

Brock University

Semester 1, 2016

BPhEd, majoring in PFSD & SPLS

Going on exchange has been an amazing experience. I have met so many awesome people and I have learnt so much about a different way of life. I highly recommend the experience to anyone.

Accommodation

I decided that I wanted to live off-campus. Brock has a really good website for those who do want to live off-campus to find accommodation. My Landlord was really easy to deal with and he did not hesitate to sort out any problems that I had. I lived with other international students, which turned out to be pretty hard because they didn't speak English very well. Most of the other exchange students lived in Halls of Residence on campus.

Money

Going on exchange is not a cheap venture, but it has been well worth the money. For my day to day expenses I used a Cash Passport. This was really easy and it was reassuring to know exactly how much Canadian currency I had at any time. But having said that make sure you have some cash in reserve or an alternate method of accessing funds because not everywhere accepted my card and it took up to a week sometimes for my money to appear on the cash passport. My rent was \$475 per



Brock campus in spring



My Volleyball team after our last game of the season

month and included everything except the laundry which was coin operated. Food is generally around the same price as in New Zealand, maybe slightly on the more expensive side.

Academics

I took 4 courses at Brock and that was a manageable course load. Most Canadian students will take 5 courses. Assignments operate in a semi-similar

way to Otago but expect the final exam to be worth somewhere between 20% and

30% of your final grade. There were a lot more small assignments worth only a couple of marks than I was used to at Otago. The Profs (Lecturers) sometimes give you marks for participation in class at random times and most of them offer bonus credit for participating in studies within your department.

Transport

St Catharines has a fairly large bus network. Bus trips are covered by your student fees and your student ID acts as your bus pass. Where I lived in Thorold you could get a bus to Brock every half hour. It was also a short walk to a stop where you could get a bus to the Pen Centre shopping mall. Buses into town left pretty regularly from Brock so travelling by bus was pretty easy.

Weather



One of the deeper snowfalls

For a kiwi, winter in Canada is cold! There was snow on the ground for most of January and February but I never had classes cancelled because of the weather. Although it got pretty cold some days (-20°C), in early March we had a couple of days where it got up to 18°C . But then we had an unseasonable snowfall in April so the weather can be pretty up and down. Definitely be prepared for all seasons when you come. I recommend a good waterproof pair of boots because the snow will soak your normal shoes very quickly.

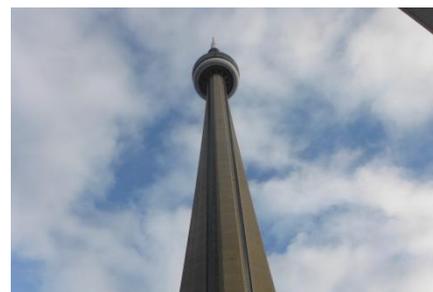
Everybody wears boots in the winter so you don't need to worry about looking silly walking up and down the corridors in big bulky boots.

Eating

I did all of my grocery shopping at Zehrs because it was the most convenient for where I lived. However it was probably slightly more expensive than some of the other places around town. Where you shop depends on how far you are prepared to carry your shopping. I had to walk between the bus stop and my house so I didn't want to be going long distances with my groceries, particularly on the really cold days. Eating on campus is really easy. There are lots of options for places to get food. Tim Horton's shops are everywhere and you should go to one for the authentic Canadian experience, but having said that the coffee was not as good as New Zealand.

Places to visit & things to do

Niagara Falls is really close to St Catharines and well worth a visit. The International office offered a



The CN Tower in Toronto

trip to the falls for the students near the beginning of the year. I got down to the falls by taking a bus from the Pen Centre. It runs every hour but you do have to pay for it. Toronto is also only a couple of hours away and you should pay the city a visit. The CN Tower is a must and I would also recommend the Hockey Hall of Fame even if you are not interested in Ice Hockey.

When you're on campus the gym complex is right there. The fitness centre is pretty small and is packed for most of the day but there are several gymnasiums that are usually set up for Basketball, Volleyball, Indoor Soccer, or Badminton. You don't need your own equipment for these things because you can borrow them from the Central Equipment Room. There is also an indoor running track and some squash courts. There are heaps of classes on offer, from kick boxing to fencing. The variety is amazing but do be careful about what times the courses are offered. Because the facility is so small some things are offered really late at night.

Number 1 Tip

Talk to people! You will be amazed at what you can find out about people and what you have in common just by starting a conversation.



Niagara Falls is not far away