SNU alumni and non-Korean American citizens, which may help with financing.

## **8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:**

**a.** If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

**b.** If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Overall, the administration was all right. Besides a couple of adults, almost all of the administration were students. As a result, you could tell that some activities/field trips were well planned out, while a couple seemed more rough. Even so, they are friendly and resourceful, and try to accommodate you and help you with whatever you need.

## **9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

This program is for someone that wants to experience South Korea without just being a tourist, but does not have the time or is not sure about doing a semester or year-long program. Almost everything you do in Korea is more fun with friends (which the program will help you make). The course load for classes is not too difficult, and everybody gets Fridays off--they definitely try and give you time to look around the city more, rather than keeping you on campus.

#### **10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

Although the three hour classes and readings seemed daunting at first, the assessments and assignments were overall not too bad. I had expected to be stuck in campus all the time--and that was possible if one wanted to study everything thoroughly--but still found time to go out on most days. Staying awake and paying attention during class was the most important part.

On a personal level, South Korea and the ISI program exceeded my expectations. I made friends much more easily than I thought I would, and there were many great experiences that I did not expect to have in Korea.

# INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

Seoul, South Korea  
Summer, 2010

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## 1- Arrival overseas/on-site orientation:

- a. I was fortunate enough to family pick me up from the airport and stay with them a night before my orientation. I know that my friends stayed in hostels in Hongdae, which is close to the school and is a youth-friendly area.
- b. My program had a 3-day field trip/orientation that I recommend a 100%. It is an extra \$300, but we got to tour all over Korea and most importantly, I got to meet a lot of people throughout the 3 days. It covered important aspects of the traditional Korean culture. We spent time at a cultural center, learning about the traditional Korean marriage ceremony, Korean arts and crafts, traditional music, and other important aspects of the culture.

## 2- Academics

- a. The classroom structure was similar to UW. Classes were smaller and consisted of lectures, quizzes, readings, and discussions. The professors in the program were from all over the world, many from the UC system. All my teachers were friendly and helpful. Grading/exams were similar. I had one class that consisted of multiple-choice exams, another with essay-style exams, and another consisting of fill-in-the-blank, comprehensive questions, and writing. Administration was helpful. There is a center just for the international school. The library was very nice- brand-new. Computer and classroom facilities were on par with the UW campus. The only issue I had with the administration was that we were unaware of the health screening that we had to get done and they expected us to get it done as soon as possible. We should have been notified of this prior to departure.
- b. The quality and content of instruction was challenging and interesting. My language class was great and my Korean language skills greatly improved over the program length. Other professors for my other classes were similar to UW professors.
- c. I would recommend taking a language class at the language institute. I would recommend taking Globalization of Korean Society.
- d. It related to my UW education, because as a International Business certificate student, I learned about the culture of another country and how global business is becoming.

## 3- Housing

- a. The housing options that were available to me were living in the dorms, in a studio, with a host family, or with family.

- b. I chose to live in the dorms, because I thought this was the best way to get to know more people and really submerge myself in the whole study abroad experience.
- c. I would recommend living in the dorms, because a majority of the students choose this option. You get to meet a lot more people. The only complaint I had was check-in for the dorms. It was hectic and there weren't enough people to help. I was actually locked out of my dorm room the first night.

#### **4- Program/exchange site**

- a. Yonsei is located in Shinchon, which is a really ideal place for college students. There are 2 nearby schools as well. There's a lot of stuff to do just around the school. There are lots of restaurants, shopping, and a great nightlife. It's a bit far from the subway station, but you can just grab a taxi for around 2 US dollars to the station.

#### **5- Health and safety**

- a. I had no health or safety concerns. I had an amazing time. I didn't feel uncomfortable walking alone, although I don't recommend doing it at night similar to why you wouldn't at UW.

#### **6- Cultural aspects**

- a. I integrated into the culture and met members of the community by exploring the surrounding environment. I went to a baseball game and also become a language partner for Yonsei students. Some of the students were Yonsei students during the regular school year, so by interacting with them helped.
- b. Cultural difference and challenges I faced were non-existent. I did notice that Korean natives ate very quickly during meals and talking was considered sometimes rude. Americans, on the other hand, enjoy conversing during meals. Depending on whom you were with you learned to eat quickly.

#### **7- Financial**

- a. The best way to access/transfer money into the US is through your bank. You first must set up a Korean bank account, which is easy to do because there is a Woori bank branch office on campus. Once you get the routing number it is easy for someone from the states to wire money. It's easier to do larger sums, to avoid the transaction fees from wiring small amounts of money numerous times.
- b. The dorms were around \$700 US dollars for the time I was in the program- 10 weeks. I would recommend \$300 US dollars spending money.
- c. I had no unexpected expenses.
- d. There were complications on receiving financial aid on time; however, I used the short-term loan to compensate for this.

#### **8- Program/exchange administration**

- a. IP&E did not administer my program/exchange.

- b. I was frustrated at what was communicated to me by the IP&E office in terms of applying to the program. I applied directly to Yonsei, because that's what I was told the correct way to go about it. I would have gone through the IP&E office if otherwise told. However, I enjoyed going without knowing anyone from the UW. The administration abroad was fine. I was a little confused navigating their website and registering for housing was a little confusing as well. However, if you call you should be able to find help.

#### **9- Program/student type**

- a. This program is best suited for someone who enjoys meeting new people, embracing the culture and enjoys going out. The Korean culture is predominately welcoming of Americans. With that said though, remember that being loud and obnoxious on the subway isn't representing the American culture very well. It's a balance knowing when to be extra respectful and mindful, especially around the elderly.

#### **10- Overall experience**

Spending my summer at Yonsei was the best experience. It was unforgettable. I made friends from all over the world. My roommate from Hong Kong and friends from California, Iowa, Boston, and many other states are people that I continue to stay in touch with. It's amazing the network you build. I am moving out to Salt Lake next year for a job and I know already one person that I met through this program. My Korean improved so much and I learned so much about myself- how independent I was and able to meet and trust new people. I learned why my family is the way they are and got to spend time with extended family. All in all it was an incredible experience. I wish I studied abroad earlier in my collegiate career, because I would have tried to go every summer.