

Exchange Report
Queen's University
2017 Spring



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Monthly Activity Log

January

I arrived Toronto's airport on Jan 3 and took a 4-hours long Megabus to Kingston. In Kingston, I lived in a house located in Queens Street, which is near to the downtown, with other three UST exchange students. The temperature kept at around -10 degrees, which was relatively warm for a normal winter in Kingston. As it always snowed, a water proof jacket is very important to live here. Queens organized an orientation for the exchange students to briefly introduce the university and provide us an opportunity to meet other exchange students. We also watched an ice hockey match of Kingston's team at that night, which is exciting. On the other day, we visited Fort Henry, which is a castle and there had a light show called Lumina Borealis at night. The school days started on Jan 10. The size of class is smaller than that in UST. Each class had around 30 students and the students are mostly active and participative, as they always asked and answered questions. As we had met many exchange students from other universities in Hong Kong, such as HKU, CUHK and CityU, we had a hotpot night with them together. It was wonderful, as we all miss Hong Kong's food. At one of the weekend, we travelled to Toronto. We visited a historical castle called Casa Loma, which is a very famous tourist spot in Toronto and had been used to be filmed in many famous movies. Also, I watched a NBA basketball match of Toronto Raptors there which is amazing to watch a live NBA match, screaming with other audiences and feeling the atmosphere there. As Jan 28 was the Chinese Lunar New Year, we tried to make Turnip cake by our own to celebrate the festival. It is an unforgettable experience to celebrate Chinese festival with our Chinese friend there.



February

February was the coldest month (around -15 degrees) and it was very snowy. The snow was thick and it was tough to walk on it. After some of the mid-term exams, we had a reading week, which is a one-week long holidays in the middle of semester. In the reading week, we went to Montreal and Quebec. Although French is the first language in these two countries, some of the people there also speaks English. So, language is not a big deal during travel. In Montreal, we went to the top of the Mont Royal, to see the view of the whole Montreal City. And it is an interesting experience to play snowballs game there. We also visited Notre-Dame Basilica, which is a huge and gorgeous church. Quebec is my favorite city in Canada as it is just like a small France in Canada and the French food there was very famous and delicious. The view of Montmorency Falls was amazing, as it is a very tall waterfall and it was interesting to see that the downside of the lake was all frozen. Also, I tried ice-skating in Quebec. It was not difficult to skate and it was exciting to skate form a 20-metres high slope. These two cities were both beautiful and it was the funniest trip I had in Canada.



March

Saint-Patrick's Day is a big traditional festival in Canada. In that day, all people wear green clothes and accessories and have party to celebrate. Unfortunately, I can't celebrate it in Kingston, as I went to Toronto again at that weekend to see the most popular tourist spot in Canada, the Niagara Falls. It is a very huge falls that across US and Canada. And it is interest to see the border between US and Canada there. Apart from Toronto, I also had a 2-days trip to Ottawa on March. The capital of Canada is full of historical buildings and museums. But sadly, we were not able to enter the Parliament as it had closed. So, it is important to check the opening hours before going there.



April

Time passed so fast and here came to the end of semester. April was all about final exam. After the final exam, I left Kingston and travelled different cities in US, such as Washington, Los Angeles and San Francisco, for 3 weeks, which was another great and enjoyable experience.



General Exchange Information

1. Visa Procedures

I didn't apply the study visa of Canada because I stayed in Canada for less than 6 months. The only thing needed to do Electric Travel Authorization (eTA) online. Also, I applied the US Visa because I traveled to US. For the US visa, you need to apply it online first and book a time for interview. The whole process will take about one month.

2. Orientation activities

Personal identification, i.e. ID card or passport, were needed to register and get the student ID card. Then, there was a welcoming talk to briefly talk about Queen's, a networking session that provide chances for the exchange students to know each other and a campus tour that take us to go around the university. At that night, Queen's also talk us to watch an ice-hockey game with CAD\$5.

3. International Services & Activities

Queen's University International Centre (QUIC) is an organization that is responsible for the exchange students' affairs. You can talk to the staff there whenever you face difficulties. It also organizes a lot of activities for the international students to accommodate the life in Canada and meet friends.

4. Accommodation

Due to high residential hall fee and the inconvenience of the hall's location, I choose to rent housing near the University. I rented the house with other three UST exchange student. The house is located at the downtown, which is convenient and 15 - 20 minutes walk or 5 minutes for bus from campus. It was CAD\$500 each per month, which is half of the cost of renting the residential hall provided by Queen's

5. Courses Registration

Queen's use SOLUS system, which is similar to the Student Centre of UST, for courses registration. You can register the courses, once you get your Queen's student account. You can search the course you planned to register and enroll it. As the system is defaulted to hide the class which is full, you can click the box that shows the class which is full to find the class and join the waiting list. And you are required to register 12 – 15 credits in one semester.

6. Teaching & Assessment Methods

Similar to UST, Queen's use assignments (including both individual and group work), case study and examinations to evaluate students. But the different is that Queen's use absolute grading. For me, I studied 5 courses, 15 credits in total, here:

Course	Equivalent Course	Professor	Comments
COMM 313: Financial Accounting II	ACCT 3020: Financial Accounting II	George Boland	There are 2 mid-terms exams, 1 final exam 2 group and 1 individual assignment. The exams format is similar to that in UST and the assignments are quite straightforward. It is a easy course.
COMM 322: Financial Management Strategy	FINA 3303: Intermediate Corporate Finance	Pierre Chaigneau	There are 2 group assignments, 1 mid-term and 1 final exam. Although the content is quite difficult, the assignment and exams are easy. Also, the professor is nice and helpful.
COMM 323: Financial Planning	FINA 4000 level	Bill Cannon	Many local students there said that this is the most difficult and tough course in Queen's. There are 3 group assignments, 1 midterm and 1 final exam. The course contain many readings and the professor expect you to read most of them before each lessons. The workload is extremely high, but you can learn many things from the professor and the readings.

COMM 328: International Finance	FINA 4403: International Finance	Selim Topaloglu	There are 2 group projects (1 written and 1 presentation) 1 mid-term and one final examination. The professor always talks about news at the end of lessons. The workload of this course is low.
COMM 414: Management Control	ACCT 3210: Advanced Management Accounting	David McConomy	There are 2 individual and 2 group case studies (each equals to 20% of the total course grade). The remaining 20% is participation marks. The professor will talk about a case in every second lesson of the week and he expects you to read the case before the lessons.

7. Sports & Recreation Facilities

Queen's students can enjoy sports facilities at the Athletics and Recreation Centre (ARC). There is a gym in the 1st and 2nd floor. There is also 2 indoor basketball court in the forth floor. Students can lend sports instruments, such as basketball and volleyball, on the UG floor.

8. Finance & Banking

I strongly suggest you to open a bank account there, as most of the people there use debit card to pay. It is just like the octopus card in Hong Kong, but link to your bank account directly. It is convenient to have a debit card because it is annoying to calculate the tips and collect the coins. Also, my parents can transfer money to by bank account through telegraphic transfer (TT), so that I do not need to bring a large amount of cash to Canada. For me, I chose CIBC because most students there used it. Including airline tickets, housing and short trips to different cities in Canada, I spent around HKD\$50,000 in Canada. And for my US trip, I spent around HKD\$35,000.

9. Health & Safety

There is a mandatory insurance package called UHIP that you need to pay in SOULUS. It costs CAD\$ 204 and u cannot get the transcript at the end of semester if you did not pay it. With the UHIP, you can see the doctors for free, but it does not include medicines. You need to pay extra when you purchase medicine.

10. Food

Personally, I do not suggest purchasing the meal plan from Queen's. unless you live in hall. This is because the meal plan is expensive and there is a lot of choices in Kingston. Here are some suggestions: Silver Wok (Chinese restaurant), Mekong (Vietnam food)), Kame (Japanese dishes) and Score Pizza (pizza). They were all prized at around CAD\$10 – 15. For dinner, we used to cook at home because it was cheaper to do so. There are two supermarket in Kinston: Metro (near to Queen's) and Food Basics (located in downtown).

11. Transportation

All buses are free in Kinston if you are Queen's student and you can show the drivers your student ID card when you get on the bus. If you can't, it will charge you CAD\$3. But most drivers are very nice and they will probably give you the ride for free if you tell them you forget to bring the card.

12. Climate

The whole semester was very cold. So, remember to bring enough cloths. Also, it always rains and slows. Waterproof jackets and shoes are also very important.

13. The phone plan is very expensive in Kinston. It costs above CAD\$40 per month. Joining a phone plan is not a must because there is Wi-Fi in campus and home. For me, I use Freedom, which is the cheapest service provider in Kingston. However, the quality is really bad as the signal is always poor in indoor.

Items to Bring

1. Passport
2. ID card
3. Letter of acceptance
4. Offer letter
5. Cash
6. Credit card
7. Winter cloths, including scarf and gloves
8. A few summer cloths
9. Waterproof boots
10. Stationary
11. Calculator
12. Laptop
13. Chargers
14. Power bank
15. Adaptors
16. USB
17. Medicine
18. Water bottle
19. Umbrellas

If you face any difficulties about your exchange at Queen's, please feel free to contact me!