

# International Student Spotlight Interview



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**YEAR AT K-STATE:** Freshman

**MAJOR:** Economics and Psychological Studies

**HOME COUNTRY:** Paraguay

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

I had a friend that was already attending K-State. She told me about how awesome it was and how she was learning a lot, and so I decided to come. I had to do all the paperwork through Paraguay-Kansas Committee and then suddenly I was here. I heard so many good things about the education in the US, and when my friend told me about K-State I just came without thinking too much.

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

It's been a really good experience. I think that the faculty members of the University are great. Everybody is always willing to help and give you a hand with whatever you need.

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

The very big difference was the weather. I arrived K-State for the spring 2015 semester, so I came in January. Back home, in Paraguay, in January we are in summer, so it's really hot. Coming from 100 degrees Fahrenheit to 20 Fahrenheit it's quite a change. Academically, the educational system has much more progress than my home country, so I really enjoy having all the tools K-State offers. One thing that I really like about K-State is that professors really want you to learn and see you grow as a person. They always insist you to go their office hours to talk about whatever questions you have, from classes to college problems. It's been really helpful being able to see and talk to professors in their office hours, I have learned a lot.

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

My friend told me that K-State was like a family. And when I came here I realized why people always say that K-State is family. If you open yourself to new experiences, you will get to know how inclusive people are. I had the luck of having really good RA's in the residence halls I stayed. They were always helpful, and whenever I need something they were there for me. I just needed to tell them what I was going through and they would try to help me how they could. I didn't really know anything about Manhattan. It's a relatively small size town, which I like, since I rather prefer being in more calm places than noisy and populated.

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

Classroom culture is great. It was my first time attending a classroom with more than 150 students. And the technology available in the classes are really helpful for teachers.

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

I like how K-State gives students a lot of voice and power. Everything revolves around students, and what students have to say matters, how students feel matters.

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

I am involved in the Model United Nations Club. This semester, thanks to the club, I have the chance to go to Chicago for a conference that I know is going to be great. All my life I heard about the UN, and thanks to this club I had the experience to really know how the UN works.

I am also involved in the recently new club Wildcats for International Development. The meetings are very fruitful and it helps K-State students have a broader perspectives. In one of the meetings we talked about the European Immigration issue and what's happening in Syria. In other meeting we talked about the current political situation in Venezuela and what Venezuelans are going through. The meetings helped me to understand global issues and whenever I hear the news it's easy for me to understand them since I have background about worldwide topics.

I am also involved in the Paraguayan Student Association, which is a team of Paraguayan students working with K-State to make everybody in K-State know about Paraguayan culture. It's also a gathering time for Paraguayan students in the K-State community.

Saints Isidore's Catholic Student Center helped me through my time in K-State to grow spiritually and it served as a bridge of connection with Manhattan community. One activity I really liked, called Prayer and Action, consisted in going to houses of Manhattan residents and helping them with whatever they needed.

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

I just hang out with my friends. Go to their places and have fun. Whenever I feel like dancing, I have some good places in Aggieville to go to. I play volleyball with my friends, sometimes in the city park, and sometimes in the rec, it really depends on the day. I also enjoy swimming and I go to Ahearn Natatorium to swim.

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

How nice the people are in Manhattan and at K-State.

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

Sometimes the going will get really hard, as you already know or might be thinking. There are high probabilities that you might feel lonely or misunderstood, but that is part of the experience. It happened to me and many of my international friends. Whenever you feel lonely, do not close yourself to other people because that only makes it worse.

GET INVOLVED. K-State offers a lot of activities where you can go and meet a lot of people, and you will be surprised how many people will be interested in your culture. If you don't know anyone, it doesn't matter, just take the first step and you'll see that the rest is going to be great. Through K-State activities, your network of friendships will expand and you will be happier. Look for people that have your same interests. It is easier to get along with people that like the same things as you, and it is easy to feel connected with them because you have the same tastes with them. There is a lot of diversity in K-State and you will be able to find someone that likes the same things as you do.

Also try to have a balanced life. Take care of the different aspects of your life, the intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional. When you eat healthy and exercise regularly, you feel good and energetic; it is easier to study and to have good grades. When you take care of your spirituality, you strive for greater things and feel better with yourself. And spend time with friends, talking to them and building relationships. Invest time on getting to know people, because good friendships last forever.

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

That is hard for many of us to leave our country, our family, and friends. That we are here because we are looking for better opportunities and a better future. When people understand that, they will be able to be more empathetic with us and understand the way we are. We just want to enjoy this

experience as much as we can, and when people get to know us they will have the chance to be more open minded learning about our culture, as we learn a lot about the American Culture.

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

“Chemopirimba”. It is not Spanish, it is Guarani. Guarani is the Native Language from Paraguay and most of the population speaks Guarani. I am from the capital of Paraguay and there is normal to hear “jopara”, which is a combination between Spanish and Guarani. Chemopirimba means goosebumps, and I chose this word because it is how my country make feels whenever something happens, like listening the people cheering for Paraguay in a game against Argentina, or listening to Paraguayans sing the hymn “patria querida” (my dear country).