

EXCHANGE REPORT

BI Norwegian Business School
Spring Semester 2019



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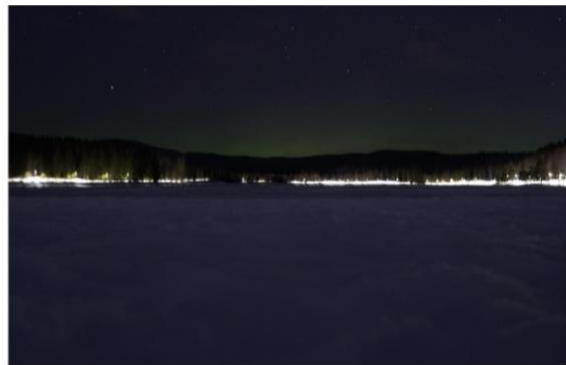
PART I – MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG

January 2019 Amsterdam and Copenhagen



Since there was no direct flight from Hong Kong to Oslo, I decided to travel for a few days at the transfer stop before the exchange. My exchange mates and I flew to Amsterdam on 2nd January. We came at the right time as light and art installations were everywhere in the city during the annual Amsterdam Light Festival. We took a walk at night to see the lit-up canals. We arrived Oslo on 6th January. We joined some orientation activities organized by the school, including ice skating, cross-country skiing and barbeque. They also showed us around Oslo on a bus tour. It was nice to sightsee and learn more about the city. They were fun opportunities to meet new exchange friends. Class started on 7th January and it was lovely to see the modern design of my school. I really liked the stairs and leveling, also how everywhere was connected to each other. As I only had one class each from Monday to Wednesday, my schedule was pretty chilled and I had time to travel on the other days throughout the semester. Compared to UST, the school life here was a lot less stressful and less tense.

February 2019 Stockholm



Winter in Oslo has really long nights so I had to go to school for 8am class in the dark sometimes, which was pretty amusing. As the sun rose late, I got to see the prettiest sky one morning right outside my dorm. I was totally amazed by the purple-red-blue-yellow sky (that I took too long appreciating and was late to class). Also, I did some “winter activities” that I walked on the frozen lake – Sognsvann, and had so much fun sledging at Holmenkollen! It was my first time taking a snowy hike at Vettakollen. It was a bit challenging due to the slippery slope but the stunning sunset view was worth it. One highlight was that I went to chase the Northern lights at Sognsvann. Although it was not strong enough to be seen with bare eyes, I was thrilled to see it through the camera.

March 2019 Gaustattoppen, Iceland, and Tromsø



Since I would like to go on adventures in the nature, I joined a student society called BI Outdoor. I went on a cabin trip with them to Gaustattoppen, the most beautiful mountain at 1883 metres altitude in Norway. It was the most breathtaking view up on the mountain top, very impressive. We all stayed in a big cozy wooden cabin surrounded by snowy mountains. Imagine waking up to a winter wonderland view from the window, playing card games next to the fireplace, running carefreely on the snow – those were the best days. It was the kind of relaxing vacation everyone had been dreaming of. One interesting activity was watching a football match at Ullevål Stadion. It was Norway VS Sweden and of course we supported Team Norway. To show our enthusiasm, we even wore the football jersey of Team Norway! It was a tie in the end but still, I enjoyed this exciting match a lot, especially cheering together in Norwegian (“NORGE! NORGE!”) with high sense of belonging. In terms of school work, it was a busy month for project meetings and assignments. As we foresaw it would be difficult to arrange group meetings when everyone was out for travels, we started to work on them earlier for better preparation.

April 2019 Poland, Stavanger, and Bergen



April was a month of Norway Nature. We had a week of Easter holiday so I went on 2 trips. The first trip was to Stavanger with BI Outdoor, when we hiked the world famous Pulpit Rock - Preikestolen. It was awesome to conquer this hike with a great team of supportive friends. We stayed at a campsite in the nature, where we could see the stunning galaxy and jump into the lake of freezing water. It was a cool experience, to be like the Norwegians. The second trip was to Flam and Bergen. In order to save money, we followed the Norway in a Nutshell route but bought our own tickets. (If interested, you could find the link of the route planning in Part IV) Instead of sightseeing in Bergen, the journey on different transports was the more important part. We got to appreciate Norway's breathtaking fjord scenery. Yet, as it was not really Spring yet, the train journey scenery was more like melting snow and brownish mountains instead of full-bloom greenery. I believed the scenery would be greener and more beautiful in later months. After this trip, I started revising for my first exam on 29th April, which was Norwegian Culture and History. Therefore, I stayed in Oslo during the whole exam period to focus on my studies.

May 2019 Gothenburg, Belgium, Germany, and Prague



My semester ended after my second and last exam on 7th May, which was Corporate Governance. On 17th May, we celebrated the Norwegian Constitution Day. Everyone put on their best outfits, national traditional costumers for locals of course. The highlight of the day was the big children's parade, including schools and marching bands. The royal family would wave at us at the palace balcony. It was the most (and only) crowded day I have ever seen in Oslo as everyone went out to the city centre. I was very lucky to be in Oslo on this big day, to experience the lively and jolly atmosphere. I stayed in Oslo until Mid-June and travelled around Europe for a bit more until beginning of July.

Going on a semester exchange was definitely a worthy experience. It was the perfect chance to meet friends from all over the world and exchange own cultures. Having dinner gatherings would be one of my favourite memories. My friends and I took turns to host dinners at own dorms. We cooked food from our hometowns and taught each other card games. I really enjoyed this cross-cultural interaction and sharing (yes I meant the international food). I learnt so much about the tradition, culture, lifestyle of different countries. Having floor dinners was a way of getting to know and bonding more with my floormates too. We spent hours eating and chatting until late night in the common kitchen. I was very grateful for having friendly and inspiring floormates to live with for half a year.



PART II – GENERAL EXCHANGE INFORMATION

Accommodations

I stayed at the SiO dorm – Sogn Student Village, located near the metro station Ullevål Stadion. It is only one stop away from BI. I chose a single room with shared bathrooms and kitchen. There is cleaning service from SiO every week. There is a REMA1000 supermarket right next to my block (28B). I enjoyed my stay in this student village as it was convenient and comfortable.

Course Registration

You have to register the courses yourself around 1 month before the semester. There will be email informing you about course information and schedule. These were the courses I took in Spring 2019, 7.5 p credits each.

1. ELE3773 – Service Marketing

20% Individual in-class participation grade

20% Group based report (essay) on field exercise (mystery shopping assignment)

60% Group based final project report

Class of exchange students

*strongly recommend, awesome teaching by the professor, Matilda Dorotic

2. ELE3766 – Social Networks & Communities

100% Group based report and presentation

Class of exchange students

3. EXC2901 – Norwegian Culture and History

100% Final exam

Class of exchange students

4. EXC3632 – Corporate Governance

100% Final exam

Class of mostly full-time students, only a few exchange students

Finance & Banking

I used Citi Bank debit and credit cards for transactions in Norway. There is no service charge. The currency is NOK and they accept cards everywhere. Therefore, I always used cards and even never drawn cash from the ATM. I brought some EURO for travels since not all European countries are almost-cashless like Norway. You could download an app called SplitWise for transactions between friends. It is very useful for recording and calculating the amount you owe each other, especially for different currencies during travels.

Orientation Activities

As mentioned, the school organized orientation activities for us, including ice skating, cross-country skiing course and barbeque. There were also city tour, museum visit, and ski jump visit, etc. You could join any of these activities if interested.

Teaching & Assessment Methods

The classes are in smaller scale, around 30 people in a classroom. Each class lasts for 3 hours and there are breaks every 45 minutes. The assignments were in group based, which was quite nice because you got to work with international students on projects. The exams were conducted digitally in a computer room.

International Services and Opportunities

BI organizes a free dinner every month, which is called the BI-nner. It is announced in the Facebook Group so you can easily register online. However, it is a very popular and first-come first-served event so you should check it often. You can also volunteer to cook and decorate the venue. Volunteers are guaranteed BI-nner tickets as a token of appreciation. Feel free to network with other dinner participants.

Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

BI Outdoor was a student society that I joined. They organize 2 trips to different destinations every semester. They are not exclusive to members but they are prioritized, given the limited quota. The membership fee is 150 NOK, which includes a free orientation dinner and privilege to rent outdoor equipment at a lower price. It is a precious opportunity to explore the nature, especially to places that are more difficult to reach. The trips are well-planned with transports, accommodation, and activities. This is where you can make friends with full-time students and exchange students.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

SiO Athletica is a gym offered by the school. There are 6 gyms and 1 is at school. with awesome facilities. It is also clean and tidy. There are courses offered every day that members could sign up for, for instance, yoga, spinning, dance classes. These group trainings can be booked up to 5 days in advance.

Health and Safety

SiO provides health services for the students and there is a clinic at BI, right next to the gym. They have general practitioners but it is rarely possible to see a specialist as you will be put on a long waiting list.

Oslo is a very safe city. You do not need to worry about pickpockets or robbers. There are some beggars wandering on the streets but you are fine if you just ignore them.

Food

The price level of Oslo is quite high. Dining out for a normal meal is around 120 NOK. Therefore, it is definitely cheaper if you cook by yourself. The cheaper supermarkets are called KIWI and REMA1000. You can also go to a market named Grønland Fruit and Vegetables. All supermarkets are closed on Sundays, except Joker and Bun Pris which are with higher prices. Therefore, remember to stock up your food on Saturdays. There is a canteen at school and their lunch box meals are 58 NOK. The alternative choice is to bring your own meal prep and heat it up with the canteen microwaves, in which a lot of students do so. Do not worry if you miss Asian food, there are a few Asian food markets – A Food Market and ScanAsia. There are also many Japanese restaurants, considered the fresh salmon you can get in Oslo.

Transportation

You need a Ruter Card for all public transports in Oslo. The monthly fee is 450 NOK and you need to top up at a card machine every month, where you can find in any metro stations. There will be random inspections and if you do not have a valid Ruter Card, you have to pay 1150 NOK as punishment. Therefore, remember to activate your card everytime after topping up.

Climate

It is quite cold you first arrive in January when the temperature goes below 0 degree. You may imagine you would be freezing in the Oslo winter but honestly, it is not that bad once you are adapted to it. There is snow in January and the snow starts melting around March. So please grasp your chance to do all the winter activities earlier, especially skiing and sledging. The weather only gets better if you are on exchange in Spring semester because it gets warmer and with more daylight in Spring or Summer. The temperature in April and May is around 15 degrees, which is very comfortable and refreshing. If possible, you should really stay longer in Oslo to experience the summertime in June.

Communication

English is the second language in Norway. Norwegians can speak English fluently and they are very comfortable in communicating in English. Therefore, there is no worries about language barrier. You could say “Takk” to them, which means “thank you” in Norwegian. I am sure they will appreciate.

Cautionary Measures

For Spring semester exchange, winter clothes are more important than summer ones. Bring thick jacket and scarf to keep warm in the winter. Melty ice floors are quite dangerous to walk on because it is slippery. Put on proper snow boots and be careful walking on snow in the dark.

PART III – Items to Bring

Passport, HKID
ATM cards, Credit cards, Cash (NOK, Euro)
Down jacket
Scarf
Gloves
Beanie
Winter clothing
Fall clothing
Ski equipment
Snow boots
Sneakers
Fanny Pack
Laptop
Earphones
Stationery
Medicine
Router
Medicine
Chargers
Adaptors
Camera
Hard Disc (for photos backup)

PART IV – USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

BI Student Portal

<https://portal.bi.no/en>

BI International Office

<https://international.office@bi.no>

SiO Housing

<https://www.sio.no/en/housing>

Norway in a Nutshell DIY

<https://exchange->

[nl.com/2017/05/22/%e6%8c%aa%e5%a8%81%e7%b8%ae%e5%bd%b1diy-%e8%87%aa%e8%a1%8c%e5%88%86%e6%ae%b5%e8%b2%b7%e7%a5%a8%e6%95%99%e5%ad%b8/](https://exchange-nl.com/2017/05/22/%e6%8c%aa%e5%a8%81%e7%b8%ae%e5%bd%b1diy-%e8%87%aa%e8%a1%8c%e5%88%86%e6%ae%b5%e8%b2%b7%e7%a5%a8%e6%95%99%e5%ad%b8/)