



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Minnesota, Twin City
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 2019
Otago degree(s)	BSc
Major(s)	Food Science and Human Nutrition

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
FScN 1102 Food Safety	English	FOSC 213 Sensor Science	18
FScN 4112 Food Chemistry	English	FOSC 202 Food System 2	18
FScN 3612 Life Cycle Nutrition	English	HUNT 313 Life Cycle Nutrition	18
FScN 3614 Nutrition Counselling and Education	English	HUNT 341 Nutrition & Behaviour Change Communication	18
GCC 3017 World Food Problem	English	HUNT 223 International nutrition and Health	18

Any comments about these papers?

For food science papers, Food Safety is mostly about the laws and regulations regarding foods in USA, it is an interesting paper if that is an area of interest, while Food Chemistry is very similar to food system in Otago. For the human nutrition papers, lectures for 3612 and 3614 are all very engaging and interesting, while world food problem is a very interesting papers that talked about everything revolving the nutrition needs around the world.

How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?

All the papers I took did not have final exam, however, all except 1102 have final group projects to be submitted on the last day of class. Also, instead of 2 to 3 exams per semester, most of the papers here weekly quizzes and assignments, therefore the workload is spread out throughout the semester. The learning style is very different here as well, instead of just lecturer speaking for the full 50 minutes, they emphasise a lot on group work and discussions, as well as questions during the lecture period. This really made the classes a lot more interesting. Most of the lecturer give extra credits as well.

Accommodation

What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?

I stayed in Radius Apartment, one of the University owned apartment located in Dinkytown, 10 min walk off campus. There are different types of rooms to choose from and each unit comes with its own shared kitchen. The apartment has its own gym and hot tub for students to hangout as well. Also, Dinkytown is a student hub with a lot of restaurants and a small target for groceries, and Radius is right by a main street so walking at night is not an issue. However due to its location, some walking will be required to get to the campus or the campus buses.

There are few other options as well, University dorms which requires flexdine to be purchased for food or other off campus housing. Good places to look for these apartments will be Stadium Village (University village, wahu..), Dinkytown, or along University Avenue (Bridges, Knoll..).

While Radius provides the basic furniture (Mattress, bed frame, table and chair..), but beddings, kitchen utensils and cleaning services are not provided. Therefore off campus apartment can be a lot cheaper, although not furniture provided, since most of do have gym and coffee services.

Money matters

Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance

Flights \$1785

Accommodation \$4500

Food and groceries \$90 per week

Transportation \$114 per semester (U-pass)

I brought US\$9000 for everything and its more than enough

What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)

I bring cash with me to the states and applied for a TCF bank account for easy college fee payments and a free UMN hoodie, but ANZ debit card is good enough.

Visas & Insurance

Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?

I hold a J-1 visa that requires an interview. But J-1 visa is a short term visa, and we paid the fees to Otago, so the interview went very fast with only two question. What kind of programme? and Have you paid for it? That's all.

Some documents are required while applying the visa and the University can be slow in giving them, therefore make sure to prepare everything you can so that interview appointment can be made right after the UMN issue the DS-2019.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes, but it is paid for.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

There are a lot of clubs and student groups to join, I joint a student group and made a lot of friends there. The university give out a lot of free tickets to the first year and transfer students, which sadly

do not include the exchange students, however, if you ask for it, you can still get it. I got a free ticket to watch a play and a hockey game. The university also have a lot of activities weekly, for example free movies on weekends.

What was the university/ city like?

UMN have two campuses in the twin city, one in Minneapolis and another one in St. Paul, both are about 10 min drive apart. The Uni also provide free busses like campus circulators and campus connectors that goes between the two campus every 5 minutes. There are also metro buses and light rails within the campus. It is a very fun city where everyone get together whenever there is a football or baseball game, and people there are very nice, truly Minnesota nice.

Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?

Places to visit: Minnesota State Fair (Mid Aug to labour day)

Minnehaha Fall

Minnesota Institute of Art

Mall of America

Mill City Museum and farmers market

Stone Arc Bridge

Places to eat: Minnesota is known for breakfast and brunch, and most of them are really nice

Mediterranean restaurants

Buffalo Wild Wings

Things to do: A play in Guthrie theatre

A game in TCF bank stadium (Gophers Football)

Road trip to Duluth Lake Superior

Any tips for future students?

Get a U-pass which is \$114 per semester if you live off campus, and it will cover all metro bus and light rail fare. Enjoy the sun while you can as it gets really cold starting from late September.

Overall Experience

Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!

UMN is a very nice place to study, and it is very different from the learning style in Otago. I learnt a lot in thinking fast and critically and how to communicate with other group members regularly. It was very enriching in getting to know different learning style. It may not be the exchange that I imagine where I can go to different places every other weekends due to the assignments and readings, but I had fun with the classes and the friends I made in the apartment and student group. One thing that disappointed me was that there are no mountains and beautiful sceneries in Minnesota like in Dunedin and getting from places to places take a lot of time. However in all, I enjoyed my stay here in UMN, friendships were formed, lots of first time memories were made, such as pumpkin carving in Halloween, turkey dinner for thanksgiving and snow storm that causes classes to be cancelled... Most importantly, it made me gain awareness of the food and nutrition system in the working society, and helped me in looking at my future career path. There are only benefits to be apart in an exchange program, will definitely recommend it!

