

Patrick Sainvil, Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto, Japan, Internship Fall 2015

Tell us about your years at Rosen College?

Rosen has truly been rewarding. I was originally a student at FIU and transferred to UCF-Rosen After I completed a fall internship in 2015. I loved Orlando and wanted to stay. I've met phenomenal people from faculty and students alike. The atmosphere is much different than the main campus. Students at Rosen are very career oriented and hard-working with most of them currently doing internships or working part-time/full-time while taking classes. The campus is much smaller and reserved which is what I prefer.

What was your most memorable experience on campus? Off campus?

My most memorable experience was in 2016 when the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH) hosted a Kompa night. Kompa is a popular style of dance music in Haiti. I'm a Haitian American so this was important to me. There were choreographers who taught everyone how to do the partner dances. Afterwards we ate Haitian food. It was great seeing the non-Haitian students learning about Haitian culture.

My most memorable experience off campus was at the Main campus in 2016. I participated in Knight-thon, the student-led dance marathon event to raise money for the Greater Orlando Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. It's held at the CFE Arena. We danced for over 20 hours! I don't mind dancing that much at all because I love to dance! It was for a great cause because at the end we raised over \$1 million for the Greater Orlando Children's Miracle Network Hospitals! It was fun, but also quite emotional.

Describe your internship?

I participated in an internship at the Ritz-Carlton Kyoto. I was one of 13 international interns from countries all over the world. The internship was from July 2016 to December 2016. I was a Guest Activity Agent. My duties as an intern included guest activities like Origami, Hiking, Japanese Soap Making, and Samurai Experiences. There was also an administrative component as well. We had to send emails, faxes and make phone calls to the guests and third party clients to make sure the activities were coordinated effectively. Lastly we had to always give each guest a personalized gift related to their particular activity, which was presented when they checked out of the Ritz-Carlton.

I learned a lot of good things during my internship. Human Resources taught us a Japanese language and culture class every week. Which helped me pick up on some basic Japanese to communicate with the Japanese guests. The staff were extremely welcoming to us when we arrived to ensure we made it to our housing safe. As international interns we each had a cultural diversity project where we made a presentation in front of the managers and leadership of the hotel about our native roots. I introduced them to Haiti. As part of my internship duties I was also in charge of the kids' activities and I was empowered to design my own activities for Halloween. With support of my team, it was a success!

Here's a heads-up for anyone considering an internship in Japan, the Japanese can be quite strict, they have a very demanding work ethic. The interns always worked overtime. We were not allowed to disagree with any instructions, make suggestions or provide feedback. Some of the interns were very hesitant to ask questions if we did not understand a particular point. Due to dress code regulations I had to shave my wonderful beard and around November it got extremely cold for a Floridian.

I chose this internship in Japan because I love Japanese culture. My brother and I literally grew up watching anime and still do. My obsession with anime is what brought me on board! I was ready to experience life in the country that is responsible for creating the art of anime that is loved by millions of people from all around the world!

How was the internship experience valuable for you and why?

I was in Japan! Sometimes it still feels like a big dream. I got to explore sites in Japan that I had seen on television and in books. I learned a little bit of the language and adapted to the culture. I made deep, lifelong friendships with several of the interns and a lot of other people! I acquired skills that Hospitality recruiters are looking for in their new hires like cultural awareness, language skills, and working well under pressure. My LinkedIn account grew with many connections!

What words of advice would you give to students considering an international internship?

An international internship can be costly as far as paying for stuff like airfare, housing, etc. Plan for added expenses. You can get homesick. This is not the United States they do things differently in Japan and any country where you plan to take an international internship. Don't expect things to be the same.

Those sacrifices are worth it at the end! Working internationally puts you ahead of the game as far as work experience. Recruiters are amazed when they see international experience on your resume. If you survived working in a foreign country, stepping way out of your comfort zone, you can take on any challenge now! Come with an open mind! Be ready to learn and adapt to their culture. Work hard but also have fun and explore on your free time. You gain so much wisdom when you can spend more than 30 days in a foreign country, and wisdom is certainly more valuable than gold!

In the future, what are your plans?

I've had several ideas. I would love to do management training somewhere in the Oceania region or possibly management training at Disney. Later on down the road I don't want to work for anyone but myself. I would love to own a Bed and Breakfast or smaller scale resort and buy my mother a big house because she certainly deserves it. Eventually I'd like to become an adjunct professor and teach a hospitality course, maybe I can teach at Rosen College.



