Living in Washington State is truly amazing. There are tons of fabulous and magnificent things to see and learn every day. Having come from a totally different culture, it has been impossible to count how many times I am amazed by the natural and splendid beauty of the state.

I still remember how exciting it was hiking to the top of Mt. Rainier. I was totally stunned by the gorgeously imposing sceneries of the highest mountain in Washington State. At that moment, I couldn’t think of any more words to say except “beautiful”. Being so high off of the ground, surrounded by inches of snow, enjoyably relaxed by the soft sound of the stream, made Mt. Rainier simply exquisite. At the end of the day after a day-hike trip, I felt so accomplished: not only because I finished a long 4 mile hike, but also because I got the chance to be at one of the most beautiful places on earth.

The Olympic National Park is also a great vacation destination. “Olympic National Park is a land of beauty and variety”. One day isn’t long enough to explore this national park, from the breathtaking mountains filled with meadows of wildflowers to colorfully ravishing tide pools. There are different parts of the park, which include the most amazing trees, rivers and vegetation in the world. I went to a day hike there last fall with the International Student Programs, and it was just awesome. Even though it was raining a little heavily, we excitedly hiked 0.9 miles through a forest to a very stunning waterfall, called Marymere. After spending an hour there, we went to a very beautiful lake called Lake Crescent; the lake is absolutely breathtaking and gorgeous.
The water was as clear and smooth as glass, and there were hills and mountains all around. Just by looking through your car’s windows, your breath can be pleasantly taken away.

If any of you just arrived in Washington, these two places are the destinations that you need to check off of in your must-do-in-your-life-time list. Besides working hard in school, give yourself the chance to explore this awesome state. After your cool adventures, don’t forget to come see me and tell me how much you love Seattle and Washington.

My name is Hritey, but most of you know me as Freedom. I hope all of my mates at Highline Community College haven’t forgotten me because I haven’t forgotten the times we spent together. The laughter and most of all, the hugs we used to give each other.

The state of California has really great weather, but people here aren’t as nice as people in Seattle. Here, students are pretty different too. No activities, no fun at this College! All students do is attend their classes. That’s it! I really miss my life back at Highline, especially the people there and the care we all got from our advisors at the ISP office. When I see International students in my college and realize that they don’t have what I had at Highline Community College, I feel bad for them. However, I am grateful that I experienced it for a year.

I am still doing Engineering (in case Atis and Mike are wondering)! I am still singing and who knows, I might still join American Idol. I am running for a Senator Position at the moment and who knows I might be the one, if I get voted for. I plan to make a lot of changes and actually start an International Students Club where all new students will have someone to guide them, and talk to them because there is actually no one to help anyone here. I plan to make changes in this year and hopefully, it might even be a permanent change and someone might take over it when I transfer.
My classes this semester are challenging, lots of homework, tests, weekly quizzes and not forgetting long Lab sessions and lab writing. I pretty much have no life and I usually get bored. But every time I feel bored, I go through the pictures I took in Seattle during the trips I took with the ILSC.

I am thinking of showing up for Global Fest 2013 to perform again, but it will depend on my schedule. San Francisco is very beautiful, but colder. People are outgoing, but not very nice. I still think there are too many people living here, and I’ll probably go somewhere else again. I think I love change way too much! I still haven’t made good friends because time hasn’t been on my side. But when I have time, I have fun and I surely believe I deserve it! I miss you all and I have been thinking of everyone over there, every day! I miss all the advisors, the fortune cookies, and coffee as well as tea! I hope new international students will enjoy Highline since people at the ISP office care so much about you. After you transfer, I hope you will remember the times you had a smile and were grateful. For new students, I’m sorry I am not there to meet you and get to know more amazing people, but life is a great adventure for all of us. Remember to enjoy life and make adventures in the United States. You might miss your life back home, but you are in America at the moment, so enjoy! Do your studies, attend your classes and have fun! You are only young once! Make memories! I love you all!

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Beautiful Emerald City

Rain, cold, wet, fog…. These could be the words to describe the area where we live, Seattle, Washington. I am sorry for this non positive beginning, but how many of you would like to argue about it? Oh! Only a few of you? I hope it’s not just a few of you but if so… that’s TOO SAD! Yes, I definitely argue about this question when I am asked. Surely, Seattle is one of the best places I have ever been to, in the world.

By the way, let me introduce myself. My name is Yukino from Japan. Actually, I graduated from HCC last year with a certificate in Hospitality and Tourism Management, and I am now doing OPT at an inbound travel agency which provides fun tours and programs around the Seattle area. Today, I would like to share the Emerald City of the Evergreen State, which is Seattle, a big tourist attraction.
First of all, is there anyone who has never been to Pike Place Market? It is one of the most popular destinations for tourists with a cute piggy bank named “Rachel” and flying fish performance. Pike Place Market welcomes 10,000 visitors every day. It is also one of the oldest continually operated public markets for over 100 years in the state. Once you go into this market, you will see thousands of diverse cultural shops like flower shops, restaurants, retail stores, and so on. I recommend you guys look down when you are walking on the brick alley since it has been the same since the 19 century. On the brick alley, carriages were crossing over, instead of cars and bikes. One of my favorite parts in this place is the ground panels that have some letters, and which were donated by citizens in order to operate this beloved market. Usually, donors’ names are engraved on the panels, but there is also a letter made of numbers which were donated by a math professor. These numbers are prime numbers and they meaning that “My love will not be divided by anything forever.” The math professor wrote these words to his wife.

After this romantic area, you can walk down to the Gum Wall, named as one of the top 5 germiest tourist attractions. Need I say more? It has an interesting history, so if you might be interested in it, just look it up! Keep going down the alley, and you’ll see a beautiful Waterfront. There is some construction going on around this area, but the work allowed the Seattle Great Wheel to open in June. The Space Needle is the first landmark of Seattle that opened 50 years ago at the time of the World Expo. Chihuly Garden and Glass was opened in May 2012, and it’s located next to the Space Needle. This is my current favorite place to hang out on a rainy day. It’s just incredible!

Oh my goodness, I don’t think I can finish sharing about all the attractions in the downtown area. Columbia Tower is the tallest building in downtown Seattle and on the 40th floor, you’ll find the highest Starbucks in Seattle with a gorgeous view. You can also have a good view from the restrooms! (Of course, without paying an extra fee for observing!) Speaking of Starbucks, did you know we can go inside the headquarter building located in SODO and have lunch with employees? It might be a fun activity compared to visiting the original Starbucks.
If you don’t have a car, you can rent a car with your friends. This is the best way to enjoy the Seattle area. You have more places to visit, for example, spiritual Blake Island where Chief Seattle was born, the pretty German town of Leavenworth, Mt. Rainier, with its many glaciers, Olympic National Park, which is a World Heritage Site, and the San Juan Islands, where you can enjoy seeing bald eagles, orcas and more. Victoria and Vancouver are also nearby towns where you can go for a day trip!! I am sure there is no place other than Seattle where you can visit so many destinations in only a day.

Seattle has been selected as the best American city to live in for many years. Now, have you learned the reasons of it? If someone asked you, “how would you describe Seattle?” What would be your answer?

You need to enjoy your precious and limited time in Seattle. Go and explore the city!

Upcoming events

Nov.15 – Rotating Restaurant (Shin Sung Korean BBQ Restaurant)
Nov.25 – Leavenworth
Nov.30 – White Elephant Party
Past Events Highlight

Mt. Rainer

Sounders Game

Chit Chat Cafe

Angle Lake

Pajama Party