

Why NCHU?!

Mark Wilkie

The traffic lights on Xingda Road turned red. I stopped and was waiting to turn right into the university. To the right of the main entrance, in bold letters, a large sign declared “NCHU 100.” A century, I thought. That’s a pretty long time. I had been reflecting on why I had chosen National Chung Hsing University to undertake my doctoral studies and most definitely the thought of starting my studies in NCHU’s centenary-year had been a big factor in that decision.

Why was NCHU’s age a factor in that decision? What did it represent to me? My undergraduate studies had been at a fairly old institute. I had really enjoyed the school’s ethos and time-honored traditions. When I did my masters, it had been at a fairly young school. Although the school had a good reputation there had been something missing in its ethos. There just weren’t the traditions present that should be central to a school’s make-up.

Like an aged wine, Father Time builds character. Over the course of a century a university will build its reputation; and NCHU has a very good one. Coupled with that are the school’s traditions. After a century an *esprit de corps* has been firmly established in the school and there is that sense of wonder that you are part of something bigger as you walk the school’s hallowed halls.

For myself, I wanted something more than just going to a good school. I wanted to maximize my student experience. I wanted to be an alumnus of an old school, a school with history and tradition. In NCHU I’ve found that. However, the school’s age was obviously not the only factor I considered in selecting NCHU as my school of choice.

Firstly, NCHU is a very good school. It is highly regarded and ranks among Taiwan’s four “Public Ivy schools,” or more precisely NCHU is one of the four leading-Taiwan-universities which make up the *Taiwan Comprehensive University System*. Further, NCHU has both *European Union Centre in Taiwan* (EUTW) and *Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business* (AACSB) accreditation. Additionally, NCHU is also a member of *University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific* (UMAP). NCHU has a large modern campus with nine colleges and very good facilities. Any graduate of NCHU can rightly be very proud of their degree.

Secondly, study costs. Tuition fees in Taiwan are very competitive if viewed globally. Taiwan is developed and when the costs of accommodation and studying in Taiwan are compared to the cost of accommodation and studying in many other developed countries, Taiwan universities are very affordable. NCHU has very affordable student dormitories, and for those who are after their own place, there are many affordable apartments near campus. Healthcare is inexpensive in Taiwan, and after six months students qualify for national health insurance. Food is pretty cheap in Taiwan and the cost of living in Taichung is surprisingly low. Further, international students are eligible for a student work permit and permitted to undertake part-time employment so can legally generate income which can be put towards their living expenses. Moreover,

NCHU offers many tuition waivers and scholarships. For hardworking-students who maintain good grades there is a very real chance of being awarded a scholarship.

Thirdly, diversity and English-taught international programs. NCHU has hundreds of international students from around the world. Studying at NCHU offers a truly global experience. The *Office of International Affairs* (OIA) at NCHU has a wealth of experience in dealing with and handling the needs of international students. Further, the school has tailored several programs and degrees specifically for international students.

Fourthly, location. While some are understandably attracted to the bright lights of the capital Taipei, Taichung, the nation's second city, offers a more central location. Taipei is in the far north of the island, and it is a very modern and convenient city. That's great if you want to engulf yourself in the world of Taipei. However, if you're a bit more adventurous and looking for more of a Taiwan experience then Taichung is a far better location to base yourself in. Taichung has more of that traditional charm yet still has a convenient and developed public transport system. Taichung is a friendly city and has a lot on offer: museums, art galleries, theaters, restaurants and cuisines from around the world, pubs, clubs, sports stadiums, libraries, and parks. Taichung offers these all, and from Taichung's central location it's easy to travel anywhere. Taichung is pretty close to everything. The cost of living in Taichung is also less than in the capital, something international students will certainly appreciate.

Lastly, but very importantly, my personal needs. My interest is Taiwan and I wanted to undertake Taiwan Studies. NCHU's *International PhD Program in Taiwan and Transcultural Studies* fitted just what I was seeking in a PhD program. As an established documentary screenwriter/producer I wanted a program that connected film with the more conventional Taiwan Studies courses. The program amazingly offered courses in both Taiwan cinema and eco-cinema as well as more Taiwan-specific cultural courses. NCHU offered all of these in English. I was truly astounded at how adaptable and diverse the program was. Additionally, Taiwan studies is coupled with transcultural studies which adds greater international scope to the degree. There was no other Taiwan university in Taiwan offering such a diverse and flexible doctorate in Taiwan Studies. This is what really clinched my choice in choosing NCHU as the school I wanted to study at.

National Chung Hsing University is one of Taiwan's oldest and most prestigious universities. From its well-placed location in Central Taiwan to its outstanding academic record and facilities, NCHU offers me and my fellow international students' an affordable distinguished education. We're all very happy to be living the NCHU international student experience.