

Eye-Opening Experience: My College Fair Journey



By Iris Yeh, Grade 11

It's that time of year again—university fair season! The energy is contagious, and it's always exciting to interact with schools from across the United States. This year, schools from all corners of the country, from the northern states to the southern, east to west, showcased a range of majors spanning STEM to the humanities. Just imagining the possibilities makes me feel exhilarated.

Studying in the U.S. has always been a dream of mine, though I can't quite pinpoint when or why it began. Maybe seeds were planted throughout my childhood, as I spent time in the States and became captivated by the idea of building a life there. The American Dream, the sense of freedom to be yourself—no matter who you are, no matter your background—has always fascinated me. The concept of self-embracing, of thriving by being unapologetically yourself, is something I deeply admire.

But enough philosophizing! At the fair, I spoke to representatives at several booths about my future major interests and got a real idea of what campus life is like at different universities. What really struck me was the diversity—not just in the student body, but in the unique personality of each school. Whether it's athletics, cutting-edge research, or local attractions, every school had something special to offer. Seeing that up close was eye-opening.

By the end of the day, I realized something: deciding on a college is going to be harder than I thought. I used to have my heart set on a "dream school," one I thought I might never get into. But now, with a clearer view of what's out there, I'm more open than ever. My focus has shifted, and I'm excited to explore all the new possibilities!



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FIND YOUR EXCELLENCE AT HWIS



Sizzling Summer: Annual BBQ Brings Students Together

By Jessica Chou, Grade 11

Every September, our school hosts an annual BBQ event that students eagerly participate in every year. The day begins with excited chatter as everyone gathers to set up tables, tents, and the grill, transforming the school grounds into a vibrant outdoor feast. As the aroma of sizzling steak fills the air, students bring their own ingredients to the table, with marshmallows, chocolate bars, and cookies making appearances. This day is more than just a meal; it's a cherished tradition where friendships are rekindled and new ones are formed.

Through years of dedicated observation, students like to reunite with their friends they don't usually meet during normal class days, they may come from different classes or departments. Even though it has nothing to do with this festival, seeing their smiles brings warmth and happiness. This is not just an event, but an extremely important core memory in the hearts of the students. I think they are always looking forward to this day, even though the weather might be extremely hot...

Every year's BBQ happens in September when the summer heat is still hanging around. Everyone knows that it might be a sweltering day, so we always see plenty of ice-cold drinks, little fans people carry, and umbrellas and hats to shield us from the sun. This really captures that "summer" vibe, with all the gear we use and the dripping sweat on students and teachers alike. It's all part of the fun!

It's great how the annual BBQ brings students together, creating a sense of community and fostering friendships. The atmosphere of cooking, sharing food, and spending time

with their friends, this definitely makes for lasting memories. Those moments of connection can really highlight the school experience. It's not just about the food; it's about the shared joy and camaraderie. Do you have any favorite memories from past BBQs?



HWIS OPEN HOUSE

弘文國際學校招生中

活動日期: 2024/11/16, 12/14

活動時間: 上午9:30 - 11:30 星期六

招生對象: 國一(G7)至高二(G11)



1st IN TAICHUNG
2nd GRADUATING PATHWAYS

04-25340011 #102
Ms. Yang

More Sports, More Fun



By Ethan Ku, Grade 11

Every semester, HWIS conducts an Interhouse Sports Day, an event where students from four houses: Hercules, Wukong, Ixbalam, and Setna compete with each other in multiple sports to win house points, the title of sports day winner, and of course, bragging rights. Physical education has always been a central part of our extracurricular activities, helping students learn "teamwork and cooperation," as stated by G11 Jessica, and "sportsmanship," as G11 Doria expressed.

This year, with the addition of numerous new students, the energy and excitement of this event reached unparalleled heights. Because of this, our schedule has become even more right and eventful, and the school has introduced new sports, including frisbee, cornhole, chess, go, and cup-stacking, in addition to badminton, table tennis, basketball, volleyball, and soccer. G11 Iris voiced the benefits of more people and sports, saying that because of the new students, there are "more skilled people," making this day even more engaging and dynamic. She also shared her secret to winning almost every badminton game: "Teamwork and confidence are the keys".

The introduction of new sports not only expanded the range of matches but also highlighted the importance of strategy. Chess and go require critical thinking and strategic planning, while cup-stacking demands precision and hand-eye coordination. These sports demonstrate the diverse talents of HWIS students and challenge them to think outside the box.

Interhouse Sports Day not only promotes physical fitness and athletic achievement but also cultivates important skills such as teamwork, cooperation, and sportsmanship.

By bringing together students, the event creates a sense of unity and belonging. Everyone enjoyed this event, whether it's because of sports or because they got to miss school. In the end, the house of Wukong won, but the most important thing is to have fun and enjoy the activities with friends, teammates, and teachers. Can't wait for the next Interhouse sports day!! 🙌



My Journey as an Educator from Southern Africa

By Mr. Siso Mahlalela

Adjusting to a new education system can be a daunting task, especially when the transition involves moving from the vibrant landscapes of South Africa and Swaziland to the bustling streets of Taiwan. Moving to Taiwan as an educator was an exciting opportunity for me, but also one that came with its fair share of challenges. I knew I would face cultural differences, but I wasn't entirely prepared for the depth of the adjustments I'd have to make. Taiwan's education system, like its culture, is distinct, and it took me time to find my footing. As an educator, my journey has been filled with both challenges and growth, highlighting the complex dance between cultural adaptation and teaching.

Upon my arrival in Taiwan, I was immediately struck by the differences in daily life. The fast-paced lifestyle, coupled with a unique culinary culture, posed initial hurdles. Taiwanese cuisine, though rich and diverse, was foreign to my palate. The bold flavors of local dishes were a stark contrast to the familiar tastes of home. It took some time to adjust to new flavors, textures, and eating habits. I often found myself missing the familiar tastes of home. As I gradually adapted, I later found joy in exploring the island's culinary delights.

The way schools are set up in Taiwan is different, especially in the classroom. Education here is rigorous with a focus on academic achievement from a very young age. The expectations placed on students, and indirectly on teachers, were different from what I was used to. Back in South Africa and Swaziland, students are very vocal and expressive. They enjoy engaging in activities where they have to challenge each other's opinions on particular matters. The teaching is mostly curriculum based and does not really focus on building relationships. While most teachers have good relationships with the students, it is not a requirement. On the other hand, Taiwanese students tend to be reserved, and their classroom behavior reflects the hierarchical structure of their society. As a teacher, there is a need to establish relationships with your students. Teaching is not entirely focused on the curriculum.

One of the most challenging aspects was managing classroom behavior. Taiwanese students, while respectful, exhibited different classroom dynamics than I was accustomed to.



Initially, I struggled to adapt my teaching methods to fit this new environment. It was difficult for me to navigate this dynamic, as students were not as vocal or interactive as I had expected. Also, the levels of the students in the classroom vary a lot. Differentiated learning was necessary. I came from a place where classroom interaction was very common and efficient. Teaching methods and strategies I had used for years in teaching and had proven to produce some of the best results soon became so not useful.

Through it all, I discovered a powerful bridge to connect with my students, through sports. Engaging in physical activities not only broke down language barriers but also fostered togetherness and trust. Organizing basketball practice and coaching the basketball team allowed me to bond with my students outside the traditional classroom setting. These interactions translated into a more positive atmosphere during lessons, as students felt more comfortable participating and expressing themselves.

Over time, I began to embrace the intricacies of Taiwanese culture and education. By fostering relationships through sports and understanding my students' backgrounds, I gradually found balance. The journey has been transformative, highlighting the importance of resilience and adaptability in education. 🙌

