



My Exchange Evaluation

Basic Information

Host University	University of Alberta
Semester & Year of Exchange	S1, 2019
Otago degree(s)	BSci
Major(s)	Sport Development and Management (minor in Marketing Management)

Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

Course title	Language of instruction	Otago equivalent	Otago credit value
KIN 245- Intro to Sport Coaching	English	300 level major paper	18
RLS 232- Marketing for Recreation, Sport and Tourism	English	MART207	18
KRLS 304- Advanced Sociology of Sport and Leisure	English	SPEX312	18
KRLS 305- Financial Management of Recreation, Sport and Tourism	English	SPEX209	18

Any comments about these papers?

Enjoyed the papers more than most of the ones I've taken at Otago. Especially recommend 245 and 304.

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

The biggest difference was that class sizes were much smaller. Professors knew you by name and classes were interactive with more opportunities for discussion and to ask questions as a result. It was more like being back at school in small classrooms and chairs with little pull out desks. I probably did a little bit less work than I would do at home and ended up doing much better than I've ever done with grades, though others found it harder than home, so it probably just depends which papers you choose. Only 25-35% of the grade is based on the exam and the exams typically only

cover material after the midterms, which takes the pressure off and meant I'd actually passed all my papers before the exams. Other percentage was given for frequent term tests throughout the semester, a couple of essays/assignments and participation in class.

Accommodation

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

I stayed at Pinecrest House. Originally I applied for HUB as it was cheaper, but I'm glad I didn't get in as Pinecrest exceeded anything I could have expected and I don't think I would have liked HUB much. Pinecrest was the most social of the international halls and students at other halls would generally come to Pine to socialise. I had 3 other flatmates, from the Netherlands, Sweden and South Korea- with whom I became very close. Other 4 bedroom flats only had 2 residents as the hall wasn't full. I would liken the flat to City Col, essentially just a flat with a basic lounge and kitchen with 2 identical rooms and a bathroom either side, with 4 floors and maybe around 20 apartments on each. The accommodation is really warm as the heater runs constantly through winter and its in a convenient location for getting to class or public transport. The only con is that there is literally nothing for you when you arrive, no cooking equipment, cutlery, cups, shower curtain, toilet paper or bedding. I would highly, highly recommend choosing Pinecrest over the other halls as the times spent and people met there really were the basis of my entire experience.

Money matters

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

Exchange ended up costing a lot more than I expected, as I think it does for everyone. I think my total expenses came to around 11k. My flight there ended up costing 2k as I booked really late and I booked a flight back from LA for 600. I took insurance through Nomads for around 450. Accommodation I believe cost around 3400 for the semester, and visas are cheap and easy to sort out- I think \$7. Food is really expensive from Safeway (the nearest supermarket), so you're best to take the bus to No Frills which is about 15 minutes each way. Some things were much pricier than NZ and others were less, so it probably works out about the same. I spent around 50 a week on food.

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

I picked up a Travelex travel card at the airport which you can top up online easily. The transaction cost is 1% compared to 2.5% on my normal Westpac card, so you save a bit of money though nothing substantial. Most people just used their normal debit cards. I would recommend a travel card if you can as you can load multiple currencies, so I could also use it in the States, though its not a huge deal and sometimes I had to use my Westpac card as the travel card didn't have my name on it.

Visas & Insurance

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

If you're going for less than 6 months you only need an ETA which you apply for online for \$7 and its really easy. Print a copy of your acceptance letter too. If you travel to the US you apply for an ESTA which is a similar process.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?
Around \$130 which also includes free public transport

Extra-curricular/Social Activities

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

There's a whole lot of clubs you can sign up to- something for everyone. I played indoor football every Wednesday by joining an intramurals team as a 'free agent' and also joined the Outdoors and Ski club. There's free access to the gym and climbing wall and there's also drop in swimming times every day. I didn't end up doing any trips with the Ski club, but membership is only \$10 and gets you discounted lift tickets and also free tacos at the Pint once a week which are normally worth \$14 so its well worth it. I did two trips with the Outdoor club (one runs pretty much every weekend)- one hiking in Nordegg and another skiing at Sunshine, and they also run quite a few bar nights. There's also an Outdoors club running group which I took part in once it got warmer. It's quite hard to meet Canadians, so joining a club is a good way of doing this and there's a lot of internationals in the outdoors club too, so its a good mix. There were also a couple of free skating days and barbeques organised by the hall. Would highly recommend the Outdoors Club, and the Ski club just for the discounts it gets you. We got tacos every week, would go out to Whyte most Saturdays and Sundays and also rented a car for weekend trips to Jasper, Calgary and Elk Island.

What was the university/ city like?

I'd read Edmonton was a big city with not much going on. This is largely true in Winter as you can't spend much time outside without freezing. As the snow cleared and it got warmer the city actually really grew on me. I enjoyed walking down Whyte and the river valley and also along the bridge at night. There isn't too much to see or do in Downtown. Public transport is really good for getting around. The major perk of Edmonton is that its close to the Rockies for weekend trips away.

Everything on campus is pretty close to each other and it doesn't take long to get to from uni accommodation. I was really impressed with the facilities- a small gym just over the road at Nypsy Hall and a bigger one at Van Vliet, free climbing wall, student union with bars, fast foods and shops, two swimming pools, ice hockey arena and also an indoor turf football pitch with free drop in hours if you get the train to South campus (5-10 minutes).

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

Get a ski club membership- we used to get free tacos and a beer at least once a week and sometimes more if they forgot to stamp your pass. Other than that I didn't eat out much. The Bower (Downtown) was by far the best bar/club I went to. Billiards on Whyte is also a nice place and County Club Saloon is worth going to at least once just because its so different to anywhere back home. I'd also recommend Church of John. We got the bus to St Albert a couple of times and got a burger from Jacks which I'd also recommend if you fancy getting out of Edmonton for a day.

Definitely get out to Elk Island if you get a chance. Some friends were even lucky enough to see the Aurora from here. And get out to the Rockies as much as money allows, it really is breathtakingly beautiful. I went to Toronto and Montreal for reading week and really liked Toronto. Montreal is cool if you're into old buildings and architecture. I travelled for a month afterwards to Vancouver,

Seattle, San Francisco (where I'm writing this from), Vegas to see the Grand Canyon and then I'll fly out of LA. Would recommend seeing Vancouver and if you can see San Fran definitely do it because its by far the favourite city I've ever been to.

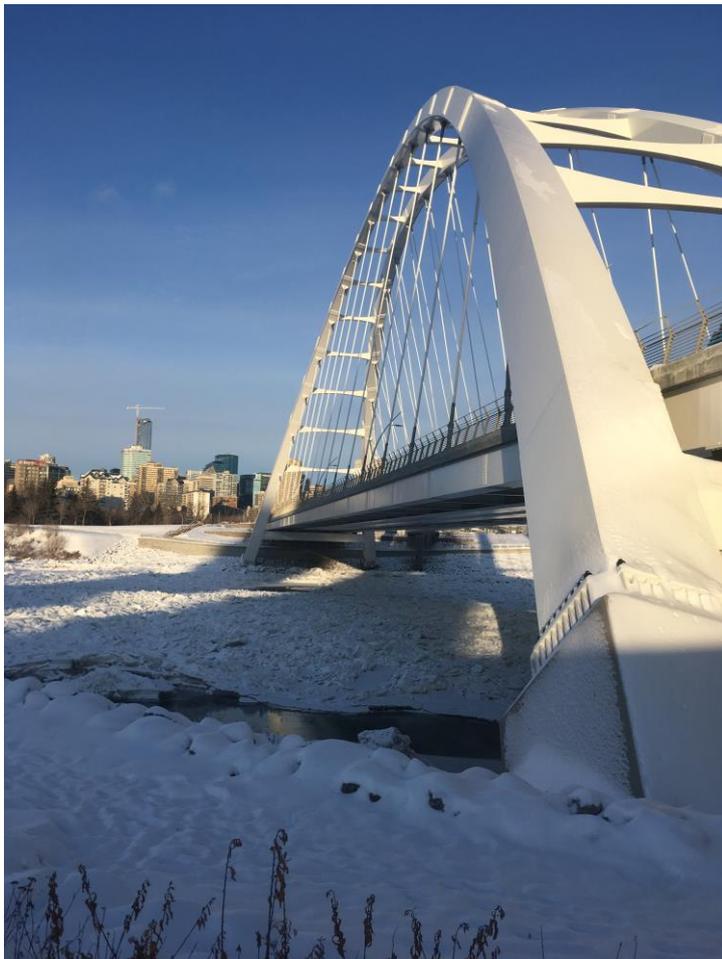
Any tips for future students?

If you're considering exchange and can afford it just do it. I think it would literally be impossible to regret going. Stay at Pine as its easier to meet people and more social than other halls and join the Outdoors Club if that's what you're into. Just put yourself out there and try everything- its super easy to meet people because everyone finds you interesting.

Overall Experience

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

Exchange has by far been the best four months of my adult life and also allowed me to travel the West Coast after which has been an amazing experience too. I didn't really know what to expect coming in other than I felt that if I didn't do it I'd regret it and even if I struggled to meet people, missed home etc it'd still be a much cooler experience than just staying in Dunedin. I met the coolest people I've ever met who I'll stay in contact with and visit again at some stage, saw some really beautiful places and made some amazing memories. It really has broadened my horizons and allowed me to see the bigger picture and I come back a lot happier and grown than when I left. If you're genuinely thinking of going exchange stop thinking and just do it! You won't regret it.



River Valley and Downtown, Edmonton. (Snow cleared completely by early April).



Jasper with views of Rockies



Niagara Falls, reading week trip



Bison at Elk Island



Hiking in Nordegg



Neon Lights, Downtown Edmonton