

NCHU- Let me be, set me free

Summer 2018, when I hold my mailed acceptance letter from University of Sheffield, United Kingdom, I thought I would spend the next few years in the U.K exploring the next step of life. As an international student spending my bachelor degree years in the United States before, I just expected my upcoming student years in the UK would just like my U.S student life, simple and ordinary. Not even once I would imagine my student life would be full of challenges but opportunities and fun at the same time like how it is currently. Then couple weeks later, when I had almost prepared everything to apply for UK visa, I received another acceptance letter, and

this letter changed everything. Choosing between National Chung Hsing University in Taiwan and University of Sheffield in the UK was not an easy decision, but it was surely one of the best decisions I have made so far, as each day in NCHU, it never feels ordinary but always extraordinary.



Until now, whoever knows I have got my bachelor degree in the US and been accepted from University of Sheffield, ranked 70th in the world top universities list, always asks me **why** I am here, in Taiwan and NCHU. To be honest, I never prepare the reasons for myself either. If I have to give an honest answer, I would just simply say “**why not?**” Staying in Taiwan and going to NCHU, to me, frankly speaking, is both like an escape and an exciting risk. When I was in high school, few of my have-to-does-as-university-student list were staying in school dorm, going to field trip, sharing different culture with friends and taking academic challenges with classmates.



However, when I moved to the United States to advance my academic opportunity, I realized my to-does list had no chance to get fulfilled. Couple years later, when I backpacked to Taiwan, the country left a great impression to me because even though I was not able to use much of the language, I was always welcomed by the warm-hearted people as well as all the breath-taking

scenes in this beautiful country. It was then when I thought to myself I wanted to learn more from this country to know how such small island can be so advanced in technology in many industries but still be so traditional in culture.

Alongside with my experiences in marketing, I was always interested in sustainability and environment, and NCHU was the best place for me to explore further, and never once I regretted the decision to go to NCHU.

The endless opportunities to learn, to challenge and to explore at NCHU is far beyond my imagination and expectation. As a student from International Master Program of Agriculture department, not only I am given countless



Figure 1 Participating in an international forum at NCHU

opportunities to maximize my knowledge and potential in marketing research relating to agriculture, but also, I get to study other science courses such as lab research training, principle of genomics, Agri-meteorology, etc. to broaden new knowledge in agricultural technology. In the seminar from my departments, students from social science field as well as science field are required to take the class together, hence, it is always fascinating to me to listen to topics relating soil organism matters, integrated pest management, post-harvest management techniques or plant pathology, etc. Moreover, as one of the top national research institutes in Taiwan specializing in Agriculture, there are always international conferences and forums hosted on campus giving students even more opportunities to keep up with new technologies and researches. Not only the university strongly encourages students to involve in researching and is willing to support its students' efforts, but also it never shows any special treatment based on students' race. Taking myself as an example, although I am just an international student from Vietnam, I was still



Figure 2 Me (in the middle) in the Food Distribution Research Society Conference in Seattle 2019

selected for a financial support to go to a conference to present my research in the U.S in recent October from both university research development fund as well as Taiwan Ministry of Technology. In addition, since NCHU has tight partnership with generous amounts of higher education institutes around the world, the opportunities to widen new knowledge and networking from

world class researchers and professor are endless, for example, I have taken courses and special lectures from professors from University of California, Davis (UCDAVIS), University Utah State University, Texas A&M University, etc.

Although I studied in the US before, I am always amazed by the diversity at NCHU. The



Figure 3 Field trips is countless at NCHU

number of different nationalities of my classmates at NCHU is much more than at me previous school. And what is more amazing is that both Taiwan and NCHU always offer countless opportunities to students to learn and explore different cultures and background,

through on-campus events and

fieldtrips. There is no such “minority groups” at NCHU because all cultures, nationalities and backgrounds are all respected and treated equally here. There are workshop, fieldtrips and programs for international students to learn and explore Taiwanese culture and society, but there are also on campus



Figure 4 Me as 1 of 4 international students in Rural Up 2019

events such as International Festival to bring international students from all nationalities including Taiwanese together. Some of the programs I have joined that left great impression to me on how welcoming Taiwan is to international students are Taiwan in my Eyes, Rural Up, Hands Together and Taiwan Comprehensive University System (TCUS).

The experiences I have at NCHU will never be memorable without the presence of my advisor, my department professors and of course my classmates. I am always thankful that I was given a chance to be under the guidance of my advisor, Dr. Yang. Thanks to his advises that not only I got to strengthen my researching skill, but also, I was given plentiful opportunities to build up my research writing portfolio. I am forever in debt to all of my department professors (Dr. Vickey, Dr. Chao, etc.), my department Director, Dr. Hwang and all other professors I have studied from, as without them, I would have known nothing. And last but not least, I am greatly appreciated to all my classmates and roommates because without them, my student to-does list would never be filled happily and memorably.



Figure 5 My dear program-mates