

International Student Spotlight Interview



Name: Petra Poslednikova

Year at K-State: Exchange Student, Senior

Major: Business – Finance

Home country: Czech Republic

What was it like coming to K-State? How did you decide to come here?

That's actually very interesting because I had already studied abroad in Sweden so I didn't think I would study abroad again. I started dating an American and we wanted to find a way to get closer, so I applied to certain schools and K-State was my choice number one. So during the summer we moved from Texas to Kansas and I really didn't know what to expect. I've seen so many movies, American movies, about college and things like that. I was really full of expectations.

What has your experience been like so far?

It's been great, I really like my classes, I like my teachers – it's very different with the Czech school. I like campus, I like that everything is small, so close, because in Czech campuses we don't have one campus. We have to travel from one building on maybe one side of the city to another building on the other side of the city, so I really like that. I like the opportunities which we have here, for example on Thursday we went to the Russian ballet – I think that's amazing. Or the rec center, it's free for students – that really motivates me to go there. So, I just love it.

What were some of the big differences when you first arrived (social, academic, weather, etc.)? Was there anything that was really surprising?

It's probably the size of campus, and everything is so concentrated in one place – probably that. And how the students are dressed probably. They are more, girls are in jeans, shorts, and in Czech it's more official, since we have to move a lot around the city, so I like that it's more casual here.

Was K-State what you expected? Was Manhattan what you expected?

K-State is exactly what I expected. Manhattan it's a little city. I wouldn't like to live in a city like that, but since it's a college town it's perfectly fine, and it's full of students. But since I stayed here for Christmas break and Spring Break it was a totally dead city, and I don't like that so much.

Is classroom culture a lot different here?

Here we have classes twice or three times a week, but back in the Czech Republic we have class once a week – and sometimes it is just lecture, sometimes it is lecture and seminar – so then we would have it twice a week. The classes, all of them, are usually in the Czech Republic an hour and a half. I like the system here more, because I feel like I can focus all fifty minutes or one hour and fifteen minutes much better than an hour and a half, so it's better for me. Otherwise I would say it's really similar – we use presentations. I would say we have much more homework here. In the Czech Republic sometimes we have in certain classes mid-exams, but otherwise we do it all at the end of the semester. So then usually the students don't do anything during the semester and then it's stressful at the end. Another difference, we have our exam periods for six weeks. We usually take five to six classes a semester and we can split all the six exams during those six weeks, so if person wants to have them in the first week and the rest off, it's totally up to them. We don't have it scheduled like here.

What do you like about being a student at K-State?

That's a good question. As I said, I like the opportunities. I work, so I really like that I found a job in the field that I study. My major is finance and I work as a student accountant in two different departments. I like that I can work and connect what I learn. I really like my classes, and I'm also taking Spanish so that I can improve. I like the language system here, because we have class four days a week, which is a lot compared to Czech. We usually have English class, or other language, once or twice a week which is not enough to practice.

What kinds of things are you involved in on campus?

I was involved in the Diversity Program committee, it's already ended. It was so much fun, we voted for and we had a budget, we got requests from other organizations and we would vote if we wanted to have the event on campus – if it had enough diversity. Since I work, I work twenty hours a week so I don't have much time, plus I'm going to be graduating in the Czech Republic soon so I had to write my master's thesis, but I tried to be involved as much as possible.

I did the Coffee Hour, it was so much fun.

What do you do for fun in Manhattan?

We go to the theater, we go to concerts. I really like jazz so sometime we go to Aggieville, they have concerts once a month – I really like that. We go to rec center, that's a big one for me too, I try to go every day. There's a social website called Couchsurfing, so people from different cities or states, will write me a message saying they would like to explore Manhattan. So we do a lot of that, we have a lot of hosts coming from different cities. Last week we had a couple from Austria, that was fun. I have a host family, every Czech person has a host family, so we spend a lot of time with them because we love them so much. We try to go at least once a week to have dinner with them, and we play games.

If you could have known one thing before moving here, what would it be?

Probably I would like to know that the public transportation doesn't work well here. I would probably try to buy me a bike earlier because the first month I was here I didn't have a bike and my boyfriend couldn't take me to school every day so I had to walk thirty minutes every day to school and back.

Do you have any advice for incoming international students?

I would say get involved because you never know who you're going to meet and the connections are the best. So far, I've met just amazing people, I don't know if it's all of the United States, but Kansas has a lot of amazing people. So get involved, and I would say, say yes to everything because it helps with getting involved.

What would you like others to know about being an international student at K-State?

That this is family, I really feel that. Since it is like one big campus I feel really connected to other students, I feel when I go to basketball or football games, I really feel the emotions and the power of the student body. I really like that, and I think that students in the Czech Republic would like to experience too, because we don't really have that.

Would you mind sharing a phrase from your native language and what it means?

Bez práce nejsou koláče; without work, there are no kolaches.