I am now sitting at the Coupa Café in downtown Palo Alto, where has been a landmark at the heart of Silicon Valley for providing a decent environment for techies, ranging from enthusiastic entrepreneurs to influential venture capitalists, to exchange ideas, rest from their busy schedules or even build the next Facebook. So I am sure that here is the best place for me to look back my astonishing voyage.

**What is the work culture and environment in Silicon Valley?**

Working with people from different background is definitely an eye-opening experience for me. I guess most of you may wonder what the work culture in the States is and how it is different from Hong Kong’s. One simple example is about assigning tasks. My manager here usually gave me a problem of what she was trying to solve and the goals that she wanted to achieve. How to do and what to do, they’re completely on my call. You could definitely come up with crazy ideas. She would not intervene a lot as long as you can finish your tasks. Of course, she would be here to guide and provide feedback when you need help. Being proactive and taking initiative are the rules of thumb of working here.

Talking about work culture, you cannot underestimate the power of flexibility and freedom here. Some interns are given the chance to utilize some of their working hours on the side projects that they are interested in while the project may be irrelevant to what their business units are doing. A distinguished engineer mentioned that some of them could even file a patent for the side project that they were working on! This kind of environment undoubtedly cultivates innovation.

Harry Chan (IBBA/ Year 4) joined the Cisco International Internship Program (CIIP) earlier and has highly benefitted from his experience in the Silicon Valley. He made much reflections of this journey and found no word other than “serendipity” could accurately describe his accomplishment in CIIP.
A ball pit in the Airbnb headquarters

What do you do outside work?

"You should spend 80% of your time working and 20% of your time networking and exploring things outside the office. This is a simple 80/20 rule." That's what my manager told me at the beginning of the internship.

One special thing about working here is the network and the people you met. I am glad that I am able to join the CUHK Alumni Association here in the Silicon Valley. I never expect that we have such a large group of CUHK alumni here in the bay area who is working in big companies like Apple, Google or even Oculus (a virtual reality technology company which was acquired by Facebook). They are willing to share their experience with you and advise you on your career and life. Another cool thing is that they can bring you to their offices for a tour and tell you more about their companies. The most impressive office I have ever been to was the Airbnb's headquarters in San Francisco where you can surprisingly find a ball pit in the office.

How do you conclude this internship experience?

One of the best things about an overseas internship is that you are forced to step out of your comfort zone and explore the uncertainties in a completely new environment. What I learned and experienced are all valuable and memorable. I am really thankful to have this precious opportunity to be part of the internship program. I would like to express my deepest gratitude here towards Cisco for launching this program, Cisco DevNet team for the guidance given throughout the year and also Career Planning and Development Centre of the Office of Student Affairs and Business School for coordinating all the logistics involved. I am sure that these priceless memories and friendships will always stay in my heart.