Program: Thammasat University Exchange, Spring

Patricia’s Majors: Agricultural & Applied Economics; Latin American, Caribbean, & Iberian Studies

Academic Life: I enrolled in three Economics courses and one Thai studies course. In my Economics classes, I was the only foreign student which I found to be a very cool experience. My Thai classmates were very welcoming and eager to get to know me. The Thai Studies class that I took was the complete opposite -- only with exchange students. We were a rather small but very diverse group of students. Our melting pot classroom allowed for an array of different perspectives and fascinating conversations to emerge.

Most Memorable Moments: I largely chose to study in Thailand because I wanted to gain an agricultural perspective of the country. I connected with my professor who, in turn, led me to his good friend who had founded a national farming network in Thailand. On two separate occasions, I traveled independently to meet up with a number of the farmers in the network. A hands-down highlight of the semester was my visit to Chiang Rai, Thailand to live with a young, female strawberry farmer named Be. I gained a glimpse into her lifestyle and was also fortunate enough to make additional visits to surrounding farms to meet other organic farmers. I’ll never forget meeting an old couple of organic rice farmers who so warmly welcomed me onto their farm and told me to please come back soon. Despite not speaking the same language as the couple (I was with a translator), I felt such a strong connection with them.

What Sets Patricia Apart: Living in Thailand gave me an incredible sense of community. Americans are undeniably individualistic and independent -- we pride ourselves on that. However, Thai culture is completely group-oriented, others-first, and communal. Experiencing that mentality was a huge shift and gift for me.