



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Colorado Boulder
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 2019
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Science
Major(s)	Physics

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
Electricity and Magnetism 2	English	PHSI 332 Electromagnetism and condensed matter	
Energy and the environment	English		
Thermodynamics	English		
Ordinary differential equations	English		

Any comments about these papers?

Physics is similar all over the world because all the textbooks and content are the same.

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

I found that even though it was pass/fail I got good grades, even though I was putting in less effort than Otago. It is due to the style of teaching, with the assignments are heavily weighted and the exams are generally pretty basic. Workload differs between subjects, I had weekly assignments for every course, so had to keep a consistent workload. Class participation is also a requirement in some classes. However, come exams and tests I found I didn't need to put much effort in at all. I found I did learn a lot in this method.

Accommodation

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

I stayed in a flat with some Australian exchange students. I found them before coming over on Facebook and Ralphies list. I was lucky to get a 4-month lease from August to December, but subletting is very common. Pros, I was able to have friends around and I met a lot of exchange students living with them. It is also cheaper than most options if you shop around. Can cook at home which is a big plus. Can't think of any cons except that Boulder is super expensive to live no matter where you live. I wouldn't have done it any other way.

Money matters

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

Boulder is super expensive! It was \$5500 NZD for accommodation over the four months, (not including bond), which comes to \$300 a week (and I got a cheap deal). Food is similar in price to NZ and I didn't get a phone plan, (was expensive but could live without it). Wifi and electricity were cheap though.

Flights are expensive, try get them sooner rather than later. I wish I stayed for longer but had a job to get back to. The ikon pass you can get for \$400 usd for the season through the freeride club but you have to buy it before November, totally worth it if you are a skier. Insurance, I bought normal travel insurance back home, covers all the requirements and was around \$400.

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

I mainly used a travel card when I was in the States. I used the loaded for travelcard through kiwibank. It's way better to withdraw heaps of money on your travel card so you pay the withdrawal fee once rather than wiring money. Transferwise is a cheaper alternative to wiring too. I also opened an American bank account, super easy to do and worth it for convenience.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes! Super big hassle. Apply and sort it out early, it's easy to get but you must fly up to the US consulate in Auckland. You can only get one visa at a time and I worked at a summer camp beforehand so needed to switch over visas, it can work but you need to have enough time to do the process in the states, I didn't and had to fly back to NZ for a week to get the visa. Very expensive big hassle.

It's also expensive to get the visa. I paid \$240 for the visa and an extra \$180 sevis fee on top of that.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yup, but travel insurance from NZ covers it. The cheapest insurance I found was NZ travel insurance which was about \$450 for the semester. Make sure you opt out of their insurance it's \$2000.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are so many organised activities for students! I joined a couple of clubs but spent most of my time with the alpine club (the climbing club). They were a super awesome group of people who loved climbing, the outdoors and partying. Pretty like-minded to me, even though I had never climbed before, I learnt the ropes quickly.

Would recommend joining a club to meet people. Other clubs that my friends joined included kayaking, hurling, freeride club and cheerleading.

What was the university/ city like?

University of Colorado is super nice and affluent. The recreation centre on campus has a diving pool, three more pools including a heated outdoor pool in a shape of a buffalo, ice rink and climbing gym. If you come here, you are definitely getting your money's worth... Boulder is the same size as Dunedin and has the same student feel as Dunedin with all the student living around campus. Boulder is very close to the mountains and there are a bunch of hikes straight out of town.

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

Go to a football game. There are many music acts that come to Denver and Red Rocks (a super amazing venue in real rock!) There are many places to eat and drink, I didn't get the chance to visit many but is a must do. I'm big into climbing. For climbing my favourite destinations included Indian Creek in Utah and Shelf Road in Colorado. The climbing gyms in town are awesome. Get amongst as much volunteering as possible, it is such a good deal usually and is totally all good to do on the visa. Trike night at the Dark Horse is a must do, it's so fun!

Any tips for future students?

Alpine club is awesome, I didn't know much about climbing before I came to Boulder. I learnt a lot and met many like-minded people. Get all the visa stuff sorted out early, although you don't need as much money as they say you need, be prepared to fork out for accommodation and food. Try to get to know some Americans so you get a chance to experience some real American culture. Get a bike and make the most of the bus pass they provide.

Overall Experience

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

My exchange experience in Boulder was incredible! The people I met and the friends I made; will be friendships I keep for a lifetime. Boulder is full of fun, interesting and genuine people and I am already planning trips to visit some of the friends I made from America, Denmark, Spain and Australia.

The highlight of my exchange would be the CU Alpine club. They are a group of people who are stoked on climbing, having fun and life. I went on a lot of weekend climbing trips organised by the club and learned everything I know today from them! They are not only climbers, but are smart, interesting adventurers with a thirst for life and it was fun to hang out with such adventurous people over there. Through the alpine club I made it to the desert in Utah, Southern Colorado and

Wyoming. The friends I made invited me to Thanksgiving, on ski trips and going running! I love the Alpine club and I only wish there was one in Dunedin!

I study physics and had to complete one of the toughest papers of my degree which I was nervous about. I again made some awesome friends who I had dinner and game nights. We also helped each other in our courses. I really liked my lecturers and got to know them well. The classes were well taught and interesting.

I really enjoyed my final semester of university and wouldn't change it for anything. My flatmates were incredible even though they were Australian (haha). I went to some incredible places close by. Skiing at Winter Park, kayaking at a festival in Gore canyon, climbing in Colorado and in the desert in Utah. Walks are in the flatirons which are accessible from town. Denver has a vibrant culture and a lot of music acts to come visit. Would recommend to anyone who loves the outdoors!

P.S FROTH (for rippers out there hyped)

P.P.S Skobuffs!



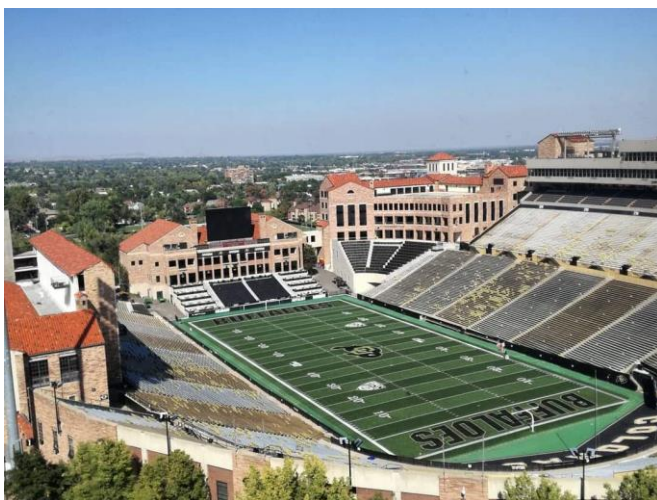
A bear on the university campus in my first week there



One of the local hikes in the area to the flatirons.



Campus





Largest inland sand dunes in North America



Colorado Buffs game



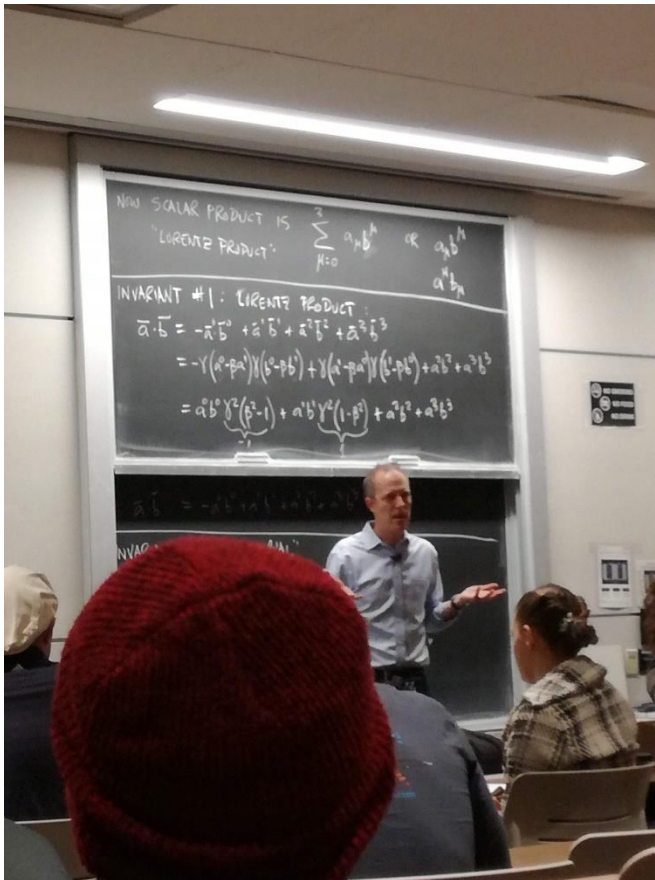
Rock climbing in Utah



Rock climbing in Colorado



Buffs game with my flatmates



Typical University lecture