



MODERN LANGUAGE STUDIES ABROAD

MLSA Ambassador Profile

We kindly request that reach out to our Ambassadors only if you are considering participating in the program.

Name: Jawon Turner
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School: Lakeland University
Program: MLSA at the University of Costa Rica
Session: Summer 2, 2017 and Summer 1, 2018
Courses: Undergraduate Level – Spanish Conversation and Composition

✓ **What was the most memorable/meaningful aspect of your time abroad?**

For me, the most memorable and meaningful aspect of my time in Costa Rica were very closely related. The most memorable aspect of my time abroad was the wonderful people I got to meet and the opportunity to experience a new culture. The most meaningful aspect was the how welcoming and loving the family I stayed with were. From the first day to the last day, the family I stayed with made me feel like a member of the family not just a student who was going to be staying there. We ate together, travelled together, went to sporting events, did homework, shared stories, and spent a lot of time together. Through this program and my time abroad I made some life-long friendships and connections. As far as experiencing culture, I was given the chance to live in a country where not many people spoke or understood English. This forced me to learn and practice speaking in Spanish as well as, adapting to the norms of society in order to communicate effectively with the natives. Lastly, I was blessed with the opportunity to travel the country and do many interesting, yet affordable things. Some of which include, ziplining through the forest, visiting national parks (Manuel Antonio), learning to surf, climbing mountains and volcanoes, swimming at waterfalls, swimming at the hot springs near the volcanoes, taking a cruise to La Isla Tortuga, snorkeling around the reefs, and most importantly eating all of the amazing dishes. However, even with all of these activities the country still had so much more to offer!

✓ **What impact did studying abroad have on you personally?**

Personally, before my time abroad in Costa Rica I was not very confident in my Spanish speaking abilities, I wasn't very open to try new things, and I did not like to eat rice and beans. However, this all changed throughout my time in Costa Rica. For example, growing up in Madison, Wisconsin there is a rapidly growing population of Hispanics and to hear them speak the language always intrigued me. Often times I would be able to understand what they would say to me but I was too nervous to reply because I was afraid I would say something wrong, but now I can confidently speak in Spanish without thinking about it. Also, growing up in a city where there were not many opportunities to

try new things caused me to not be very open to trying new things. In Costa Rica however, there is a completely different atmosphere. From the family I lived with, to the friends I made, to the university of Costa Rica, there were numerous opportunities to try new things and to not to take advantage of these opportunities would have been a very foolish mistake. I had a lot of fun and now I am looking forward to trying new things in life every day. Rice and beans! One thing I learned about when it was time to eat is to not ask. Rice and beans became a very important part of my diet. Every meal included rice and beans (breakfast, lunch, and dinner).

✓ **What would you recommend to students considering studying abroad, especially to your country/program?**

Some recommendations that I would give to other students who are studying abroad or looking to study abroad are to be open to new experiences, explore, take classes seriously and really practice speaking the language and adapting to the culture, take advantage of all the country and program has to offer as for some people it will be a once in a lifetime experience, lastly and most importantly enjoy yourself!



This photo was taken at La Isla Tortuga. This photo represents many things. For example, friendships, opportunity, and experience. It was my first time ever at sea, first time swimming in the ocean, and I was able to experience it with many of my friends!



This photo was taken on the last day, outside of my home. This is a picture of my younger brother and I as we grew very close over my time in Costa Rica. This picture represents the bonds and family.



This photo was taken at the waterfalls in Alajuela! During this trip to the waterfalls I was able to swim at the waterfalls. This picture represents being open to try to new things and explore.