**Exchange Program Statements**

Jordan Clark

Chestnut Hill College

Major: Journalism

**Tell me a bit about yourself.  Where are you from?  What do you plan to study?  What are your passions?**

I am originally from Greenwood, Delaware, and when not at college I currently reside in Seaford, Delaware. I am studying Communications with a focus in Journalism and a minor in Political Science. I love talking to people, working with people, interviewing people, I’m a big people person, hence my passion to pursue broadcast journalism so I am able to interview and talk with people on a daily basis.

**What inspired you to study another campus?  What drove you to seek change?**

I come from a very small town in a very small state with limited opportunities. Just going to college in Philadelphia was a huge step for me, a new place, with new people, and new opportunities. Once I learned that I was able to study in Los Angeles, I jumped at the opening. I had never been to California, and I thought, what better place to study journalism than Los Angeles. I knew it would be a huge culture shock, but I was ready for a new scene.

Coming from a small school, just attending Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia was a big jump for me. Going to Los Angeles was an ever bigger step but I had to step outside of my comfort zone. I had wanted to study abroad but due to financial reasons, I knew it wasn’t in the cards for me. However, this study away program was a bit more feasible and gave me a real opportunity to meet other people who live in a different culture, but in the same country. I wanted to experience something different, and so far I have.

**How did you learn about ACSSJ’s Student Exchange Program?**

I learned about the program from Sister Joannie, I told her about wanting to study abroad but not being able to afford it, and she told me about this program and here I am today, having the time of my life in sunny Los Angeles.

**What risks are you excited to take on your new campus?**

Since I am a part of the softball team at Chestnut Hill, I do not have much free time to explore and go on adventures during the school year. However, being able to have a semester where I am just focusing on school, I have a little bit more free time to go and explore which I have done and plan to do more of. There are so many events and activities to attend in LA, so I’ve been given the opportunity to do so. Activities like Disneyland, exploring downtown LA, Universal Studios, hiking to the Hollywood sign, attending museums, seeing the stars, there is so much to do here and when I’m not writing a paper or working, I will be exploring as much as I can.

**In the process of moving to another brand-new campus, what have you learned about yourself so far?**

I have definitely learned how am I am certainly far from being a city person. I do adapt well, but I could never see myself living somewhere like here. At least not for a long period of time. The culture here is shockingly different than from where I live. A lot of my friends and family from back home see me traveling and living in these big cities, especially with the job I want to pursue, but coming to LA has made me see myself in a new light. As much fun as I have with traveling and meeting new places and learning new material, I know I am more comfortable in rural areas, and would rather be in a place where there’s not a skyscraper on every corner. I love to visit, but definitely would not choose to live anywhere like LA.

**What advice would you give to other students considering participating in the Student Exchange Program?**

I would tell them, this has to be something you really want to do. You have to be willing to get outside of your comfort zone and take the opportunities that are handed to you. Some people may never be able to experience this, so do it while you’re young. Travel somewhere where you know is outside of your norm, the more open you are, and the more excitement you’ll find will enter your life. Meet new people, explore new places, do something that makes you happy, you can find happiness anywhere, you just have to be open to it.

**How has participating in the Student Exchange Program advanced your long-term academic and vocational goals?**

I definitely see my strengths in my academic pursuit of journalism. I have found I have a lot of skill in Public Relations, which broadens my knowledge when it comes to the real world job search. Do I see myself working in that area? Maybe, maybe not, but it is definitely an option if being a News Anchor doesn’t work out at first. I definitely see myself travelling more, I never was a huge advocate for change, especially drastic change, but coming here was a great decision. I feel as it has changed my way of talking with people, and where I want to take my expertise. My goal is still the same, but I have become a lot more open to broadening my horizon in the future.

**So far, what has been your most eye-opening experience as an exchange student?**

Definitely being in a very liberal state, at a very liberal college, that is a primarily all women’s college. I think the culture here is drastically different, the way people act, communicate, talk, even the non-verbal communication seems to be different. People here are very independent and to themselves in a sense. Opening doors for people, or saying please and thank you isn’t an everyday use, not because they’re rude, that’s just not a value. Here, it’s mostly “get where you need to be, and move on.” I am used to southern hospitality and a close-knit community so I have definitely seen a culture in a new light.

**When you return to your home campus, what new perspectives do you see yourself bringing?**

I see myself bringing new ideas to the campus, especially involving student. I think more opportunities should be given to explore different parts of Philly, or even PA. We have a good amount of students from other states and countries and I definitely want to see people explore more. I know the campuses are very different, since we do have girls and guys, as well as athletes too. So student involvement can be tricky, but I think there are ways to keep people involved in the school, I think we just have to give them more options, or really learn what people like to see and experience. College is a onetime experience, and I think each student should be able to make the most out of it.