

UAB Summer School Return Report

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Introduction

I found out about this Short-term Abroad Program through a school notice. I wanted to live abroad in a short-term to get a deeper understanding of another country than I could through traveling. I also wanted to meet students from different countries, broaden my perspective, and learn about different countries. Especially, I wanted to experience the lively culture of Spain and UAB offers various classes taught in English so that I chose UAB.

About classes

I took two course, 'Operation Management' and 'Women's Rights Protection'

In Operation Management, I learned how companies can improve productivity and increase customer satisfaction through operational management techniques. The content was similar to what I can learned in business classes at my University. Instead, I liked that the professor of this class constantly asked us questions and encouraged us to think and answer for ourselves. This kept me stay involved and focused during class. For final assessment, we worked in groups and analyzed a company using its given data and Excel. We used quantitative methods to identify and solve problems of this company. Through this test, I was able to improve my teamwork and communication skills in a foreign language.

In Women's Rights Protection, I learned about human rights issues around the world, especially violations of women's rights related to LGBTQ+ rights. We also discussed possible solutions to these problems. In the first class in this course, professors told us that the classroom was a safe space where we could freely express our opinions. So I really enjoyed being able to discuss freely topics debated around the world with students from different countries about gender-related issues. The most memorable part of this class was a debate tournament. We discussed topics such as GBV (Gender Based Violence), abortion, female genital mutilation and gender quotas. Regardless of our personal prior opinions, we were randomly assigned a position that could be different from my own beliefs and should protect this position. While preparing for this activity, I learned to look at the same issues from different perspectives instead of having a narrow

view. I also became more open-minded and learned to listen carefully to other people's opinions with greater understanding

Life in Barcelona

In addition to visiting major tourist attractions, I tried to experience the daily life of local people. I went grocery shopping at supermarkets, visited restaurants that were popular among locals, and enjoyed Spanish food culture. I also had the chance to celebrate a festival in Catalonia with my host, where we ate traditional local food together. The night of June 23rd is a special night for people in Catalonia, as they celebrate the arrival of summer with La Festa de Sant Joan. One of my most memorable experience was having dinner with her and enjoying traditional festival food while listening to stories about the history of Catalonia and its independence movement. I was surprised heard it by her that Catalan people were once heavily oppressed for using their language, and that there were even cases where people were sentenced to death for speaking Catalan. At the same time, I came to understand why Catalan is widely used in Barcelona today. Catalan is one of the main languages of the region, and I often had seen it written before Spanish on signs and menus in many restaurants and I could feel the pride of Catalan people. This experience helped me better understand the history behind the language and culture I saw during my stay.

Among Gaudi's works, the Sagrada Familia and the 'Laundry Women's Portico' in Park Guell were the most memorable to me. Unlike many other cathedrals, the Sagrada Familia has sculptures representing religious figures on the outside walls instead of inside the cathedral. It shows his wish to make the Bible accessible to ordinary people, even if they could not enter a cathedral. The 'Laundry Women's Portico' in Park Guell looks as if the structure of huge stone mountain is being supported by the sculpture of the women doing laundry. This reflects Gaudi's idea that ordinary people support society. I was impressed by the way this work showed Gaudi's care and respect for ordinary people.

Also, The 'El Born Centre of Culture and Memory' was one of the most inspiring places I visited. I actually just entered the museum to avoid the heat, but I learned about the history of the Born district over time. The building had been used as a fortress, a retail market, a wholesale market, and a library before becoming the Born District Museum today. It showed how the area had changed over time. Furthermore, I was able to learn

about the history and social changes of Catalonia. I was especially interested in how cities change. For example, as the Born district's food-focused retail market developed into a wholesale market, the main economic participants changed from women to men.

After this experience, I became interested in the history of cities, how cities change, and how these changes affect the economy. I would like to learn more about these topics after returning to my university. I am especially interested in taking 'Urban Economics', a major course, or liberal arts courses offered by the College of Urban Science.

Conclusion

In my classes, I could learn how to listen to different opinions and look at issues from different perspectives and improve my cooperation and communication skills. During this Short-term Abroad Program, I was able to experience and better understand the culture of Barcelona and Catalonia. Through Gaudi's architecture, I learned about his love and respect for ordinary people. And the Born District Museum made me interested in how changes in the cities can affect the economy. After returning to my University, I would like to learn more about Urban Economics.

Pictures

