

Name	Vivian WONG
University	Institut National des Sciences Appliquées de Lyon (France)
Duration	2018/10-2019/3
Graduate School	Engineering
Academic Advisor	Professor Yasuhisa HIRATA
Research Theme	Creation of a Haptic Device
IRTLab	3 (Fall Semester) - (Spring Semester)



Reasons for choosing COLABS

COLABS is a unique and well-rounded program that allows me to have my first experience as a research student in a prestigious robotics laboratory but at the same time I get to participate in classes of my choice that are related to my major. One of the main reasons in choosing the COLABS program is because I get to apply what I learned during my classes in Tohoku University into my research project at the same time. This allows me to gain a new perspective on my project every time I learn something new. Besides that, this program coincides with the requirements of my university that obliges me to spend a semester abroad and to produce my graduation thesis by working on a six-month project. Most of the engineering classes are available in English in Tohoku University and at the same time the COLABS program allows exchange students like myself to participate in Japanese language classes tailored to your Japanese level determined by a test before the start of the semester. It is a great compromise between learning about your major and at the same time integrating yourself into a Japanese university student life.

COLABS Experience

By choosing the IRTLAB 3, I have dedicated 70% of my time to focus on my research project and 30% of my time in classes. Hence, on average, I spend 20 hours per week in the laboratory and around 7 hours per week for both my scientific and Japanese language classes. From my experience, I realised that the Japanese research laboratories are very well-structured and organised. There is always the directing professor of the laboratory who is in charged of all his research students with the help of a few assistant professors depending on the size of the laboratory. Although I was just a special research student who was only staying for six months, I was required to participate as much as I could in the laboratory activities, including the weekly lab meetings. These meetings were opportunities for me to keep track of my progress and to ask for advice or help to the lab members as not everyone was always available during the rest of the week. At the beginning of my exchange, I was required to carry out a training crash course on a industrial robotic arm simulation. This was to ensure that I would acquire the basic skills needed to produce quality research work later on. Alongside with other exchange students and a senior Japanese lab member, we were guided to carry out read-out sessions and to create our own simulation under two months. After two months of training, I was assigned to my personal research project of 'Creation of a haptic device'. My role in this project was to try to create the lab's first customizable haptic device by studying an existing haptic device in the market. This project is important as it will serve as a base for many future robotic projects in the lab that requires the usage of haptic devices, mainly to guide human motion or to simulate human motion in every day life situations.



Overall experience through COLABS

To conclude, my overall experience as a COLABS student was an extraordinary and a fruitful one. I'm grateful to have a professor who was very understanding and supportive of my research choices. He trained me to be independent in my research work but at the same time to not be afraid to ask for help when I am stuck on a certain problem encountered in my project. Besides the scientific knowledge gained during this exchange period, I was able to gain insight on the working culture in Japan. I learned to adapt to the working rhythm in the laboratory and I learned to be a responsible member of this lab. I also realised that being part of a lab also means that I'm part of a family that helps one another when in need. Outside the lab, we have developed and maintained a healthy friendship with the lab members through social events and outings.

Experiences at TU, in Sendai and Japan

Before coming to Japan, I had a minor glimpse of this country of the rising sun through media and hearsay, but I have to say that experiencing it firsthand is definitely another thing. My stay in Sendai as an exchange student in the university of Tohoku has exceeded my expectations. Sendai is not only a beautiful and calm city in the Miyagi prefecture, but a city of its own charms and colours. During my stay, like many other exchange students, I have decided to make the fullest of this short stay of six months. I wanted to experience the full Japanese culture and that was when I decided to step out of my comfort zone and join the Judo club in Tohoku University. Despite having no experience at all in this Japanese art of self-defence, I was welcomed by the club members with open arms and became their first female judo player in the club. Their dedication in training me at least twice a week in the dojo despite their busy training schedules touched me and made me more determined to master this sport. Beside the practices, I was also invited by my Japanese club members for some volunteering work in nearby village. I had my first experience to be part of the local Japanese community and actually helped them to contribute to the well-being of the village after the earthquake in 2011. Other than that, Tohoku University itself has a very extensive network that tries their best to organise events for foreign students like myself, like hiking trips, ski trips and even get together meals to celebrate a certain Japanese festival. All in all, there was always something to do, somewhere to explore and someone new to meet here! It is not only because of Sendai is a beautiful city with lots to offer but also thanks to that the people that I have met during my six months here that has made this exchange experience a memory that I will always cherish.

Schedule

6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	☒		IRTLab				☒	Class	IRTLab		Judo	☒	Assignment/Rest					

