

Kat's Thai experience on the Fall 2022 Faculty-led Program Abroad

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The first thing you need to know about a Global Learning Opportunity - unfortunately, it will not be everything you think it will be.

The second thing you need to know - it will be much more than you could ever imagine.

When I first heard of the Faculty-Led Program Abroad to Thailand, I was making quite a few changes in my life already. I was starting a new program for a new career, meeting new people, moving on from the worst years of the pandemic (where I didn't get to travel at all), and really coming into my own. Immediately, I knew this was the perfect thing for me to be involved in and to experience. After the application, the offer, the acceptance, and the planning – we were finally at the airport, and it finally felt real.

Our host institution, Panyapiwat Institute of Management (P.I.M), went above and beyond our entire three weeks to make sure we felt included, supported, and experienced everything possible thanks to their cooking, culture, language, hospitality, aviation, and tourism classes. We were able to experience what we never could in Canada, whether it be on the P.I.M field trips or adventuring on our own. I got to know that the Thai people are immeasurably kind, humble, helpful, and respectful. In my chosen career field of aviation, cultural differences and cultural immersion are a significant part of your everyday life - a part that I have always welcomed during my journeys through my own personal love of travel. This was the longest time I have ever been away from Canada, and I immersed myself in every way possible while I was there. I take with me my memories, my knowledge of their language and culture, and the feeling in my heart that says I will return one day.



As with any experience, there comes challenges – but there also comes pleasant surprises. Living with eleven strangers for three weeks can seem daunting, leaving the comfort of your home and your support systems can seem frightening, and finding yourself in an entirely new country where you don't speak the language can seem overwhelming. However, what became daunting to me was the reality that no matter how much time we had in Thailand, I was never going to run out of new experiences I wanted to have while there. What became frightening to me was that I knew I would miss it deeply when I left. What became overwhelming to me were the life-long relationships that were built during my trip, with the strangers I travelled with who became my classmates, my roommates, and my best friends, and with the people I met in Thailand itself, who I hope to one day see again.

If you are even slightly debating taking part in an adventure abroad, whether it be faculty-led, a semester exchange, or an international work experience - take the opportunity. It won't be perfect, but it will be life changing. You will grow as a person, come back with experiences that change how you see the world and what you want out of life, and have valuable knowledge and skills that can help you reach your highest hopes and dreams.





This trip abroad further solidified everything I already knew about myself; I want to experience culture and language, I want to learn about the world and the people in it, and I want to continue building a community with those I meet during my adventures, forever learning from each other.

When I graduate in April and begin sharing the skies with my future flight crews, I will look back on this as a moment where I am grateful for everything I have, everything I have worked through, everything I have worked towards, and everything I have accomplished.

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