

BOSTON COLLEGE

Semester 1 2017 – Victoria Mills LLB/BCom

My exchange experience was nothing less than incredible. I fell in love with Boston and am determined to move back there in the future. I am a Law and Commerce (major in economics) 4th year student. I wanted to live a full American College life on my exchange, and I can safely say I did just that! I was completely immersed in the American lifestyle and made the most of my exchange.

Accommodation:

After already flatting for 3 years in Dunedin, I knew I wanted to live off-campus at BC. I also knew that I wanted to live with only American students, as I was interested in living the full American experience, rather than live with other international students. I used the Housing website and emailed a few different sublets. I found a house on Rose Garden Circle (just off Foster Street), which had 4 American girls living there, (I did a wee stalk on Facebook) and they looked awesome! I am lucky enough to say now that these girls became my best friends, and we still talk every day, and they are all planning a trip to New Zealand! If you are living off campus, I would recommend knowing what situation you want to be in, whether it's with Americans or Internationals, boys or girls, and finding something which suits you! As my roommates truly made my exchange the best it could be! (There were some horror stories of international students not liking their roommates at all or their house). Definitely flat around Foster St, Gerald St, South St, etc. These are similar to Castle/Leith and are all close to Campus (max 10 min walk), or on the shuttle line (the bus goes every 10 mins to and from campus for free). You can also opt to live on-campus, but I think it's quite hard to find a spot!

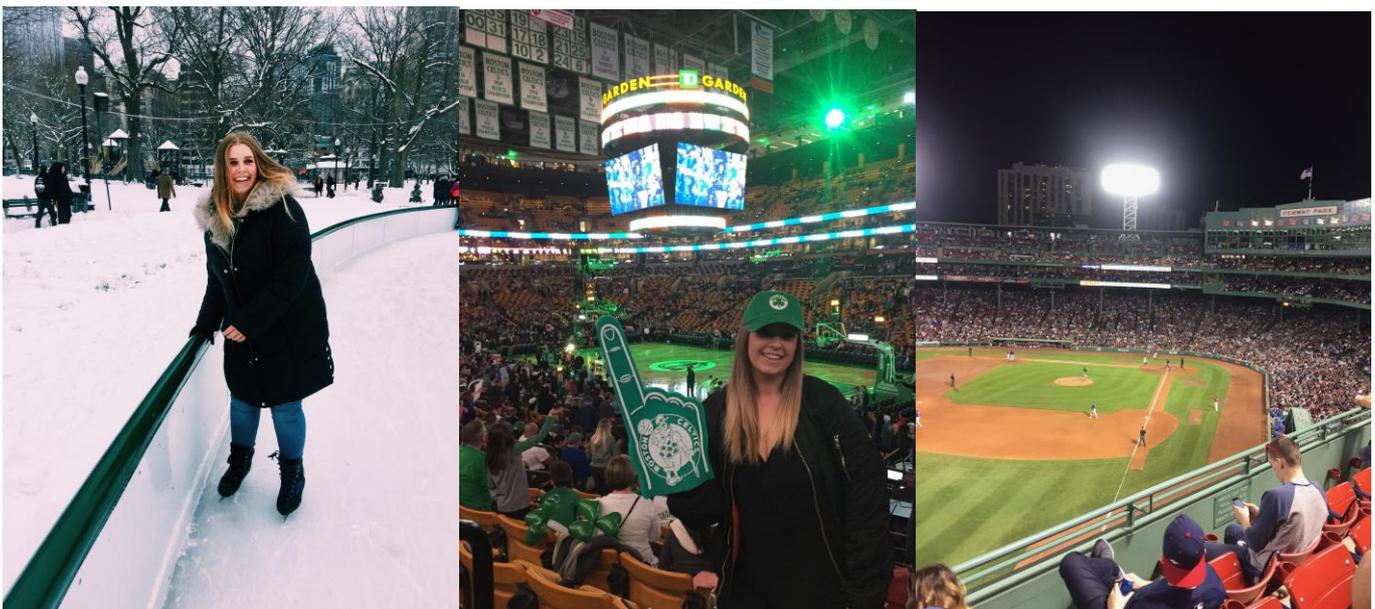


Academics:

I completed 3 economic courses (1 x 200 level and 2 x 300 level) as well as accounting and a business law course. The prerequisites for courses at Boston College are strictly adhered to. This meant I had to complete 100 level calculus in Dunedin before going on exchange to ensure I could study Economics at BC. This took a lot of planning and forward thinking, but all worked out in the end. When I was first given my timetable, they had only put me in one economics course (which I was warned of), however, I went directly to the professors and asked if I could join their class, even though some were 'closed'. They are really happy to help you and really enjoy having international students in their classes. I also managed to organise my timetable to only have classes on Tuesday and Thursday, my days were long from 9am-7pm but it was worth it to have three days off and be able to use those days to travel and explore the city. The classes at BC are very different to those at Otago. Class sizes are small, especially if you are doing 3000 level courses, and there was a very personal feel between students and professors. One of my professors had our whole class over for dinner at the end of semester! Speaking up and discussing topics in class is encouraged and can count towards your final grade. I found this easy to get used to and enjoyed the normality of answering and asking questions in class. All my classes were taken at pass/fail, so studying was not one of my priorities, but I of course still passed everything.

Boston:

The city of Boston is incredible. Before going on exchange I had travelled quite a bit around the States, but never to Boston. I simply chose it because it was close to New York and I prefer the East Coast over the West Coast. I was amazed from the start at how much Boston had to offer. The history and people is what makes Boston the best city in America! There is so much to see and do – the Freedom Trail, Fenway Park, Newbury Street (shopping), Public Library, Boston Commons, the museums, Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Harvard, Cambridge, MIT... the list goes ON! Take advantage of your BC ID, which gets you free entry to many places. I loved spending time on Newbury Street and in the Commons. During the winter, there was snow everywhere and you can go ice skating on Frog Pond (a MUST!) and then during the summer the lake is melted and you can go on the swan boats! Every weekend I would do something new and never wasted time. Sport is huge in Boston, and was one of my favourite parts. We had the Super Bowl while I was there, which was the ultimate American experience. Make sure to go to a Red Sox game at Fenway, and a Celtics game at TD Garden! Also, the BC sports are amazing, I went to ice hockey games, basketball, lacrosse, definitely get amongst – GO EAGLES!



Travel:

I did a LOT of travel while I was on exchange. I went to New York twice, it is so easy to get a bus (you can get tickets for \$5!) or get on the Amtrak (fast train). My parents also came and visited me and we travelled to Washington DC, Martha's Vineyard, Rhode Island, New York, and then I got to show them around Boston for a few days. I also went down to Cancun, Mexico for Spring Break! That was definitely a highlight and it was just like the movies. For Easter Break I went to Coachella, as my friend from New Zealand was studying abroad in San Diego. This was unreal. If there are any music festivals you want to go to in the States, I definitely recommend going (it was 2000x better than RNV). Then, after finals and spending some more time in Boston, I had a month before second semester started again in Dunedin. I used this time to travel Europe. I went to London and stayed there for a week, before embarking on a 25 day long Contiki, which went to 11 different countries. This was such a great way to see and do as much as possible in that amount of time, and you meet some fantastic people.



Extra Tips:

A few little extra tips I can think of for your exchange to Boston College, is it really helps to be 21. Boston is very strict about the drinking age and going into bars, as it is such a student city. I had my 21st in the first week of arriving, my roommates threw me a huge party and it was a great way of meeting all of their friends. But for the people that weren't 21, nightlife was very difficult. Regarding money, Boston is pretty expensive, my rent was \$300 NZD per week, and Boston College, being a private college is quite expensive.

I had saved up for a while as I never wanted to miss out on an opportunity because of financial stress. Another tip is that before arriving to my flat I had ordered a bunch of bedding and supplies from Target to be shipped to my flat, so when I got there, everything was waiting and ready for me, this just lessened the stress slightly of moving to a brand new city.

Other than that, I can't really describe how grateful and lucky I am to have gone on exchange to Boston College. I had the time of my life, met my best friends and will 100% be moving back there in the future. If you have any questions at ALL about the College, or Boston, or exchange please don't hesitate to ask me!

