

PKP – A journey of stepping out of your comfort zone and exploring the world at a world-renowned university

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Physical Education, Exercise Science and Health / 4



Going to class with friends – the diversity I encountered was far beyond my expectation! @King's College

I could still remember the nervousness when I went to the information session and the excitement I felt when I received the acceptance letter – I could not wait any further to study at the University of Cambridge to learn from world-class scholars and immerse in the British teaching style.

A year since then, I can now proudly tell you that I have become a better person and Pembroke-King's Programme (PKP) has brought me a lifelong impact on my pursuit of academic excellence and understanding of cultural sensitivity through both formal and informal learning experience.

Where was the dream started

I was born and raised from a humble background; I therefore understand the difficulties an aspiring student would face when he or she lives in poverty as I used to be there as well.

However, a lot of teachers and mentors offered help to me. To empower more aspiring students who don't have abundant resources, I have joined a non-profitmaking initiative under YMCA called Boundless, which was founded by a few graduates from the University of Cambridge, the University of Hong Kong, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Empowered by the study abroad experience at the University of Cambridge of the co-founder, I started to dream about it as well.

The highlights of Pembroke-King's Programme

As a prestigious university, Cambridge never fails you with its high quality of teaching and learning. You will be amazed by the diversity you will encounter too – as you will meet friends who come from a totally different academic background, cultural background and country.

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Beyond classroom, programme assistants of PKP would ensure there would be various activities such as college tours, sports evenings and movie nights. As the tradition of Oxbridge, the three formal dinners would also be the unmissable highlights.

What I have learnt from the programme

Throughout the 6-week intense schedule and demanding workload, I have learnt to be an independent learner. Among the 45 courses offered, I chose 'The Development of the City', which was about the reconstruction of European countries after WWII. However, the professor was very traditional – there were only pictures in his PowerPoint, notes were not given until five minutes before the lecture and he has very strong British accent. Under such a circumstance, I found it difficult to follow the class as I had to catch up with what he was talking about and did research on the topics covered in the lesson at the same time. Although it was very academic-driven and intellectually challenging, the sense of satisfaction was strong when I could finally reach the goal after 75 minutes of a highly concentrated mental state – to fully understand what he taught in class without playing back the recorded audio.

Being an independent learner means you have the curiosity to learn beyond classroom and syllabus in order to better understand what you are learning. Upon the expectation of the professor, I built up my ability to learn independently. I believe that this ability will carry me further on the way to pursue academic excellence.

Beyond classroom, formal hall was an unforgettable informal learning experience to me as well. At around 7:30, starting from the Latin grace, a three-course dinner with fellows and college members takes place in a dining hall which looks like the 'Harry Potter' one. Not only all the college members and guests have to dress up, phones and photographs are not

allowed as well during the dinner. The whole atmosphere is perfect to make new friends – you can't use your phone, so you can only talk to other people. By talking to different people who might be studying or doing research in a different field than yours, your scope of knowledge will be expanded in terms of width and depth. By having a quality time to build network without the distraction of phone, the ability to present yourself and socialize with others and your confidence in such social occasion will be developed. As an Asian student, I used to be quite shy and fear to start a conversation with others. However, this informal learning experience equipped me with the confidence to build relationships with others in the future workplace.

If you want to learn from world-class scholars, experience the prestigious British teaching style and immerse in an academic environment, PKP would never disappoint you! It acted as a platform for me to know more about the world, to broaden my perspectives and meet new friends. Not only PKP brought me a lifelong impact on the pursuit of academic excellence, it made my summer a fruitful one! 🍷



A picture with Professor Nick Bullock – his lessons are challenging yet insightfull