



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Colorado Boulder
Semester & Year of Exchange	S2 2023
Otago degree(s)	Bachelor of Arts and Science
Major(s)	Ecology and Anthropology

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent
ANTH 4755 Cultures of Expertise	English	ANTH 300
ANTH 4235 Landscape Archaeology	English	ANTH 329
GEOG 4371 Forest Geography	English	Unspecified 300-level
DNCE 3001 Intermediate/Advanced Contemporary Dance	English	ARTS 300
EBIO 3190 Plants and Society	English	GEOG393

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

Any comments about these papers?

I really enjoyed my papers overall, it was nice to get a different teaching style from Otago and to get different topics than we have at home. These papers were all 1 hr 15 mins 2 times a week, which was a good amount of time for the practical dance paper and the discussion-based ANTH and EBIO papers, but was a bit too long for my GEOG paper which was a lecture for the full amount of time.

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

The ANTH papers were more like long tutorials, being entirely discussion-based, and as I was doing upper level classes people were quite good at participating which was really nice, and a change from Otago, where I have found that tutorials are often very quiet. Overall the workload was pretty easy, most of my classes just had a few medium/bigger assignments infrequently, but the EBIO and ANTH both had small weekly assignments (usually worth 0.5-10 points each) which were sometimes hard

to remember to do. I didn't have any final exams, just a few final projects that were relatively straightforward. In general, the teaching style expected more in-class participation, even in the lecture based class, but overall the students were pretty good at participating, which enhanced the learning experience.

Accommodation

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

I rented a room in a 4 person house, so I had 3 flatmates. My house was about a 10 min bike ride/bus ride from campus in a quiet neighbourhood (Martin Acres), so it was a good location and was relatively cheap for Boulder (\$875 USD a month). Living with flatmates worked out really well for me as it gave me people to talk to and hang out with when I was still making friends on campus, and they also were able to give me rides to do things like groceries. The only con was that it wasn't really that close to the middle of town area, so I had to plan for that if I wanted to go out in the evening. Luckily the public transport was pretty reliable and went pretty late, and I didn't go out all that much so it wasn't too big of an issue for me.

Money matters

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

My flat was \$875 a month plus probably around \$75-100 in utilities (lower in summer, higher in winter), I paid around \$700 for the Studentsafe Outbound insurance, and probably around \$200-\$250 a month for food (I am vegetarian so this is excluding meat). My flights over were around \$1,500, not including Dunedin to Auckland.

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

I opened a US bank account with Elevations Credit Union because it has a partnership with CU Boulder. I used Paypal and a Wise card to pay for things, and I'd definitely recommend getting a local bank account if possible (I think that Chase was good for non-US citizens) so you don't lose money on the conversion and credit card fee every time you buy something.

Visas & Insurance

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

I have a US passport so I didn't have to get a visa.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?

CU has mandatory insurance but you can use your own personal insurance, you just have to fill out a waiver to get it approved. I used the Studentsafe Outbound from Insurancesafe NZ and it was perfect.

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There were heaps of clubs on campus, I'd recommend the Alpine Club (for outdoor rock climbing) or Backcountry Squatters (women/non-binary folks tramping club) because they both run weekend trips which are a good opportunity to get to know people. I went to Bread & Belonging at St. Aidan's church which was a free meal on Tuesdays (no need to be religious) and joined SAFE (distribute supplies to unhoused people) as well. There was such a wide range of clubs including singing/musical groups, sports, outdoors, arts, etc, similar to what Otago has.

What was the university/ city like?

The city was similar to Dunedin in size and layout, with the university campus being all in one spot (a pretty large area) and close to the middle of town (Pearl st.) There were plenty of good bike lanes and bike racks, and lots of buses going everywhere. The Uni itself had a mix of older and newer buildings with some having the older style lecture halls, and others newer rooms. All the classrooms used PowerPoints. Boulder is very close to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains so there would occasionally be a bear on or near campus, or deer wandering around. This also means that there are plenty of cool walks nearby that are easily accessible by bus or bike, or a short walk or drive.

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

The Australian and Kiwi exchange students who I got to know would go to Half Fast Subs once a week for dinner and drinks. I'd definitely recommend the farmers market and wandering around Pearl St. I also used to study with friends at Trident which is a cool bookstore and co-op café. Definitely visit the museums in Denver, and try to go on a road trip if possible – Utah has so many amazing national parks, we went to Zion, Grand Canyon, Arches, Capitol Reef, and Yellowstone (Wyoming).

Any tips for future students?

The other exchange students will probably be your first friends as you're all in the same situation, and it's nice to have people who are from a familiar place. Join lots of clubs, put yourself out there – Americans are quite friendly and were pretty chatty even in my classes. It is an emotional rollercoaster at first, but I had so many amazing experiences and made some wonderful friends, it was definitely worth it!

Overall Experience

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

Overall, this experience was a wonderful, full, fun time with lots of learning on all levels. I learned new stuff in my classes obviously, but I also learned a lot about myself in relation to how I handle stress, new things, challenges, etc, and I learned better how to make friends and create community. I made so many wonderful friends in both the Aus/NZ exchange students and with Boulder-based students in my class (though this took a lot longer). These connections will stay with me for a long time and even though it was hard at first being away from family and friends, in the end it was worth it! Boulder is an amazing place for outdoors stuff and I was able to not only get

outside in the local area (def go up the 2nd Flatiron!) but also go on road trips to Yellowstone, Grand Teton National Park, the Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, Arches National Park, and all the amazing sights in between.



Photos (clockwise from top left): Chataqua Park in Boulder, local uni friends, me (second from left) and Aussie exchange students doing the Angels Landing hike in Zion, me at the top of Angels Landing, more uni friends.