

Spring 2017 Exchange Report

Queen's University



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Finance and Operations Management (Year 3)

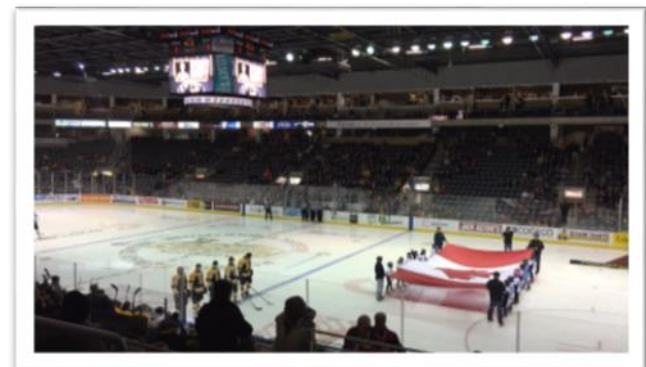
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Part 1 – Monthly Activity Log

January 2017

Although the spring semester officially started in the second week of January, all exchange students had to arrive in Kingston a few days earlier to attend an orientation session organized by the Center of International Management (CIM), Smith School of Business. The orientation comprised of an introduction to Queen’s university and its commerce program, an academic session, a networking session and a campus tour. Following the campus tour, students were invited to a hockey game at K-Rock Center. The hockey game was very exciting – the whole stadium was filled with people from all around Kingston and these enthusiastic audience shouted so hard to support the local Kingston team, the Kingston Frontenacs! It really was a good chance to experience the hockey culture in Canada.



On the weekend after the orientation activity, I went to the Kingston waterfront and Fort Henry with other exchange students from Hong Kong (who I met during the orientation session). The view from the Kingston waterfront was stunning as the St Lawrence River was frozen into ice. In contrast, Fort Henry was a disappointing place to visit: the weather was much colder there but all you got to see were some dull animations.



In the first two weeks of school, I spent most of my time settling down in my house (which I rented with three other students from UST) and finalizing my timetable for the semester. After that, I took a three-day trip to Toronto with other exchange students, during which we visited places such as downtown Toronto, the Toronto Island and Casa Loma.



February 2017

The first half of February was all about projects and midterms. As the coursework at Queen's tends to be more evenly spread out throughout the semester, I had to work on assignments starting in the second month of the semester. Also, although there was a reading week in mid-February, three of my midterms were held before that. Therefore, it was really tiring working on case analyses and preparing for the midterm exams at the same time.

Luckily, during the reading week (from 19/2 to 26/2), my friends and I could finally take a 5-day trip to Montreal and Quebec. These two cities are not too far away from Kingston and are really two must-go places. There were a lot to see and do, such as the old port of Montreal and Notre-Dame Basilica in Montreal, as well as the Montmorency Falls in Quebec. Apart from those attractions, my friend and I even went skiing in Quebec! As it was our first time skiing, we spent quite a while getting used to it and it was indeed an exciting sport!

After we were back to Kingston, it was time for us to resume our studies.

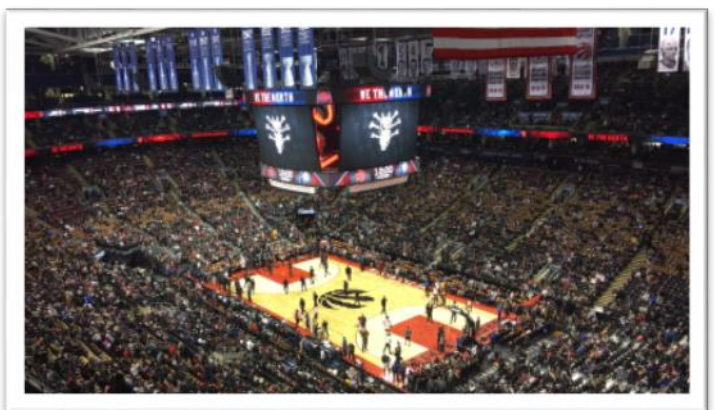


March 2017

March was a less busy month compared to February as most midterms had already been held in February. Therefore, our friend and I left Kingston on the St Patrick's Day (in mid-March) and went to Toronto for a three-day trip. The highlighted destination for our trip this time is the Nigara Falls! However, it was rainy and misty on the day we visited the Falls so we were not able to capture the best view of the Falls. Fortunately, on the last day of our trip, my friends and I had a great time watching the game between Raptors and Pacers. After the game, we returned to Kingston for school.

On the third weekend of March, my friends and I spent two days in Ottawa. Although our original intention was to visit the Parliament, we were not aware that the opening hours of the Parliament on Saturdays were very short and it was even closed on Sundays. Fortunately, the National Gallery of Canada was open on the day of our visit and we found a lot of amazing artworks in there.

On the last day of March, the Centre of International Management organized a farewell party for all exchange students. During the party, staff members from the Centre introduced to us several platforms on which we could stay connected to Queen's after our exchange. Also, there were a lot of Queen's souvenirs given to students during the lucky draw and there was a photo booth for students to take photos.



April 2017

There was only class in the first week of April. And after one week of study break, it was finally time for final exams. In April, seats at the Stauffer library and Douglas library were usually fully occupied. My way out was to follow my friends from the Faculty of Law to the Law library located opposite to Goodes Hall. Inside the Law library, there were fewer people and it was a little bit easier for me to find a seat.

Weather-wise, it was much warmer in April and there were a lot of mosquito-like insects. Even though they did not bite, they were literally everywhere in Kingston and were extremely annoying.

In late-April, after all finals were over, my friends and I were busy packing up our belongings and emptying our house to prepare for our departure. During this period, there was a small pop-up market in front of the City Hall with people selling maple syrup and other produce. On the last day of April, my friends and I left Kingston and embarked on our post-exchange trip to the USA.



Part 2 – General Exchange Information

1) Visa Procedures

No visa is required for permanent residents of Hong Kong who are not visiting Canada for more than 6 months. With that being said, the Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) is needed and has to be applied online in advance. As for visiting the USA, visitor visas are required. But if you hold a Canadian passport, you do not need a visa to travel to the US.

2) Orientation Activities

The orientation session is held before the start of the semester. It consists of an introduction to Queen's University and its commerce program, an academic session, a networking session and a campus tour. On that day, the School may even find the local banks to set up counters inside Goodes Hall for students to open bank accounts.

3) International Services and Activities

The Centre of International Management organizes an ice-curling activity and a farewell party for exchange students apart from the orientation activities.

In addition, the Queen's University International Centre (QUIC) also holds a variety of activities for students throughout the semester, including movie sessions, several meals and trips. Also, they have an English Buddy program in which they match exchange students who want to improve their English with the local students for regular meetings.

4) Accommodations

Students can choose to live in student hall or live off campus.

For student halls, exchange students can apply for a room in Jean Royce Hall. This Hall is located on the West Campus of Queen's University and it takes approximately 10 minutes to go from there to the Main Campus by bus. However, the hall fee is very expensive compared to the off-campus housing.

To find a room/house off campus, you can go to kijiji or the Queen's housing listing. During my stay in Kingston, I rented a house with three other exchange students from UST and we found the house on the Queen's housing listing. For the houses listed on the Queen's housing listing, you may not find any photos of the houses there. However, you are welcome to send emails to the house owners to request for houses. Remember to start looking for a house as early as possible because there would be more available options!

5) Course Registration

Queen's uses a system named "SOLUS" for course registration, which is similar to UST's system. Course registration starts in August but the courses are usually not full until October/November.

6) Teaching and Assessment Methods

Different from UST, Queen's University adopts an absolute grading system and most courses carries a class participation component in their evaluation schemes.

Course	Equivalent course in HKUST	Professor	Comments
COMM 322	FINA 3303	Pierre Chaigneau	2 assignments, 1 midterm and 1 final. The workload of the course is very low and the course is easy.
COMM 323	FINA 4000LEVEL	Bill Cannon	3 case analyses, 1 midterm and 1 final. The workload of the course is high as there are a lot of readings and the assignments are difficult. However, the professor is very friendly and is willing to offer students help on their studies.
COMM 328	FINA 4403	Selim Topaloglu	1 case report, 1 article presentation, 1 midterm and 1 final. The workload is normal and the course content is not difficult.
COMM 329	FINA 4503	Bill Cannon	3 cases analyses, 1 midterm and 1 final. The workload is similar to that of COMM 323.

7) Sports and Recreational Facilities

The gym and swimming pool are located at the Athletics & Recreation Centre (ARC) which is opposite to the Stauffer library. Inside the gym, there is a counter next to the changing rooms where you can borrow basketballs, volleyballs, etc. The basketball courts operate on a first-come, first-served basis unless there are special events. For the lockers in the changing rooms, you need bring your own lock to use them.

8) Cost/Expenses

Flight tickets	HKD 15,000
VIA ticket from Toronto to Kingston	CAD 160
House rental fee (utilities included)	CAD 2000
UHIP	CAD 204
Course materials	CAD 100
Travel	HKD 35000
Food and Miscellaneous	HKD 15000

9) Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

Apart from attending the activities organized by CIM and QUIC (mentioned above), the Queen's Hong Kong Students' Association also organizes activities for students from Hong Kong from time to time. For instance, they held a Chinese New Year Feast last year.

To get to know the local students, you can also work on group projects with the locals in the courses you take. In most courses, you can send an email asking the professor to put you in groups with the local students.

10) Health and Safety

With UHIP, students do not have to pay to see the doctor. However, students have to pay for the prescriptions themselves.

In terms of safety, Kingston and Queen's University are very safe overall. Inside the university, there are blue light bars for students to call the campus security when they feel unsafe.

11) Food

There are a variety of food available at ARC, including Tim Hortons, pizza, salad, teriyaki and fruit juice. Alternatively, students can choose to cook themselves. Metro is the closest supermarket to the university. Queen's students can enjoy discounts on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Alternatively, Food Basics located in downtown area is another option. It is cheaper overall and discounts are available for Queen's students on Tuesdays.

12) Transportation

For the bus service within Kingston, it is free of charge for students if they present their Queen's student card. If by accident you do not have your student card with you, you can try to tell the bus drivers you are a Queen's student. To check the arrival time of the bus, you can either use Google Map or an app called "Transit".

To travel to other areas in Canada, Megabus, Greyhound and VIA Railway are three common options. Do note that the ticket prices go up significantly as the departure day approaches, so buy your tickets early!

13) Climate

It is cold in January, February. The weather is usually -10 to -20 degree. Most of the time, it snows. However, it may rain from time to time. I heard that the temperature could get below -20 degree in February but it was not the case last winter. The weather gets warmer and warmer in March and April, but it may still snow at times.

14) Communication

Mobile and data plans usually cost around CAD30 per month. I got a mobile and data plan from Fido and the service covered nearly all parts of Canada so I still had data when I travelled to Toronto, Montreal and Quebec. If you plan to travel to the USA, you can consider buying a mobile and data plan in Hong Kong as you may be able to find cheaper plans.

Part 3- Items to Bring

1. Letter of acceptance
2. Passport (Original and copy)
3. HKID (Original and copy)
4. Copy of Megabus/ VIA Railway tickets (if any)
5. Cash
6. Laptop
7. Stationery (stationery is much more expensive in Kingston)
8. Calculators
9. Chargers and adapters
10. Extension plug
11. Business suit
12. Sneakers
13. Slippers
14. Winter and Summer clothes
15. Scarf and gloves
16. Medicine
17. Laundry bags
18. Shampoo, body wash and lotion
19. Toothbrush and toothpaste
20. Bed and pillow sheet

Part 4 – Useful Links

1. Queen's housing listing
<https://listingservice.housing.queensu.ca/index.php/rental/rentalsearch/action/search/>
2. Queen's University International Centre (QUIC)
<http://quic.queensu.ca/>

If you have any question, you can ask SBM office for my contact. I wish you an enjoyable exchange journey!