

Name of University: Tennessee State University

Name of student: Jakote Lejaha

Exchange semester: Summer school

Cultural Program

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1. Tennessee State University, TSU, is located in Nashville, Tennessee, United State of America. It is the largest and only state funded historically black university. The main campus has on-campus housing for students. And we were staying at the Rudolph Hall dormitory situated at the far end of the campus from the main gate.
2. TSU offers summer camps and programs, for athletes and scholars of varying stages, from elementary to tertiary institutions.
3. Name of my program is Cultural Immersion Initiative (CI2) program from 21st June- 1st July 2018.
4. Intended number of participants, was 24 students.
5. Duration of the program, was 10days.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Information before I left

- I received preparation overview of the research program and the schedule, a few weeks prior to the commencement of the program.
- There were no difficulties comprehending and utilizing all the provided resources.

Visa Procedure and travel experiences.

- The visa application was liaised by the University of Johannesburg and their preference agency. I was summoned for the interview when my application was accepted, and did not face any challenges attaining the visa on the determined time.
- As for the travel experience, it was splendid, as anticipate. There were no flights delays, or any unforeseen contingencies for that matter.

Academic Calender

- Arrived on the 21st June, to settled in at Rudolph Hall and issue student cards, took an interesting tour the next day, went hiking on the other, and went to the local church and the mall on the last day of the weekend.
- Monday, the 25th June, we started the research program, at the research building and later moved to the library, where we were divided into 3 working groups.
- Research was conducted without easing till Thursday, the 28th June, whereby we had our presentations and award receiving ceremony.
- Then on the 29th June we spend time at the zoo, spend day at the shores on the next day, and departed back to South Africa on the 1st July 2018.

Reception

- The reception and hospitality through out the stay in Tennessee, were very warming.
- The administration and faculty were also very prepared and transparent with all students.
- All students that had registered for the program fully participated in the reception.

Housing

- All participants were allocated rooms, and handed own key to their respective rooms, at Rudolph Hall.
- The school had not only offered rooms to the students, but also provided well made beds with very tidy bedding.
- For prospective students, I would suggest they bring, or ensure they have their own rolls of toilet paper, since they were not distributed in the rooms.

Costs

- Fortunately all expenses were covered for by the school, let alone I had a very decent stipend wage with me.

The International Office.

- Yes, there was an international, but I never fought myself in a situation whereby I had to visit their premises, because we were introduced to Dr. Jewell Winn-Senior Intl Officer –OIA.
- And Mr Mark Brinkley was always available to sort out any of our reports or challenges, throughout the program.

- Since I did not have to use the international office for any matter, and since it was over the summer program, I was not exposed to how the international office could work with part time scholarly students.
- But however there was enough information on which bodies to report to in cases of emergencies or special attention.

Exchange promotion.

- I was never exposed to raising awareness about student exchange because, I was only an exchange student for a very short period of time, and not all students were participating in the summer activities offered by TSU, so it would have been futile to even try, as it would have only reached a niche of the student masses.

Social Activities.

- My relationship with other students was good, because they were eager to learn about my culture as much as I was interested into theirs.
- We actually got along so well, that we all members of our private whatsApp social media group.
- All international and domestic students in the program took part into the hiking activity that was hosted by one of the hikers club in Tennessee.
- And there no special gatherings for exchange students alone, because it was easy for us, exchange students to unite with local as we had very similar perception of race, due to our similar skin color.

Culture and Language.

- I had no problem communicating with everyone at school, because they spoke and wrote standard English.
- However there wasn't enough time for us to get to explore the American culture in detail. We only had a few leisure days, and few research studying days.

Culture and Social Effects from the Exchange Experience.

- Since I got the opportunity to interact with people from a different culture, that alone has improved my socializing skills. I can get to relate to other people feel, and view everything around them. With more of such experiences, I am bound to become a better global citizen.

- The exchange experience also exposes me to exploring different ways of life, different ways of tackling problems and learning, and different ways of networking with more people that are not of my own origin alone, hence widening my opportunities of becoming a better professional, who's decisions are not biased to exposure of one culture.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The Teaching situation.

- Everything was taught in English, and there were no problems.
- Teaching was practical and theoretical.
- Teaching is done through videos, trips, reading..etc
- Relationship between students and faculty is good
- Relationship among students very good.

Required literature

- English proficiency required
- Level of literature standards similar in UJ and TSU
- Literature used for both detailed and broad overview
- Assessment based on presentation judges and literature.

Assessment

- Each group present their research for less than 30mins, and a video clip less than 3mins.
- Knowledge criterion determined by the judges of the presentations

Others Factors

- There's easy access to the library and the internet to gather information.
- There's easy access to TSU scholarly database for searching academic literature.

Description of Course.

- 2018 Cultural Immersion Initiative (CI2). Innovative programs that enhance the standard

curriculum while also creating an enlightening and engaging experience that cannot

be easily replicated in a classroom.

- CI2 had two research projects, "The study entitled--Learning Race in a U.S. Context: An Emergent Framework on the Perceptions of Race Among Foreign-Born Students of Color", and "Evaluation of the 'CiCi-Your Multilingual Companion' for access to foreign language translation and emergency safety assurance".
- There are no prerequisite, and the presentation is divided into two parts. First part conducted at TSU, and second part done at the University of Johannesburg.

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