



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	CU Boulder
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 1 - 2019
Otago degree(s)	BPhED
Major(s)	Professional Studies

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
ASTR 1000	English	Unspecified Physics	Not quite 1 paper
GEOL 1060	English	Unspecified GEOG	4 for 3
GEOL 2040	English	Unspecified GEOG	
PHIL 2240	English	Old PE paper: PHSE 206	

Any comments about these papers?

Phil 2240 – Fascinating American sports philosophy paper for anyone interested in the American sporting system. Sports and values are different in a lot of ways so an interesting and challenging different perspective.

GEOL 1060: Superb intro to Global change class for anyone interested in the science and theory that informs the present and future of our planet. Super interesting, nice small class.

GEOL 2040: Search for life in the universe. Awesome thought provoking class, eccentric lecturer. Probably my favourite class in Boulder.

ASTR 1000: Solar system class. Super interesting if you like space.

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

Super different. I found it much more supported and almost comparable to high school. Not in terms of difficulty but in how it is communicated, homework and assignments. In general I found the workload less than a paper at home, and weekly homework ensures staying on top of work throughout the semester. Pretty easy to not only pass, but do surprisingly well without a gnarly work load. In saying that I did lower level papers so that probably helped.

Accommodation

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

Bear Creek Apartments: Was super easy and convenient with a bus running between apartments and campus. I shared a room with an amazing gal and life was good. I had a bike which made life super easy. Living on the Hill is closer to Uni and more like student flatting. More expensive but if you can afford it, I would probably do that if I were to repeat. Just a personal preference, as the hill has a bit more character. Ralphies list and Facebook is where other exchange students found their rooms.

Money matters

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

Flights: \$1700 NZD, can get cheaper if not last minute.

Accommodation: \$3800 NZD ish. Boulder accommodation is SUPER expensive compared to Dunedin.

Visa: \$160 USD I think. + Sevis fee \$180.

Food: Not 100% sure. Groceries cost is similar to NZ, so I guess it depends on how much you eat out. I maybe spent USD \$40 on food a week.

Insurance \$800-900 NZD

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

Definitely opening a Wells Fargo Bank Account is the way to go. Free, need passport + 1 other ID only to set up account when you get here. Transfer wise is the way to go for transferring money across to account. Venmo is used for transferring money between people here which is super good, and you need an American account to use. Cash passport has a few hidden fees and less value for \$\$.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes. J1 Student Visa. It is a lot of admin so get onto it early. You Need your DS (2019) form from CU Boulder before you can complete the first form, but as soon as you get it, get onto it. You have to go to Auckland for interview also which is added cost if you are not from there. It is a process, but the interview is super chill.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

No. But you have to opt out of it.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

The outdoor Clubs are exceptional. I was here in winter semester and got super involved in the Backcountry (Ski) Club. Is fab if you want to get into touring, with super experienced students so great way to build backcountry skills. A good friend was in the Freeride club and he loved it. Great way to meet fellow skiers with cars.

Alpine club (Climbing) and Hiking Club are super fun also. The rec centre is phenomenal, climbing wall/ice skating rink/ everything you could possibly want and more. Though my experiences with clubs were very outdoor centred, there really is something for everyone.

The international office runs events too but I didn't go to many of these events as too busy SKIING.

What was the university/ city like?

Amazing. Boulder and CU are super beautiful parts of Colorado and the US. Boulder is nestled in the front range of the Colorado Rockies. Bit of a mountain lovers dream, but if the outdoors isn't your thing, there is still heaps to do in and around Boulder and Denver. On the whole, it is a pretty affluent place and college, with a lot of wealth in the area. Resultantly it is less diverse than average parts of the US. The boulder bubble definitely exists. It is a pretty classy place comparatively.

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

Really strong café and restaurant scene. Costs a few \$\$ but there are soooo many options. Cool micro-breweries and craft beer places if that is your thing also. Open mic night (Tuesdays) at the Attic bar is super fun also. The Southern sun at table mesa is an ultimate post ski beer and feed place. Also trike night at the Dark Horse (Near Bear Creek) is a must do if you are 21.

You can do 30 days of yoga for \$30 at Yoga pod if you want the full 'Boulder' experience/lifestyle.

If you can, get out and explore CO a bit also. Amazing state and little mountain resort towns.

Skiing: If you are looking for a ski pass, the IKON pass is the way to go.

Any tips for future students?

A bike makes life easy, but you get a free bus pass also which is fab. Also the woman and gender studies cottage library is a stunning place to study. Check it out.

Overall Experience

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

I had a phenomenal 6 months in the states. I probably skied a bit too much and met some fantastic people along the way. The campus is breath-taking, big and filled with heaps of cool corners to explore. College sport is next level over here, and I really enjoyed witnessing the spectacle of Basketball games. The football games would be crazy also if you were here semester 2. The courses I took were super interesting and not too hard, which left heaps of time for adventures. The change up in classes here compared to Dunedin was cool and inspiring. Would totally recommend doing at

least 1 random paper if you can while here. While the exchange students are super fun, I also met some really amazing local people. Through these people came endless new experiences and cool small places that I would never have found otherwise. Had some awesome weekends in mountain cabins and small parts of Colorado thanks to some good local mates. I had a couple of Hard months in the Middle when I lost a close family member in NZ + the Mosque shootings happened. Stuff like that makes you feel pretty far from home, but that's the way life goes sometimes. I had an awesome week in Park City Utah skiing and a week river tripping on The green river with friends which were huge highlights. All in all, a superb experience which will be forever memorable for a wide variety of reasons. Boulder is a quirky, very liberal town with a fun vibe. If you want to experience small (ish) town mountain living in the states, a big extravagant American college experience and adventures galore at your doorstep, Boulder is it.

