

## Global Engagement: Student Testimonial



Name: Trang N.

### **Study Abroad Program: UCR - Certificate in Applied Management for Hospitality**

#### **1. Why did you choose this study abroad program?**

I was looking for a program that would help me broaden my global horizons and gain real-world experience. My expectations are met by this program since it provides a unique opportunity to study at the University of California, Riverside, while also offering a diverse academic environment and an internship at Disney World that emphasizes exceptional customer service and creativity.

#### **2. Did you receive academic credit for this program?**

All three courses that I took with UCR during the program have already transferred to Douglas College. This has helped me significantly, as the transfer process was smoother and more convenient than I expected. As a Hospitality major, it is a big plus that I can ensure my study plan remains on track while gaining international work experience.

#### **3. What was your favorite part about studying abroad?**

My favorite part of this program was the opportunity to learn more about how a global entertainment company manages the daily operations of their theme park and how they succeed by applying hospitality to create a magical moment and memorable experience for all guests. It also created many lasting memories for me, including working with an amazing, supportive team and meeting guests from all around the world.

#### **4. What was the most challenging part and how did you overcome it?**

The most challenging part of this program for me was adapting to the fast-paced work environment and navigating many cultural differences. At first, I was a bit overwhelmed by the number of people I needed to meet each day, but I quickly learned to manage my time efficiently and prioritize tasks. I learned how to work closely with other cast members to provide excellent service and communicate effectively, no matter what happened, to get things done in a timely manner. They always had my back, and their encouragement helped me handle and overcome the pressure gracefully.

### **5. What surprising or fun fact did you learn about your host country?**

One fun fact I learned about the U.S. while living there is how seriously people take their theme park experiences. I was surprised to see that many families and friend groups wear character-inspired matching outfits or movie-themed family costumes to add more fun and excitement for their visits, making each trip to the park feel like a special event and a lifelong memorable experience. It really showed me how much Disney is a key part of American culture and family traditions.

### **6. What did you gain from this experience?**

I gained a lot of valuable professional and personal skills from this program. I had the chance to improve my ability to adapt quickly to fast-paced environments and enhance my communication and teamwork skills by collaborating with people from different cultures, learning how to integrate with everyone while each of us has a different background. I learned how to improve the way I interact with everyone, not only guests but also my coworkers, by knowing what I should do when they need help and what I should avoid saying to minimize misunderstandings. Overall, this experience helped me grow both as an individual and as a team player.

### **7. What did you learn about intercultural communication during your study abroad?**

I learned the importance of being open-minded, flexible, and sensitive in intercultural communication. Gestures, expressions, and communication styles may differ significantly across cultures, and being aware of these differences helps me prevent misinterpretations. Moreover, I found that showing interest and curiosity about others' cultures is an effective way to connect with strangers and bring a better understanding of their backgrounds.

### **8. What does being a global citizen mean to you?**

Being a global citizen means to me that I have the ability to easily accept diverse global perspectives in any environment, from school to work and daily life. Additionally, I recognize cultural differences while actively promoting inclusivity, empathy, and social responsibility. I have learned to embrace change, be flexible, and adapt easily to make everything around me more manageable in this globalized society, bringing a positive attitude toward all the international friends and coworkers I have met and will meet.

### **9. How did Global Engagement support you during your planning?**

Global Engagement supported me step by step, from the moment I first learned about the program to the application process and then preparing the necessary knowledge and advice for my journey. Additionally, Global Engagement provides important resources and guidance every step of the way so that I can be well-prepared for the cultural and professional experiences ahead. Their frequent meetings and pre-departure sessions gave me a better understanding of what to expect, and they were always available to answer any questions or concerns, making the entire process smoother and more manageable than I expected. My journey would not have been as successful and memorable without the enthusiastic support of Karen and Global Engagement.

team throughout the entire program.

**10. Would you do it again?**

Yes, I would do it again because it offers me an incredible opportunity to gain cultural exposure, develop valuable professional skills, and build lifelong connections with coworkers from around the world. The experiences I gained exceeded my expectations. Additionally, the challenges I faced, such as engaging with and serving a large number of guests coming to the park every day, taught me many valuable lessons both personally and professionally. Everything I encountered in this program provided me a chance to grow and adapt in a dynamic environment that I would find difficult to replicate anywhere else.