

I am Charlize Caye Cheng, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology student from Manila, Philippines and a participant of the Korea University International Winter Campus (KUIWC) 2022-2023. This experience was a journey filled with numerous firsts - my initial solo travel, my first visit to South Korea, and my first extended stay in a foreign country; regardless, it was an experience that I initially looked forward to very much, and now is an experience I will never forget.

During the program, I enrolled in the Sustainability Strategies course led by Professor Mark Davidson. As a humanities student with a profound interest in environmental care and human rights, this course struck a chord with me as it was both intriguing and applicable to my aspirations. One of the highlights of this course was our final project, which required us to prepare a Corporate Social Responsibility Report for a company of our choice. My group decided to choose a company that we all bought products from regularly, which allowed us to maintain our interest for the three weeks that we worked on the project. I thoroughly enjoyed this assignment, because it compelled our group to take an objective stance towards our selected company. As we know, all companies come up with ways to make their company look ethical and sustainable, even if it means having to give up some forms of transparency, so this project forced everyone in the class to look past these facades. One aspect that stood out to me about Professor Davidson's course was our field trip to the Seoul Bridge. This excursion set the class apart from other classes, as not everyone had the opportunity to go outside the university campus. The Seoul Bridge, an elevated walkway constructed atop a main road as an alternative to a highway project, showcased South Korea's commitment to public transportation and sustainability. The insights gained from this trip resonated with me, and I returned to the Philippines equipped with knowledge to apply when assessing new government projects in my home country.

While attending classes at Korea University was completely life changing, I think it would not come as a surprise when I say the most memorable aspects from this three-week Korea trip are the things I experienced outside of the classroom. Exploring various tourist attractions like MyeongDong, GyeongBokGung Palace, and Nami Island allowed me to immerse myself in Korean culture and history. Additionally, our program granted us a one day access to Lotte World, where my friends and I seized the opportunity to enjoy the park from opening to closing, going around the entire park and leaving no stone unturned. To this day, I talk about my Lotte World experience as a day wherein I decided to let loose and not hold back. Conversely, I also had the opportunity to visit the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), an excursion of a more solemn nature. After several weeks of witnessing the vibrant activities and talent in South Korea, it was humbling to hear about the issues faced by the Korean military everyday. The sights and stories shared in the DMZ were truly unique to Korea, making the experience all the more fascinating. Moreover, catching a glimpse of North Korean culture in the DMZ was profoundly compelling.

After all is said and done, I still cannot believe I got to experience the Korea University International Winter Campus. I will forever be grateful for the invaluable lessons I learned and the people I met. Stepping out of my comfort zone for this was a significant leap, and though I missed home, I came back with my heart absolutely fulfilled. At the beginning of the program

Professor Davidson told us, "These three weeks are going to go by so fast, so let us all make the most out of it." I did not believe him at first, but he was right. I developed genuine love for South Korea in a span of three weeks, and I cannot wait to visit again one day. The lessons I learned during my time there will accompany me throughout my life's journey, but above all else, the connections I forged with fellow participants are invaluable, and I eagerly await the opportunity to reunite with them, wherever our paths may cross in the world. I went on this trip alone, and I left with new lifelong friends with whom I made so many core memories with.

A more detailed version of my experience: <https://youtu.be/8HkRefTbKT8>