Hi everyone!

This is the first of hopefully many blog posts for the next couple months while I'm studying abroad. Today I leave for my semester abroad in Singapore where I’ll study at Nanyang Technological University. Here I’ll be posting some pictures that I take along the way and keeping you all up to date on what I’m up to.

For the past couple months, I was in Des Moines working for Principal Financial Group as a software engineer intern. It was a great learning experience and gave me a chance to break out of the classroom and do some real programming. On my intern team I did a lot of data science work learning about machine learning models and neural networks.

We were given a project at the beginning of the summer to use machine learning, natural language processing, and neural networks to make some insights on the company’s workflow management system JIRA. Going into the summer I was already wanting to get into data science, so this project was a perfect fit. We ended up being fairly successful using a couple different machine learning algorithms along with some natural language processing to predict how long JIRA tickets take.

We also had a Code Jam over a three-day period in July. For all three days we were camped out in a windowless room programming away with the goal of delivering a valuable result to our stakeholders. For our project we made a web app to improve the way employees view the status of their stock option distribution. Currently employees have to call in to check the status of their payment which can take a month or more to be processed. We replaced this with a web page coupled with email updates, text alerts, and a Google Assistant action to check your status. This was a lot of fun to build and gave me some good ideas for future side-projects.

That’s most of what I worked on this summer in Des Moines. Now I’m off to Seattle, Tokyo and then Singapore!