

International Student Spotlight Interview



NAME: Zihao Fu

YEAR AT K-STATE: Sophomore

MAJOR: Business Administration

HOME COUNTRY: China

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

The first time I came to the United States, I came to Kansas. One of the first things I noticed was that the people here are really nice, but everything was so new to me. The reason why I came to K-State was obviously for educational purposes, and to observe, and also it's what my parents want me to do—to discover the rest of the world and how it works.

What has your experience been like so far?

Generally, it's been really good. I'm satisfied with the education, the atmosphere, the people, the vibes. There aren't very many recreational activities, but other than that, it's a good place to live. Well, and the weather is unpredictable, but I've gotten more used to that.

What were some of the big differences when you first arrived?

The biggest difference for me was interacting with others. This year I live in a Jardine Living Community and all of my roommates are Americans, so I've had a few interesting observations. In China, when we interact with others, we tend to be very restrained and show a lot of humility. In America—and I'm not saying it's not good, it's just different—people tend to be a little more egocentric, but in a good way. People seem to have higher self-esteem, which is different than in China. That makes communicating and

interacting with people very different than in China. I haven't really changed my style, though, because I believe that modesty is a very good characteristic of people from all cultures. So no matter who I interact with, when I talk to others, if I can do something I say "I can do this," and if I can't do that, I'll say "I can't do it." So even though it's different, I don't think I've really changed because of it.

Was K-State what you expected?

By the time I was applying to universities in America, I did some research on K-State, so I knew a little. But was it what I expected? Yes and no. Academic-wise, it's about the same as I expected. The university life is what I didn't expect, at least in terms of college sports and the popularity. I didn't expect it to be so crazy here! Some other aspects like transportation and housing—some little things—were also a little different than I expected. Last year I lived in a residence hall and I was expecting to get involved in my floor community, but it didn't turn out to be as much as I hoped. It might be because I lived with a roommate from China and we tend to be immersed in our own little environment. But this year I live in Jardine and it turned out to be better. I have more interaction with domestic students, which is what I always wanted.

Is classroom culture a lot different here?

Yeah, it's pretty different. I haven't experienced going to a university in China, but in general there are some differences. For instance, in the classroom, everyone is free to say what they want to say here. There's a lot of freedom. In China, I won't say it's suppressed, but students are more dependent on what the teachers say. They're probably thinking about their opinion of what the teacher says, but they don't make contributions to the classroom. Here, it's more of a discussion—which is sometimes overwhelming—but it's basically just lecture in China. There are also more tests here; in the universities in China, they just have a mid-term and a final.

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

I've never really thought about that, but probably unity. When it comes to sports, it's like beat KU and wear purple! And being at K-State, you obviously integrate with the Manhattan community because they come to the sports events and wear purple, too. It's like a big family, and that's kind of impressive. I don't think I would see that in China.

What do you do for fun in Manhattan?

I'm a regular at the restaurants in Aggieville—I go every week, twice or three times a week! My friends and I go to all different places depending on what we want to eat.

If you could have known one thing before coming to K-State, what would it be?

Probably course enrollment stuff. If I would have been better informed, I would have taken more classes. My first semester, I took only 15 credits hours and I had a lot of free time. I thought I could have utilized my time better.

Do you have any advice for incoming international students?

My advice would be to try to make friends with domestic students instead of just getting involved with your own community. Sometimes it's hard—especially in the English Language Program—but it's important to make an effort.

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

I just want people to get to know the rest of the world and learn about the experiences of people who are from other parts of the world. Sometimes people make comments and they're not trying to be rude, but the questions are a little weird, like "Do you have cars in China?"

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

"Du wan juan shu, xing wan li lu." It means read ten thousand books and travel ten thousand miles. It's saying you should expand your horizons and learn about the world in any way that you can.