

Research-oriented Program Testimonial Essays



Summer KAIST CAMPUS Asia Research-oriented Program

Tamaha from Tokyo Institute of Technology

I have looked for an international research internship program since I decided to go to master's course in life science because I was keen to participate in research overseas. I had several purposes for that. One is meeting superior researchers in foreign countries and knowing their attitude toward research. The other one is that feeling difference between them and Japan and getting a broad perspective. **At this point, Campus Asia program was very attractive to me.** I expected that all the new experiences in this program would be very useful and valuable in my life, and now, I can make sure that is right.

In this program, I belonged to the synaptic brain dysfunction laboratory and joined research on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) model mice following a master's degree student in the laboratory. They are trying to investigate what molecular dysfunction causes ASD phenotype and how it happened. I focused on one of the ASD risk genes, Dlg2, which is a postsynaptic scaffold protein. It is shown that the DLG2 protein-deficient causes ASD phenotype, so we tried to investigate the molecular role of that protein by seeing its localization in primary cultured neurons. **It was the first time for me to culture primary neurons, so it was an exciting and useful experience for me.** Since I'm considering to conducting neuron culturing in my research project for master's degree, it gave me some ideas to do that. Other than that, I participated in several experiments such as genotyping of transgenic mice, immunohistochemistry of the mice brain slice, and analysis of single cell-RNA sequencing data. In addition, I joined the lab meeting once a week and some lectures which my mentor took, and my mentor also taught me basic knowledge about electrophysiology or other behavior experiments. I didn't have a deep insight into neuroscience before, **so I could learn a lot of new things by spending time in this lab.** On the other hand, since my lab in Japan is researching on the ASD field, some experiment was familiar to me. However, some protocols are a little different, **so I could compare each of the methods and get to know the better way to do that.**

Other than the scientific experience, I could get a lot of things. Before I came here, I know little about Korea, but **through the experiences such as having a chat with lab members, taking the language class, and having a day trip, I could deeply understand Korean culture.** Discussing about the difference between Korea and Japanese was very interesting to me. Because my mentor knew very well about Japan (even he had an experience to visit TokyoTech), we talked a lot about that and enjoyed it. While I found many differences between Korea and Japan, I noticed that there are some similarities. I was glad to know that some Koreans have much interesting or favor in Japan. I thought that there is no border between youngsters even though their home country differs.

The most I liked about this program is reassuring support by coordinator, buddy, and staffs. Thanks to them, I **could really enjoy this opportunity without little anxiety and inconvenience.** It could be more hard experience to live in foreign country without their help. I could get used to staying KAIST easily and smoothly because of the kind introduction, and some fun activities made this program more wonderful.

In addition, I like KAIST itself so much. The campus is quite large, and it has a lot of cafeterias and café. There are so many attractive laboratories that have great facilities and excellent professors. Moreover, KAIST students are all kind and nice. They are diligent and talented, stimulating me a lot. Seeing their work, I was encouraged and motivated so much. I found that most of the KAIST students who engage in natural biological science are in the master and doctor-integrated course. I'm in my two minds about whether I get PhD or a job after getting a master's degree so far, but I became to think about getting PhD positively, influenced by them. Besides, their English speaking skill and presentation skill are very good, which encouraged me to practice them more. I often struggled to tell what I want to say to other people in English during this program and felt frustrated. I will make an effort to speak English more fluently.

Lastly, **joining this program changed my mind to have more interest in the world.** I found that I knew only a small part of the world, making me have more wish to go to other countries. I would like to know more about foreign countries and meet various kinds of people. This experience broadened my eyes and influenced my thinking a lot. Although I'm still feeling a month is too short to be satisfied, I'm sincerely glad to participate in this program. I would like to research harder with the experience I could only get here.

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Winter KAIST CAMPUS Asia Research-oriented Program

Terutoshi from Tokyo Institute of Technology

I participated in this program to develop my research that I have been doing at Tokyo Tech. My major is Science and Technology Studies (STS), and I am doing research about scientific advice. Both KAIST and Tokyo Tech consist of students who have science- or technology- related background, but I am not major in those fields. However, both institutes have amazing department that stimulates my research interests, and I thought this would be an amazing opportunity to be a member of KAIST STP and do research with prominent professors and students. This is the reason why I decided to join this program.

This program is "research-oriented program" and the participants are required to conduct research here at KAIST. I joined KAIST STP, did my research, and discussed with the members of STP. This experience was very fruitful for me to develop my research. I hardly had the knowledge and information about the situation surrounding scientific advice in South Korea, and the way of utilizing it to deal with COVID-19. Above all, I didn't even know how to get the relevant information about scientific advice in this country, but I was able to get a lot of materials which help me to enrich my research. Thanks to the people I met at KAIST STP, I now understand the whole structure of handling COVID-19 in South Korea, and gradually getting the picture of how scientific advice has been utilized at the time of crisis. Even though we are supposed to do research in this program, I feel we are encouraged to go traveling, hang out with friends, and enjoy life in this country as much as possible, because it lasts only one and a half months, and it is very difficult to complete research in that period of time. Therefore, I tried to talk to the students at STP and asked them to eat out together several times and went other cities except for Daejeon with friends both from KAIST and Tokyo Tech. Even though the time was very short, I feel this experience would be unforgettable memory for my life.

What I like the most about this program is the tremendous support I got from everyone I encountered. The coordinator Ms. Hyelim Bae who was so supportive. Especially the one-day trip to Jeonju with her is one of the highlights of this program. Whenever we asked questions or for help, she always replied quickly, which was so helpful. And she gave us snacks, fruits, and things like that several times. That is also the reason why I like her. We really appreciate her dedication very much!! Not only her, but also our great buddy, Edward, helped us so much. He is in the Ph.D. course and doing start-up job so he must be very busy, but he always cares about us and asks us to go out and show us around Daejeon. Our stay in South Korea would be boring without him for sure. We really hope his success in Ph.D. and his company!! Additionally, the professors and students I met at STP were amazing. I didn't expect I could get this warm welcome, but they welcomed me very nicely. They tried to help me all the time whenever I have problems with my research. We discussed the research and have meal together, which is unforgettable memory for me. I really hope all of them will have successful life at KAIST and even after graduating. The Korean Language course was also one of the most exciting experiences for me. The teacher was so kind and we had so much fun learning with her. I will keep studying Korean even after I go back to Japan.

I am fully convinced that the experience I got through this program will have huge impact on my research and my personal life. My master thesis is comparative research between South Korea and Japan, but I would not be able to gather this amount of critical information without joining this program. My research continues even though my stay at Korea ends soon. I will keep in touch with people I met during this program both for my research and my personal life.

I have come to South Korea two times before this program, and EVERY time I feel so happy to visit this country. I have been to several countries, but South Korea is always one of the best for me. South Korea and Japan sometimes have issues especially in terms of politics, but I believe we can get along and we ARE getting along with each other.