

Reuben

WR 13300

Professor Clauss

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The World Awaits You

Situation: The Ateneo de Manila High School (the secondary school I attended in the Philippines) has a buddy system in which a senior (like I was a year ago) is paired up with a junior. I wish to write a personal letter to my partner in that program, Marty. Now that he is in his last year of high school, he is not sure whether to consider applying to American schools. Thus, as one who is taking college in the USA, I want to encourage him to try attending a university here as well. Hopefully, after reading this letter, he will be more informed about the benefits and joys of studying in the USA and thus be more inclined to doing so.

Marty,

Hey there! How have you been? It's been a couple of months since I last saw you. If I recall correctly, the last time I talked to you in person was during my high school graduation last May. It's been way too long, hasn't it? We really have to catch up soon! As a matter of fact, I can promise you that I'll make time for just that when I fly back this December (if you're up for it as well). I really want to know all the stuff that's been going on with your last year in high school, like how the senior ball went, how the new girl students are doing, how good your teachers are, and especially the universities you're considering applying to for college. Knowing you as a really diligent student, I'm sure you're doing your very best in applying to a lot of great schools. The universities over there are going to think highly of your applications. No doubt about it! But hopefully, you're considering sending applications to American schools as well. In fact, as one who is currently attending college in the USA, I think that attending a university here will turn out to be a really great decision on your part!

Now before I say anything else, I know that a bunch of apprehensions are popping into your head. First of all, I know that you're thinking about the tremendous cost of studying in the USA. However, we both know your family can most definitely cover that. In fact, out of curiosity, I even did a quick search on the web, and I found that the bank your dad owns earned Php19,295,782.00 last 2015 [roughly \$397,800] ("Financial Highlights" 2016). Not only that, the school system he owns is worth Php6,000,000,000 [around \$123,000,000] (Amable R. Aguiluz V" 2016)! Your dad's income is humungous compared to the highest possible college tuition here, which is \$67,255 ("Most Expensive U.S. Colleges and Universities, 2015-2016." 2016). Additionally, your parents are open to the idea of you studying abroad. You yourself said the last time we talked! You mentioned that they don't mind spending more should you decide to go abroad for college. Given that your parents are willing and able to pay for studying here, I don't think that you have to worry about the cost of college in the USA.

Aside from the monetary costs, I know that you are worrying about the difficulty of adjusting to a whole new culture. That's a really legitimate thing to be worried about. However, I assure you that this difficulty will not last. I can confidently tell you that the challenge of adjusting lies mostly at the start. Believe me, I've been there myself. When I first arrived here in the US, I experienced a massive culture shock. It was really hard to get used to everything looking and feeling so different. For a few weeks, I felt an extreme longing for going back to the home I was used to. So many things bothered me here from the weather, currency to the customs and habits of the people. It had a rough time feeling like a fish out of water. However, to combat this, I made an effort to keep a curious and open mind. I tried to observe and study what brought about the culture differences. I read more about the history and customs of the country. I did my best to adapt to the local culture by eating the food and going around the area. Sure enough, as

time passed by, I started to adjust to the way things were. I even learned to appreciate the differences as well as the similarities of home and the US. I started to feel like I could call this place my second home, and now, it really is! Trust me, once you get used to it, it's going to turn out great!

Now, I know that the new place is not the only thing you're worrying about getting used to. Beyond that, it's also being far away from your friends and family. Indeed, this is an extremely valid concern, and I personally understand why this would be an apprehension. Being far away from friends and family really makes you miss them a lot. It makes you feel like the people you could love and find comfort in are too far to reach. However, worry not my fellow millennial! Nowadays, technology helps us connect with people far away! In fact, I call my mom, dad, siblings and close friends on FaceTime every single day. There, I talk to them about anything and everything, just like how I did when I was still back home. It's almost as if I never left! Not only that, we regularly send each other gifts and goodies to make each other feel "more together" even if we're far away. Receiving and sending out postcards, pictures and other items to the folks back home makes me still feel updated and involved in their lives. Should you decide to go, through technology and other ways of communication, you would still be able to maintain close relationships with family and friends.

Hopefully, you now feel less worried about the challenges studying abroad poses and I can explain to you why you have to give college in the USA a chance. First of all, you're intellectually superior. You have high grades in school. In fact, the straight A's you managed to get in the hardest semester of junior year landed you a spot in the top 10 of the entire class of 2017! Not only that, you're an all-around candidate; you do much more than school. You're part of both the debate and the golf team. You're an excellent guitarist. You're even part of the

student council. It's clear that you've got a lot more than academics to show! However, most importantly, you exhibit genuine compassion. You have many friends who idolize you and have nothing but good things to say about you. Teachers look highly with regards to your character. You even attend charities and beneficiaries almost every month! Given all that, let me tell you that universities in the USA not only look for excellence in academics. They want good moral character in a candidate as well. Marty, you fit the requirements of American universities so well that it would be a shame if you didn't even consider attending them!

However it's not just about your qualifications, but the quality of education here as well. Now I know that you want to attend the best possible university for college. I was thinking the exact same thing when I was applying to various colleges last year. Looking at the present data, considering colleges in the USA will open up your opportunities for an extremely fine education. For example, the college I attend, the University of Notre Dame has a global ranking of 122 ("World" 2016)! Given your excellent credentials, if you attend college abroad, there's a high chance you could be in schools with about the same rank, if not higher. Beyond the rankings, however, the educational facilities here are very updated and advanced. It's very common for many colleges here to have these kinds of high-quality and updated materials, and much more! In fact, in my own university, we possess a world-class library! Also, equipment here like microscopes, spectrophotometers and computers are of good caliber, well maintained and are updated to newer versions regularly. When studying in the USA, it will be very easy to have access to these things because the great universities here lay out all the best resources possible for their students. So if you want to attend a top ranking school with great facilities, the USA is the place to go!

Beyond the educational standpoint, the experience of living in the USA also means a lot more independence. In the Philippines, almost everything is taken care of by housekeepers, parents and relatives. Almost all is done for you from the expenses and transportation down to the washing the dishes and making the bed. I should say that it's not really such a bad thing to live that way. However, living in the USA will mean that you get to learn how to have that independence you've always wanted! Like you, I personally desired to learn how to be more self-reliant. Now that I'm here, I feel like I do have that independence because now I do a lot of things myself like doing my own laundry, cleaning my own room and managing my expenses. There's even more things that I could learn to be more independent! I could get my own job, have my own car or learn how to use the public transportation. Here in the USA, you get a much firmer grip on your life in the sense that you control more of how you run it. In that way, the independence that you seek can be found!

Finally, besides the kind of life you will have, studying in the USA gives you the opportunity of expanding your worldview as well as strengthening your Filipino identity. Being abroad has immersed me into a world that is entirely different from the one I grew up in. Here, I've met people from all around the world! I have fellow students and friends from New York, Indonesia, England, China and Mexico. Because of these people, I now am not as ignorant as I was before about the ways of people from different places. I have learned a lot of simple things like the Chinese like to brew tea, as well as complicated ones like how the British parliament works. Now knowing all these things gives me a wider sense of the world and helps me appreciate diversity more! Even more than that, it's also having that sense of pride in your own country when immersed in a melting pot of cultures. Living in a place where my nationality is considered unique has helped me realize that my own identity is something beautiful. Seeing

others so proud of their nationalities makes me feel that I too can be proud of where I'm from.

With that feeling, it makes me feel even better than ever to be a Filipino. Marty, if you decide to attend an American university, your worldview will grow wider and your nationalistic pride will strengthen.

The decision of where to go to college is no trivial decision. It's an important step you must take in order to achieve your goals in life. In doing so, I sincerely hope that you consider to attend a university in the USA for college. You're highly qualified, so why not go for it? There's so much in store for you out there. You'll get an extremely fine education. You'll finally have that independent life you've always wanted! You're even going to expand your worldview as well as strengthen your Filipino pride. If you take on the challenge of studying here, there are so much benefits that you will reap, and truthfully, you deserve all those great things. You really do! So reach out Marty. The world awaits you!

Sincerely,

Reuben

Works Cited

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