

國立東華大學  
National Dong Hwa University  
姐妹校國際交換交流學生心得報告  
International Inbound Exchange Student Report

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交換系所 Host Department	Materials Science and Engineering		
原學校 Home University	Universidad Publica de Navarra (UPNA)		
原系所 Home Department	Industrial Engineering		
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My name is Gabriel, I am a student of the master degree of Industrial Engineering. I am an exchange student that has spent one year in National Dong Hwa University. I chose this university because I wanted to spend a year in a country where I could live different experiences than the ones I can live in Spain. I believed Taiwan was a great possibility and now that I am finishing my experience here I can say that I was right.

I arrived Taiwan in the beginning of September, around 10 days before the orientation week. I did not come alone, but with another student from my home university, Inigo. Our flight landed late night in Taipei, so we decided to spend our first night there. We were a bit shocked, the weather was very hot and humid and the city and the atmosphere was completely different as what we have back home. In addition, we did not know any Chinese, so it was kind of difficult to get to our hostel.

The next day we took the train to Hualien city, where we thought the university was. Once there, we started asking local people about Dong Hwa and they told us to take a bus to Zhixue, the place where the university is. By the way, I needed around two months to learn how to pronounce Zhixue properly... it was funny every time I had to ask for a ticket to go there because Taiwanese people never understood me at first. Once in Zhixue, we had the contact of a student in Dong Hwa, Susi, who hosted us in her place until we found our room, because we were not staying at the student dorms.

During those days before the orientation week, we tried to explore as much as possible. We went hiking to some mountain around us and swimming to different rivers. Going to the river was always the best plan, because when we were swimming was the only moment of the day that we were not sweating, the weather those days was so hot. We also visited the campus of the university, even though there was no one there and all the building were still closed. We were amazed about the scenery inside the campus, it was so beautiful. So during those days, we did not have much to do but explore around. I was not bored, but almost all the shops and restaurants at the street were closed and there was not much to do. I was kind of scared that I was going to be like this for the whole year. I really was waiting for the university to start, I wanted to meet more people and see how it was going to be to study in Dong Hwa.

In the orientation week I met a lot of nice students. I was so happy of being surrounded of students like were in the same situation as I was, looking forward to make new friends and enjoy as much as possible the experience abroad. First, I met my volunteers, Esme, Tia and Vicky. They are awesome! I am so happy of having met them and having them as my volunteers. They have always been there when I needed and they helped me a lot. Of course, they are not just my volunteers, but one of my best friends here in Taiwan. We did a great group of friends during those days, with both international and Taiwanese students. More than a group of friends we were like a family, we spent so much time together, was great.

Regarding the academics, I think it has been a bit easier than in my home university, at least the first semester. The subjects that I took were very interesting though. I would say that the way of teaching here is different than in Spain. In most of the courses that I took in the first semester, there is a lot of team work and discussion that I do not have back home, which I liked it because you have the chance to work with guys from other countries and see how they think and work. I also had to take two Chinese courses, one each semester. It was very nice to learn the fundamentals of Chinese, and it has been very useful too. However, I still think that Chinese is one of the most difficult languages of the world, I have so many difficulties to learn it. Anyway, I think I will try to keep learning Chinese next year in Spain. The second semester, I had to do the master thesis. I had the chance to work with a Taiwanese company to do it, which was a great opportunity to see how they work. In this way, I have been able to see both the student life and the working life in Taiwan.

As I said before, the classes that I took the first semester were not super demanding. Therefore, I had the chance to travel around Taiwan with my friends. Almost every weekend or holiday day that we had in the university we went somewhere. During the first semester I visited a lot of Taiwan and I really liked. It has been great to have this time to see the different places and cities of this beautiful island. I have been in Taipei several weekends, where I went to different night markets, delicious restaurants and most famous spots like the Taipei 101. I have been in Kaohsiung , Taoyuan, Kaohsiung, Tainan, Kenting, Taitung and Yilan too. Even though I enjoy all of them, I have to say the Hualien is the county that I like most from Taiwan, maybe it is also because I know it better know and I know where I have to go if I want to have fun.

As well as travelling, I love doing sports. Specifically, I love swimming, therefore, before coming to Taiwan I wanted to keep on swimming and I already checked that Dong Hwa had a swimming pool. What I did not know is that the university had such an amazing swimming team. The first days I went alone to swim, because I did not know about them yet. But one day in the swimming pool they told me if I wanted to join their trainings, and of course, I said yes. I was the only exchange student of the team, so it was great to enjoy the swimming practices with all Taiwanese guys. They are all super friendly and the accepted me super well since the first day. We did not only train but we also competed. Every year, they participate in a competition with all the universities of Taiwan, the National University Athletic Games. This year was hold in Taoyuan, so we went there to swim. The result of the competition were great, the boys team of Dong Hwa got first in the general classification. I am so happy of being able to say that I helped my university to win the National University Athletic

Games.

To end up, I want to say that I am so glad of having chosen this university. The organization in Dong Hwa is great, the academic experience is satisfactory too and the staff working at the different offices and departments is super friendly and always ready to help you.

Thank you very much for everything Dong Hwa, this has been a year that I will always remember.

Gabriel Uriarte