USA: as a turning point for Korean Exchange Student

There are about 80,000 Korean students studying abroad in the USA. This figure is the top among all nations. Why are such enormous amounts of people studying here? Why are many students in Korea dreaming to study in the USA? Ultimately, during exchange student periods in the USA, what kind of aspects affect their career values and goals?

According to recent research, which was surveyed by “Gohackers English Academy”, building up career experience has taken first place in the survey, leading with 45 percent for reasons why student choose to go on Exchange periods in the USA. In second place, 37 percent of people said that overseas experience was their purpose of studying abroad in the USA. The last main reason was to increase English skill at 12 percent. As a result, most students set their sights on developing their career.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>Overseas exp</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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| Purpose of Exchange Student in USA |

But there are many people who change those career values after their experience as an exchange student periods. According to the survey, as mentioned above, more than 96 percent of people said that they were changing their career values during or after studying abroad in USA.

Here are some examples showing how studying abroad in the USA affected their career values when choosing their career.

1. Work and life balance
   Vs. Annual Salary

Yongjin, Cho who is working at Google Korea company said that he changed his career values after his exchange student period in the USA. Originally, the most important factor when choosing a future job was to make money as soon as possible. However, after studying abroad in the USA, he realized that work and life balance was more important than earning money. He said that in Korea, it was difficult to find people
who enjoyed their job and life at the same time. On the other hand, in the USA, he saw many people enjoying their private lives and filling up their work experience step by step. So he decided that even though the annual salary was not higher than that of his expectation, he could be happy with maintaining work and life balance.

2. What I really want to do

Vs. Name value of the company

Euljeong, Ko who works at P&G Korea company replied that she always tried to be the best in her position and thought that it was natural to dream about entering a major company in an industry which she wanted to work in. However, during her experience as an exchange student, she saw that there were many people who wished to work at the company in their community, pursuing their value and goal in that industry or career. Thereafter, she realized that it was not the most important factor to work at large company, instead the more important thing is to work at what she really wants to do and how she can attribute to her company showing her competence.

In Korea, there are many students who just pursue large or famous companies and fancy jobs. They tend to judge their career values and goals not for themselves but to show off to others. However during time spent as an exchange student in the USA, most exchange students would realize that the most important thing when we choose our career values is doing what we really want to do and what we can do well. Sooji, lee (2014) said that there were many cases which their life has been changed since they spent time as an exchange student in the USA. If we constantly look back to ourselves and watch carefully other people who already set clear career values in the USA, we can establish prime career values for ourselves and not to please others.

3. Getting the chance to specify goals

Here is yet another example of someone who after his experience as an exchange student in order to establish his career goals and values with certainty, had a change of heart. Jaeseong, Jeong who works at Mckinsey Korea Company said that he was able to gain confidence and specify his abstract career goals and values. During his period of study in the USA, he joined AKpsi, which is one of the business Co-ed fraternities. In there, he made a consulting club which helped non-profit organizations and he helped planning a few project to help the community. By doing so, he realized that for a global business career, the competence of skill with which he could use to make a change through global business was more important than the skill of speaking business English. Consequently, he decided to enter a strategy consulting firm to be able to make a change in the company through global business after his graduation.
Seonghoe, Gu (Edgar, Gu)

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Exchange Student (3rd year)

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Career goal: Business Consultant
Resources

<Interview with Expert>

1. Yongjin, Cho (Google, Sales supporting department, October 24, 2014)
2. Euljeong Ko (P&G, Business and Sales department, October 18, 2014)
3. Jaeseong, Jeong (Mckinsey, Management consultant, November 1, 2014)

<Survey>
Respondents: 32 korean exchange students
Period: October 16-18
Question: What is your most important factor when you are choosing a job?
Have you been changed your career values or goals during or after the time spent as an exchange student in USA?

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