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University Life of Multicultural Students at CSUMB: A Conversation between Aimee [Sunghyun] and Jackie (Episode 2)

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<Transcript of "University Life of Multicultural Students at CSUMB: A Conversation between Aimee [Sunghyun] and Jackie">

0:00

Aimee : This is an episode of the OtterPod from CSU Monterey Bay. This episode is for Social and educational purposes. If you want to listen to more episodes, please subscribe to our OtterPod.

0:07

Jackie : Welcome back, everyone! This is OtterPod. So today, What we are going to talk about, Aimee?

0:15

Aimee : Today, we will talk about what kind of experiences international students face in their first semester, as well as other multicultural students.

0:20

I think it sounds really familiar to me, actually, I was one of them while I was studying at CSUMB, and we took the same class, right?

0:28

Jackie : Yes, I remember that class vividly, and I miss being able to share that class and meet in person.

0:37

Aimee : Oh... I miss that time really. But I also had, you know, kind of an embarrassing moment while I was staying in CSUMB. How about you Jackie? Do you also feel the same moment as I did?

0:42

Jackie : Of course, I had a couple of hard times and embarrassing moments myself, just as you mentioned. And I think most of the international students have similar experiences. This is today's topic and we will also be talking about other multicultural student's experiences at CSUMB today!

0:54

Aimee : Let us check, international students in CSUMB, first. According to Brian Childs who is an international program director, "Usually there are 400 in a typical semester.

1:13

However, in this semester, because of the COVID-19, unfortunately, due to COVID, most of our

exchange, study abroad, and ESL students did not take classes with us this term and only a few new students pursuing their degree chose to start this term.

1:25

So there are 124 international students now in this fall semester." And he also said "This semester, we have the

international students from 36 countries, the most populous being India (24), China (22), and Japan (11)" students here.

1:40

Jackie : Wow, that is quite a lot.

1:57

Right? And many of them are from other countries, experiences studying abroad in CSUMB are very cool, however, there are also hard times for those students. One of them is the experiences as a multicultural student, I think.

1:59

Jackie : Yes, it is really true.

2:15

Aimee : I deeply agree with the article. There is an article about this. The author said, "international students undergo similar challenges throughout their sojourn duration, and much of the responsibilities in managing international students fall on universities and respective faculty members within the institutions."

2:16

It reminds me of the time when I was in CSUMB, too. Most of the memories were very sweet, but, you know, there are a few hard moments

2:37

Jackie : I also have an article to share regarding why universities want to expand and become as diverse as possible, or simply how universities see diversity as being imperative to their campuses, both in a physical sense and now, online.

2:46

David Rozado, states "Several political creeds over the past few decades have come to support the

idea that diversity is valuable and desirable and that diverse societies may improve communication between people of different backgrounds and lifestyles, leading to greater understanding and peaceful coexistence.”

3:00

Diversity and inclusivity are values that all universities seek to have, yet not all are able to do so, which may make the lives of those who are multicultural students, difficult. In today's Podcast we have guest speakers who will share their experiences at CSUMB, being native and international multicultural students.

3:17

Aimee : So we will share our experiences and ceasing to be, as do international and multicultural students.

3:32

Jackie : Can you tell us more about your background?

3:38

Aimee : Sure. I'm from South Korea, and my Korean name is Sunghyun Kim. I am an international student at CSUMB. When I was in Korea, I thought that I needed to study more about global issues, because my major in Korea is International Trade.

3:39

So I'm especially interested in International Development Cooperation, and the U.S. is the origin of this, so I decided to study abroad. Searching for a university with this, I found GS, Global Studies, a major which CSUMB offered and would be suitable for myself.

3:54

Jackie : Oh wow, so you're here in CSUMB! Awesome. What was your first impression of CSUMB?

4:12

Aimee : It was really good, actually, the weather was so good, the university is so cool and the classes I chose were very helpful, although there were some embarrassing moments in my first week.

4:18

Jackie : Embarrassing moments? Can you tell us more about it?

4:31

Aimee : It started the first day when I arrived at CSUMB. It was 9pm, when I went to my dormitory, and I saw my dorm, even though I had booked a furnished room, there was no furniture and the door was kind of unlocked. The key which I had received didn't fit with the front door, which means...

4:35

Jackie : You couldn't lock the front door, right?

4:56

Aimee : Yes, exactly. The member of the international club who brought me to my dorm, informed me that she believed the dorm was still unavailable, so I had to find another place to stay for the night. But as you know, I was an international student who came to the U.S. It was my first time, and I had no idea what to do.

4:58

Jackie : Oh, I am so sorry to hear that. Was there anyone who can help you find a place to stay for you?

5:21

Aimee : I asked the, I don't know, maybe the officer who is in the housing part to help, but she told me that since the dorm was technically off campus, Frederick park, so there is nothing she can help. It was almost 11pm, and I was so nervous.

5:27

Jackie : But you're an international student, who was unaware of what to do and needed some help, right? Then where did you stay that night?

5:45

Aimee : It was my roommate's boyfriend's house. Me, my roommate, my roommate's mom, and the boyfriend stayed in his house. They took care of me very nicely, and I could sleep on the roof, not under the sky on the road, [laughing]. At least they rescued me, thanks to Liz and Nick!

5:51

Anyway, if I were a native or had prior knowledge of the area, then I could've easily found a place to stay or call the dorm office, but at that time, I didn't even know where I could call in the middle of the night. In addition to this incident, I spent almost 3 weeks in my room without furniture.

6:13

After I met with the finance officer in Frederick Park, they refunded me one month's furniture fee. But can you imagine life sleeping on the floor? [Laughing], now it is just episode but, at that time, it was a nightmare.

6:34

Jackie : It is a situation which probably can make anybody nervous and embarrassed, but especially, to the international students, it seems more of a difficult situation. Not only this, but also, Is there any other tough moments as an international student?

6:51

Aimee : Jiyeon Sung, who studied in CSUMB last semester, said, "The most nervous situation in CSUMB is when the Business professor said 'You're really good at English, I'm impressed.'" Because she graduated high school in Australia and lived there almost half of her childhood. she knew he said it with good intention, but it sounds a bit ignorant to her.

7:05

Kensy Shun, who came from Japan, told me that "When I introduce myself I come from Japan, the first question is always, 'What is your favorite animation?' Or sometimes, there are some students who think Japan, Korea, and China are almost the same."

7:35

Jackie : There are always misconceptions regarding international students, especially with the languages they speak and how they act. There are people who may know English, or other languages just as much as their native tongue.

7:54

In Jiyeon's situation, this must have been a hard example of a stereotype that is pushed on international students, of not being able to speak proper English or being able to communicate. This bias towards international students happens constantly, and it makes them even more nervous and embarrassed than they already were.

8:06

Aimee : Exactly. We all know this does not come from bad intentions, but it is difficult to keep hearing the same stereotypes over and over.

8:22

Jackie : To put it bluntly, it makes you feel like shit.

8:32

Aimee : Yes it does.

8:34

Jackie : Then during your campus life, is there any experience which makes you confused because of cultural differences?

8:36

Aimee : Umm.. maybe it is food, I mean sultry food. However I have a good experience with cultural differences.

8:43

Jackie : Oh, that's good. What was it?

8:50

Aimee : Class mood it was. In Korea, it is more heavy, and professors are more ... bossy. In Korea, there are two cases of office hours, first one is Confirm, and the other is Offer. There are a few professors who try to interact with students.

8:52

So at the first semester in CSUMB, office hours were difficult for me to attend and made me nervous. Meeting professors in their office, I was worried about making mistakes and I thought I have to show the perfect outcomes to them. I felt this kind of pressure to do so.

9:11

However, now it is comfortable and really helpful to my studies. And also in the class, students were sharing their snacks, saying hello to each other even if it is our first meet, and discussing passionately. I was really shocked, a good shock and really glad that I studied at CSUMB.

9:31

Jackie : Thank you for sharing both your experience and other international students' experiences with us, Aimee.

9:52

Aimee : Yes. Now its your turn to share, Jackie. Can you begin by telling us about yourself?

9:58

Jackie : Yeah. I'm excited to share my own experiences at CSUMB, especially because mine are very different from yours.

10:05

Aimee : OK, let's start. Where are you from and what is your first memory at CSUMB as a student?

10:11

Jackie: I'm local to the area, so I live within the county and my sister also attended CSUMB, so I visited the school a couple of times when I was younger. I was able to join a program, which allowed me to move into campus a week early and it was really helpful in getting around campus before it was bustling with students.

10:18

Aimee: Is there any sort of embarrassing or tough moments you experienced?

10:37

Jackie : Ah, yes. There was one time I was at the farmers' market that was on campus every Thursday, and I was ordering an agua fresca from one of the booths and the owner spoke to me in Spanish, which I spoke back in as well, since it is my first language.

10:42

I was there with a group from one of my classes and I was pretty shocked to hear one of the girls say she didn't expect me to speak or even know Spanish.

10:58

Aimee: Wow, so it's kind of like the opposite of what happened to Jiyeon, where her professor didn't expect her English to be so good, this is sort of a back-handed compliment.

11:06

Jackie: Absolutely, you know. At first, it was something that didn't bother me much, but after thinking more about it, I always get to thinking, how am I supposed to appear then, how am I supposed to look like someone who would speak Spanish as opposed to how I look now?

11:19

Aimee: Ah, I completely understand. Are there any other experiences you'd like to share?

11:34

Jackie: There was this situation in one of my classes that made me really uncomfortable once. There was a girl who stated that she was white and ¼ Hispanic, and said that whenever convenient, she would put down Hispanic as her ethnicity so she could appear more "diverse" to schools.

11:39

This is something that made me really mad, because you cannot pick and choose who you are born as, people are killed because of their skin color, while she is able to have the privilege of being white and then being able to also say she is Hispanic. I think this was really a horrible thing, that caused me to have such a strong dislike for her throughout the semester.

12:01

Aimee: Thank you for sharing your experiences, Jackie. I really appreciate getting to hear some of the different experiences multicultural students have here at CSUMB.

12:21

Jackie: All students at CSUMB have different experiences, and today we were able to highlight those that international and other multicultural students have as well as some of their shared experiences.

12:31

Aimee: Yes. It was great to be able to talk to everyone today and learn from so many different perspectives, it's important to understand what others go through, their hardships and nice moments too.

12:42

Jackie. I agree, Aimee. Thank you everyone who shared their stories on today's podcast and thank you to everyone who listened.

12:54

Jackie: Executive producers of the OtterPod are Dr. Sara Salazar Hughes and Liz Zepeda, theme music by Eric Mabrey, our hosts were Jacqueline Madrigal-Espinoza and Sunghyun [Aimee] Kim, audio mixing by Jacqueline Madrigal-Espinoza and Sunghyun [Aimee] Kim, script writing by Jacqueline Madrigal-Espinoza and Sunghyun [Aimee] Kim.

13:02

Thank you to Brian Childs, CSUMB International Program Office Director, Sung Jiyeon, and Kency Shun for sharing their personal experiences.

13:17

Articles shared include "Using Word Embeddings to Analyze how Universities Conceptualize 'Diversity' in their Online Institutional Presence," by David Rozado and "A research into international student-related research: (re)visualising our stand?" by Doria Abdullah.

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