

外国語スピーチコンテスト

丸山 敬弘

国際コミュニケーション学部

言語コミュニケーション学科

The first day that I arrived in America, my life took a turn for the worst. I found myself wandering around campus looking for my friend, who was an exchange student as well, and it felt as if I had been walking for ages. We had no form of communication, plus it was late at night. I walked and walked through the dark campus, and when I thought I finally reached my destination, the receptionist mistook my friend for a different student and informed me that he had moved to a different dorm. But it turned out that he was actually staying in the original dorm. And by the way, this wasn't the end of it. The person at the front desk was not allowed to tell me which suite he was staying in, so I had to knock on all the doors and ask the residents, "Oh, hi. Is my friend so-and-so here?" Thankfully, an hour and a half later I was finally able to see a familiar face.

This day sums up my life in America better than any other day I had experienced there. I did not know where to go or what to do, and I was worried and lonely. And when I thought I finally reached a goal, I went off on a tangent, or another obstacle blocked my way. Countless times, I felt immensely miserable and lost. I criticized myself, "What am I doing here in America? I came all this way from Japan to learn something, but I am not progressing as I had expected." A lot of people misconstrue the idea of studying abroad; they say it will be fun and full of exciting experiences. No way. On the contrary, it is full of difficulties, struggles, miseries, and all the negative emotions you can think of. But did I give up? No, because I signed up for this. The reason I applied for study abroad was not just to study English. I went there to push myself to my mental limit in order to grow as a person. The primary reason was to open my eyes by seeing and experiencing a completely different world. I cannot help but to think that my experience in

America has taught me more than I could have ever learned in the classroom.

Of course, it was difficult, but whether you can pull yourself together, move forward and take hold of the opportunity without losing sight of your initial goal is up to you: your own determination. I always remembered not to give up because I learned from the very first day of my life in the U.S. that I could accomplish something in the end, just like how I managed to find my friend on the other side of the earth. If you persevere, you can accomplish your dreams.

Thank you.