

Sh = Shelby Holtz

S = Songwut Bhattarachaiyakorn

Sh – Can you tell me your name?

S – Songwut Bhattarachaiyakorn.

Sh – And where are you from?

S – I am from Thailand.

Sh – Okay. So I'm just going to ask you a few questions about being an FLTA and why you chose NIU, okay?

S – Sure.

Sh – So, why did you choose to come to NIU for your Fulbright scholarship?

S – Well, I didn't choose NIU because the Fulbright program chooses the best fit for you, but NIU was my top choice and I had a former FLTA friend suggest NIU to me.

Sh – Is this your first time in the US?

S – Yes.

Sh – What are your duties as an FLTA?

S – As a TA I design the course homework and observe the class. We have "no-note Thursdays" which is when students come to class prepared to just practice speaking the language.

Sh – Thai language?

S – Yes. We also reach out to Sycamore High School and promote Thai language and culture. I have been involved in promoting Thai language here at NIU by setting up tables in common areas and teaching people about the Southeast Asia foreign language program.

Sh – Wow, okay, that's great. I'm going to transition a bit here and ask for your opinion on the food here in DeKalb and on campus. What do you find yourself eating?

S – Well I eat a lot in the dining halls, but it is the same food there everyday. There is no variety.

Sh – Do you have any places off campus that you like to eat?

S – I like Panda House and Thai Pavilion. There are fewer restaurant choices here compared to other states. (Songwut traveled throughout the US over winter break) But mostly I try to cook in the dorm.

Sh – Really? What are you cooking?

S – I go to Walmart and get some ingredients and then I make pork with garlic in the microwave and some rice. I usually cook just for myself.

Sh – Do you think you would cook more if ingredients were more widely available and you had access to a proper kitchen?

S – Yes. My suggestion as to how NIU could improve for international students would be to allow for more flexibility when it comes to cooking in the dorm rooms. It is hard to prep food in the microwave.

Sh – What do you find yourself eating on a typical day or week?

S – Sometimes I will eat fries, fried chicken, or sweet and sour chicken but it is not often. I usually drink Diet Coke every day and Gatorade after working out.

Sh – Have you ever been sick from any of the foods that you have eaten here?

S – No, I haven't been sick. There just isn't a lot of food that I like.

Sh – What foods are you looking forward to when you arrive back in Thailand?

S – Probably spicy soup, or spicy fried fish.

Sh – Do you have any other suggestions surrounding the variety or quality of food here in DeKalb and at NIU?

S – I wish they had more Chinese or Asian inspired dishes. Or, I wish they would get more creative with the dishes they do serve in the dining halls. It seems like it is always the same thing. Food has been the only problem I have had here while in the US.

Sh – Okay. Well thank you so much for your honesty, thoughts, and time. I really appreciate you being able to help me out.

S – Yes of course. Thank you.