



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	The University of Texas at Austin (McCombs Business School)
Semester & Year of Exchange	Semester 2 (their fall semester)
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Commerce and Science
Major(s)	Marketing and Information Science



Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
Digital Marketing	English	MART308
Global Marketing	English	MART326
Human Sexuality	English	ARTS 300 LEVEL
The Business of Sports Media	English	MART3XX

Total Otago credits gained: ☒ 54 points ☐ 72 points ☐ 108 points ☐ _____

Any comments about these papers?

Both Marketing Classes were amazing!!! The quality of lecturers are amazing and incredible guest lectures like CEO of Wendy's, Chipotle and very high up people in their respective fields.

Definitely recommend both of my electives I took! Human Sexuality is exactly what it sounds like (a sexual education class) such an interesting and fun class! And The Business of Sports Media class was so enjoyable learning about American sports and how sports work in the business end. This class also had amazing opportunities such as getting to go to a sports awards dinner at a private club and going to the business of sports summit where I got to meet chairman of ESPN and owner of Chelsea United just to name a few.

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

Definitely different to Otago but I enjoyed it much more. Class sizes around 30 people so quite small and class participation is graded so expect to talk in class. I would describe to just like a tutorial at Otago it is more like a conversation with the whole class rather than a lecture where the lecturer just talks. In terms of workload there is a lot of smaller tasks like homework every week but this stuff is easy and if u keep up with it you will be fine. Unlike Otago the final exams at UT are mostly quite low percentage around 20% max which is nice as all the rest of load comes in those smaller homework's

or assignments. Overall I found it much easier to Otago considering I enjoyed this way of learning and having to keep up with work much easier to get information in my head.

Accommodation

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

I stay in an off-campus accommodation like less than 5 min walk to campus called Laurel house which was part of College Houses (search collage houses Austin on google). Best house in terms of collage houses. We hosted some parties and lots of group events so you end up knowing all 60 of you that live there like one whole family. College Houses because its so cheap to live you are obligated to do 4 hours of labour a week. This could be cooking or cleaning not that bad at all and you get to do it with friends so makes it fun. Everything is included in price including food and power, Wi-Fi etc. Lots of exchange students live in these accommodations as well as Americans so you get the best of both worlds. Other options would be renting rooms in apartments (which are much nicer but more expensive and you can find people subleasing rooms for a single semester on Facebook pages if just staying for 1 semester)

Money matters

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

Accommodation (includes weekday food, power, wifi, etc.): approx. \$1600 NZD a month

Flights their and back: \$2200 NZD (look for sales when booking!!!)

VISA: \$760 NZD total for all costs from forms to shipping of forms. (I didn't have to go to Auckland embassy for an interview but you might have to so keep that in mind!)

UT Austin Fees (including the school's compulsory health insurance): \$2623 NZD for semester

Student Safe Travel Insurance: \$776 NZD covers everything you need like health to lost baggage etc.

Overall I would suggest saving 10,000 before you come and even more if you plan on traveling around USA. (it's an expensive country)

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

I got a wise card in NZ before I came to USA and I highly recommend was very easy and simple to use. You just upload money through the app and it transfers your NZD to USD for you with very little fees and you can choose when to convert it based on conversion rate. You can have a digital card (apple pay) and physical card and super easy to do everything though the app.

Visas & Insurance

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

Yes I did have to apply for a visa and let me say it's not the easiest process in the entire world. It involves applying for a J1 (exchange student visa) online then you may or may not be expected to interview in Auckland (so beware of that extra cost) I ended up not having to do an interview but I do know people who did so prepare in advance. It is a very lengthy and expensive process involving lots of forms and getting papers signed and sent back and forth so make sure you start it early.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

Yes it does! Overall it was just over \$1000 USD for the 1 semester.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There are heaps of activities to do for exchange students and normal students. There are heaps of events throughout the year for exchange students including welcome evenings and group catch ups. I would recommend starting in the fall semester as this is the start of there year so heaps of o week type of events on where there is less in spring semester. There are many clubs to join and be part of and also sports. I joined the swim team where we trained socially and competed against other universities in US, we went out for dinner and thanksgiving diner together so I would recommend joining a club or sport you are interested in, you meet the best people. Also recommend planet longhorn (international club) which has events on every week run by students like they host pres for parties and fun weekend events like I went on a fun boat party!

What was the university/ city like?

The university is in the city of Austin, Texas which is known as the “Live Music Capital of the World”. There are heaps of things to do in and around Austin. The campus is quite big but being in Texas where everything is bigger I thought it might be a bit bigger. It is a very pretty and stunning campus, the gym is massive which includes an indoor pool and outdoor pool including a leisure pool so in the 42 degrees you can swim and tan on campus for free or even have a spa and sauna in the winter. Lots of yummy food on campus and massive libraries and super cool places to study. Austin has so much to do and see! From Barton creek outdoor springs to paddleboarding in the lake to country line dancing and hiking and the best part THE FOOD!! Texmex, BBQ and In&Out, you name it, it’s there.

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

- Barton Creek Outdoor Springs
- Terrys Blacks BBQ
- South Congress (cowboy street shopping)
- Congress Avenue Bridge (watch 1.5M bats flying out of bridge)
- Shopping (Domain, thrift stores above uni, San Marco outlet)
- Paddleboard on Ladybird lake
- Texas State Capitol
- NASA (Houston)
- San Antonio (fun city out of Austin, has six flags)
- Texas State Fair (Dallas)

Any tips for future students?

Start you planning early (especially visa process) work out where you want to stay, etc to avoid stress. That’s what made it so less stressful for me because I planned so early. Also take every opportunity! Going on exchange is so much fun and the more opportunities you take the more experiences and life long memories.

If any of you have any extra questions or help with your exchange or planning feel free to reach out to me, I’d be happy to help! – andol082@student.otago.ac.nz

Overall Experience

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

My exchange at the University of Texas at Austin was a truly amazing and transformative experience. Not only did I gain valuable insights and knowledge from incredible professors and industry leaders through engaging courses, but I also formed bonds with some of the best friends I've ever had. The

collaborative learning environment, diverse perspectives, and small class sizes made every class memorable. Beyond academics, the vibrant city of Austin provided a unique backdrop for personal growth, introducing me to new cultures, cuisines, and perspectives. The experiences I had, from exploring Barton Creek to participating in international and sports clubs, have not only enriched my life but have also given me a broader view of the world. This exchange adventure has not only enhanced my academic and cultural understanding but has also imparted valuable life skills that will undoubtedly stand out on my CV. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity, as it has not only shaped my academic and professional trajectory but has also given me a profound and positive outlook on life.

