

Before coming to the US, I was a shy person who feared failure. Although I was an involved student, I hesitated to become involved in important or official activities. I would not even have considered applying for an assistantship because I assumed I would not earn one. However, as an international student in America, I have observed that my classmates and friends never hesitate to do whatever they think is right. Their brave has changed my timid and even has made me want to stimulate my full potential and prove my abilities in a new environment. I do really believe that nothing is impossible since where there is a will there is a way.

Therefore, I have worked to overcome my shyness for the eight months I spent in the America. My efforts have included reflecting on my personal characteristics and experiences to write a convincing resume, to impressively introduce myself, and to communicate professionally in a business environment. At the career fairs I have attended at UNC Charlotte and NC State, I have learned several valuable lessons about the job-search process, including how to research companies in advance of an interview, how to ask recruiters informed questions about my qualifications and whether my graduate research is relevant to their organizations' work, and how to dress professionally.

Additionally, in Taiwan, I was too shy to socialize with people. However, since coming to America, I have tried my best to make new friends because I have learned the importance of expanding personal social network. I have joined Friendship and Culture Exchange and the International Coffee Hour held by the International Student and Scholar Office at UNC Charlotte. When joining these groups, I have learned how to show my friendliness to other people: smiling, greeting, listening, thanking, and sharing. Therefore, I have made some good friends. For example, one of my American friends, Cori, invited me to her Friendsgiving party. She introduced some of her international friends from Turkey, Japan, China, and Vietnam to me. When we shared our cultures and experiences, it helped me broaden my horizons and become more open-minded.

I truly believe that friendship is borderless. For example, my best friend, Babacar, introduced both French and African cultures to me while I explained Chinese customs to him. I also helped Babacar by writing a travel guide to Taiwan for his parents when they traveled to my hometown on their vacation. Furthermore, Babacar and I constantly exchange cultural information, such as teaching each other how to speak our native languages and how to cook various exotic dishes. Moreover, based on our different backgrounds, we have shared our interests and experiences with each other. He has shared car information while I have shared medical knowledge.

In addition, when Babacar and I have exchanged our viewpoints of big issues or something happened in daily life, we have respected and learned from different opinions. For example, I used to have a traditional stereotype of parties. However, he told me that not all parties were crazy and wild. For example, when he joined a party held by a career fair in Boston, he made some new friends from the same major, and they had good conversation about the future development of engineering jobs.

Moreover, to help me adjust to the changes in cultural experiences, he told me that John F. Kennedy once said, “There is nothing more certain and unchanging than uncertainty and change.” Babacar means that he wants me to become more flexible and become less worried and serious about life and future. Keeping this quote in mind, I have adjusted my serious personality to grow as a person.

In America, there are various cultures to learn and explore, and I have utilized the experiences from my social network to help myself become more open-minded. Overall, with the multicultural elements and multicultural friends that I have encountered in the United States, I have truly discovered how wonderful the world really is.

CROSSING BORDERS

How my international experience has affected my view of the world.

yhsu10@uncc.edu

Yu-Chen Hsu