

My trip to Angers, France, was a truly rewarding experience. During my two-week stay, I was enrolled at l'Université Catholique de l'Ouest and was completely immersed in the French language and culture, surrounded by students who shared the same enthusiasm to learn and improve their French skills. I made many amazing friends from all around the world, and it was wonderful to see such a variety of students all at different stages of their learning journey. I got to stay with a lovely host family who were also housing three other students, and they made us delicious homemade meals everyday so that we could explore French cuisine. We got to eat dinner together every night, which proved to be another fantastic way to practice our oral French and interact with each other. The city itself was absolutely beautiful, and I had a great time wandering around and becoming acquainted with everything it had to offer!

In addition to taking courses at UCO, the university also offered many different excursions to their students, and I was able to come along on most of these outings. Each one took us outside of Angers, granting us the opportunity to explore different areas of France. My favourite excursions were when we went to see Mont St. Michel and two different castles in the Loire region. The breathtaking structures provided a glimpse into history, which was unbelievable to experience first-hand. I even enjoyed the bus rides to and from the excursions, as I got to see much of the French countryside and other little cities. One thing I noticed is that they love growing sunflowers!

While I was extremely nervous to embark on such a trip by myself, I had an incredible time and made some life-long friendships. I definitely feel that my French improved greatly, especially in terms of oral communication, as I got to interact with many native French speakers and citizens of Angers. I am grateful to the French department for granting me such an amazing opportunity, as it was a life-changing trip that I would have never experienced if not for the Fenêtre sur la Francophonie Award!