

## International Student Spotlight Interview



**NAME:** Hanh Phung

**YEAR AT K-STATE:** Graduate student (I have been at K-State for 5 years)

**MAJOR:** Architecture

**HOME COUNTRY:** Vietnam

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

I was really excited, but very nervous at the same time. K-State's prestigious architecture program led me to Manhattan.

***What has your experience been like so far?***

During the past five years I have been at K-State, I have made many lasting friendships and have grown to be a better version of myself. It has been an amazing journey with many difficulties, but there are people that care about me and help me in many ways.

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

When I first arrived at K-State, I was nervous that I wouldn't be able to communicate to or make any local friends since I was not fluent in English at all. However, many would patiently listen and help me improve my English. The most surprising thing about Kansas is its dramatic change in temperature and weather throughout the day or the week. I still can't never predict how it is going to be like without checking the weather app on my phone (smile).

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

I have heard so much good thing about the education atmosphere at the U.S.A. colleges, but I never would have expected such friendly and nice people in Manhattan. The school wants you to do well and the teachers would help in any they can for the students to success.

### ***Is classroom culture a lot different here?***

There is an equal and mutual respect between teachers and students here. If the students have any concerns or ideas that might be different from the teachers, the students are even encouraged to share with the class and the teachers. That is rarely seen from the typical classroom culture where I come from.

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

The group projects, group discussions, study groups and the facility that promotes that (Hale Library) make I feel like I learn from the other students as much as I learn from the teachers.

### ***What kinds of things are you involved in on campus?***

Being involved with College of Architecture, Planning, and Design Ambassador, Vietnamese Student Association, and Kappa Kappa Gamma organization have really diversified me in many ways.

### ***What do you do for fun in Manhattan?***

Getting together with friends is my favorite thing. Sometimes, we would stay at home in our pajamas and watch a movie. Some other time, we would try out different food places (JP's in Jardine or Varsity Donut truck or many other local restaurants). Also, I love hiking and the Konza Prairie is one of my favorite trail.

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

If I could have known one thing before coming to the mid-west, I wish I knew more about the winter weather here. I was totally unprepared for that.

### ***Do you have any advice for incoming international students?***

I understand the feeling of uneasiness and nervousness of someone who comes to a foreign country to further their education. With the nervousness that you wouldn't make any friends or wouldn't follow with the materials in class, I would recommend the incoming international students to get involved with an on-campus group that seem interesting to them and talk to their advisor or their teachers.

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

There were many things I did but didn't know that others think are weird. There were many incidents that I didn't know how to react. I hope that others would understand that international students comes from a different background and culture, and we would like someone to let us know about the culture and custom here and understand our differences in culture too.

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

'Đi một ngày đàng, học một sàng khôn' – It carries the meaning that the further we explore on our journey, the more learning and knowledge we would gain from it. If we just stay in our own bubble and comfort zone for our whole life, we wouldn't know what the world has to offer us in our understanding and experiences.