

Field Report Summer School Saitama

August 2016, 2 weeks

Saitama Prefectural University, Saitama, Japan

Nathalie Rey, Bachelor Nursing, between 2nd and 3rd year of study

Why I applied for the SPU Summerschool 2016

A few students of my class visited the SPU last year and they submitted very positive reports on the exchange programme. They were thrilled about the experience to travel to Japan, visit a nursing school and live with a host family.

I just finished my bachelor and I had some spare time this summer. To participate at the SPU Summer School was a once in a lifetime opportunity so I applied to the programme. I really looked forward to learn more about the Japanese culture, the Japanese health care system and school system. Living with a host family was another great opportunity to learn more about Japan, which would not have been possible with travelling.

What I Learned

At the Saitama Prefectural University (SPU) summer school were four Swiss students and six students from Hong Kong in one class. This allowed us to compare the Swiss healthcare system with the health care system from Japan and from Hong Kong. The lessons we had were diversified. We learned a lot about the Japanese health care system, the educational system, the interprofessional collaboration in health professions, the career history of a nurse and the expertise of a Japanese nurse.

Japan has an advanced health care system, which is in some points comparable with the Swiss health care system. The Saitama Prefectural University has five courses for bachelors: midwifery, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, nursing and social work. All students have to visit a lecture called interprofessional collaboration, which contains theoretical foundations as well as practical applications. To graduate you have to study four years at the University. The expertise of a nurse at the end of her studies is almost the same as a Swiss nurse.

My cultural experience through my host family

My host family enabled me to gain a unique insight on the typical Japanese life. My host family was incredibly hospitable and very kind to me. I was immediately accepted into the family and I even met the grandparents and the aunt and her husband. Every evening they cooked me a delicious Japanese meal. They were very patient with me, and introduced patiently to Japanese customs. They were also very understanding, when I did something inappropriate or I didn't understand something.

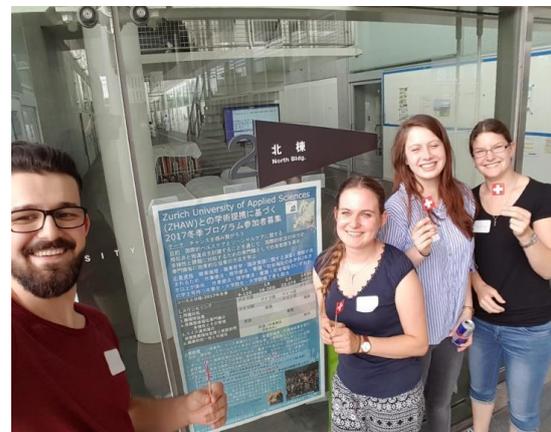
On my days off, they planned many activities. They took me to a soja sauce factory, where they explained the production of the different soja sauces. I also tried soja sauce ice-cream (very delicious ☺ by the way) and I could make rice crackers by myself. One day we also visited the famous Asakusa Temple and the Skytree tower, which was very impressive. I also had the opportunity to try on a Yutaka (Summer kimono) and visit a Japanese garden. To summarise: The host family was amazing and I am very thankful having had the possibility to stay at their home.



Opinions or feedback about the SPU Summer School 2016

The summer school was very well organized. We were informed about everything in advance and were accompanied to different places like the two hospitals. We even had an opening and a closing ceremony and we received a certificate for our participation. The lessons in class were very diversified. Every professor was very well prepared and introduced us to his main theme with enthusiasm. It was very interesting to join the lessons.

The days at the hospital were also very interesting (see the report for the SOKA hospital). The DOKKY medical university was extremely fascinating and amazing opportunity. I saw a lot of things I had never seen before.



The only things I missed were the contact to the other students from Japan. Unfortunately, they had their exams during the duration of the SPU summer school.

What you need for your professional career

During these 12 days at the SPU, I gained new insight in a complete different culture and realized how difficult it can be, especially in the beginning, to try to fit in. This was new feeling for me, because until now I never felt such a cultural shock. I was very thankful for the help from my host family, the professors and the other students to explain us everything and showing us around. I think some people might feel the same way in Switzerland and now I understand more the importance to be patient and kind to foreigners in Swiss Hospital.

They might feel like strangers and need help. In the SOKA hospital, I saw how the Japanese nurses had a high workload but they were always really calm and patient. They took their time for the patients and helped each other in difficult situation. They never seemed stressed. I think this is a very admirable characteristic and I would like to adapt some of it to my daily life and work life.

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