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My six months in America: A journey of research and discovery

Introduction:

Spending half a year abroad was a unique and enriching experience that has had a lasting impact on my life. My stay in Ewing Township, New Jersey, at the renowned College of New Jersey (TCNJ) allowed me to work as a research assistant in a laboratory while also completing my internship and writing my bachelor's thesis. In this report, I would like to share my fascinating experiences, challenges, and positive encounters during this time.

Research work in the laboratory:

My time at TCNJ was marked by my work in a fascinating laboratory that dealt with the modulation of lasers to create colored structures on glass substrates. Under the guidance of Professor McGee, I immersed myself in a completely new topic in the field of optics. The training was demanding, but thanks to the support of my colleagues and the professor, I quickly became familiar with the challenges and opportunities of this fascinating field of research.

Cultural diversity and friendships:

In addition to my work in the laboratory, I had the opportunity to get to know the diverse American culture. College life at TCNJ was lively and vibrant, with numerous clubs and events that allowed me to meet people from different cultures and make new friends. Clubs such as JSA (Japanese Student Association), KSA (Korean Student Association), VSA (Vietnamese Student Association), and many others provided a platform to dive deeper into different cultures and form friendships across borders. From evening Magic matches to group trips to Miami, Princeton, Philadelphia, and New York, there was always something new to discover and experience, and these diverse interactions broadened my horizons and deepened my understanding of the world. Furthermore, sharing my own culture was an integral part of my experience. I had the opportunity to share my German culture in Ms. Fenners German class and with friends through translations and comparisons between American and German culture. These intercultural conversations and encounters were extremely enriching and helped to build bridges between different ways of life and ways of thinking.

Challenges and surprises:

Of course, my stay abroad also presented some challenges. Adjusting to American life, from the huge packaging in supermarkets to the long distances and limited availability of public transportation, was challenging at first. However, the support and friendliness of the local people made this adjustment easier for me.

Conclusion:

My six months at TCNJ were a period of personal and professional development that I would not have wanted to miss. The experience in the laboratory expanded my knowledge and opened up new perspectives, while college life gave me unforgettable memories and new friendships. I am grateful for the opportunity to have taken this unique journey and look forward to applying the insights I have gained to my future career.