

# *EXCHANGE STUDY REPORT*

Queens University, Kingston Canada

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*Major: ACCT & MGMT | Spring 2018-2019*

## Part 1 - Monthly Activity Log

### **December – January**

I flew to Canada on 28th December to get a taste of the Canadian lifestyle. I toured around Toronto and took the train to Kingston on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January. The semester started on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, but the Business school has organized various of orientation activities for commerce students. We were grouped into groups of 5 in which students all came from different country. I met a few new friends during the orientation and we went to watch the Hockey Game together. Most of the exchange students from HKUST lived Jean Royce Hall which made the settling down much easier. There were also 'kick-off' dorm parties in the first two weeks, allowed us to get to know our neighbors. The next few weeks are more of academic work, a few activities were organized by Queens International Center, there were campus tour and more parties like snow tubing, hiking and volunteering events. I did not go to all of them, but I found most of them enjoyable, especially the volunteering event in which we were asked to spend a few hours playing with kids in the neighborhood, thus help them with their studies. Group projects and assignment also started around the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January, so I also spent some time in organizing my work and going to meetings for projects.

### **February**

For February, the highlight will be going to Blue Mountain for skiing as well we as my trip to Montreal and Ottawa. Me and my friends attended a two days one-night trip to Montreal and a day trip to Ottawa. Both cities were extremely beautiful, everything felt like Christmas since there were light snow. Despite the weather being cold, especially for Montreal in which it dropped to -20°C. We were able to skate on the top of a lake beside the Montreal Pier. Skiing in Blue Mountain was also fun since it was my first time skiing. It was difficult to me at first, but with the help of my new exchange friends, I was able to enjoy myself without much pain! Apart from the exciting trips, I also spent more time studying in February. Mid-term exam started, my team also started working on the volunteer project for our Leadership course. My team set a goal in volunteering in a Retirement Home for 50 hours til the end of March. This kick-started my weekly journey to the Retirement Home spending 3 hours there playing the pool, chess, fixing puzzles and having tea times there. The elderly there were all very nice, they share with us their experiences and wisdom. The most thoughtful one to me will be how they said about life being a journey of hope. No matter which part of life you were in right now, always have hope that things will turn out to be pretty. It may not turn out to be what you wanted, but it will be a something meaningful to your life journey.

### **March**

There was a 1.5 weeks Mid-Term break in March in which I went to NYC with my friends. The most unforgettable moment for that trip will be the part in which we almost missed our flight. Fortunately, we were able to board on the plane before the assigned time and went to NYC safely and on time. It was my second time to the United States and things were so different from that of Canada and Hong Kong. It was a bit unsafe to me in comparison as I experienced being followed and almost got my purse stolen. Besides these dangerous parts, NYC was a nice city to tour in. With the most convenient transport, the best brunches and best museums.

In March, we also experienced a snow storm which the school was forced to shut down for two days. The weather was freezing cold with  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ . I still remembered walking under such weather to the nearby super market since the bus has stopped because of the slippery floor. The snow was so thick that it almost reached my ankle. That 30-minutes walk back to the dorm was definitely one of the most unforgettable experience for my exchange journey.

### **April**

In early-April, I visited Vancouver a bunch of friends. We spent time tour around the city, visited UBC, tried a lot of great foods, do a lot of hiking. Vancouver has a really warm temperature comparing to that of Kingston which we experience  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  and snow storms. Vancouver is for sure one of the best places that I have ever been. Since I have 3 final exams to prepare, I also manage some time to study for my finals during my trip. My last final exam was on the 25<sup>th</sup> and I took the train back to Toronto to meet my family on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April. There was farewell party to farewell my exchange friends. There were tears as well as laughter, we took a lot pictures in Queens as well as in some tourist spots in Kingston.

### **May**

The semester officially ends on 30th April. I went to United States to stay with my family, went tour around in various cities as well.

### **Overall Experience:**

I can describe my exchange journey as a fruitful one which allows me to know friends from all around the world. Queen's University is indeed a place which stresses greatly on work-life balance. The programme provides us with numerous opportunities to mingle with bankers and CEOs from a variety of fields. There are also seminars held in school to facilitate commerce students in brainstorming their career pathways after graduation.

All the opportunities allow me meet professionals from multiple industries and granted me a deeper understanding on many business sectors.

When talking about the challenges I faced, I will say it's the class culture. The class which I took in Queens are quite small with around 30-40 people in a class, and interactions were hugely emphasized. Class discussions were encouraged and questions are usually not related to the lecture content. It is more towards the real life business issues and the rationale behind the topics the professor was going to introduce.

As an introvert, I found it difficult to adapt to this culture at first for I am not the type that could confidently express your opinions to the crowd. I used to shake and had a hard time keeping up other classmates in raising out my answers confidently without much preparations. I still remembered the first time when the professor asked me to express my views towards the changing accounting system and policies of Canada was a really bad experience for me since I knew nothing about the local accounting system before I attended the class. Fortunately, all my classmates were being very friendly, kindly helped me out with the answer. With the help of my classmates and the professors, I found myself more and more used to such learning environment. Freely raising out concerns and questions in front of the class during lessons has become a habit of mine and have I was more eager to answer the questions asked.

“It’s not about the accuracy, it’s the thinking process” this was what my professor from my International Business Strategy class had mentioned. Though in her fifties, she was still a student, an MBA student in specific. She told us not to consider making a mistake as something that was wrong, think of it as a chance to think more and are ways to sharpen yourself. Some may think raising your hand up and to call out your answer is a very simple thing to do, but some introverts like me, being able to proactively do so is indeed a step forward. I consider this as one of my greatest takeaways from the trip.

Talking about learning experience, things I learnt from Canada is indeed something different from the normal course I took in HKUST. International Business Strategy and Leadership emphasize a lot more on learning by doing. Both require us to use create something as consolidation on what we have learned from class. For International Business Strategy, we were asked to finish a project on Freshi and was asked to formulate a market expansion plan for Freshii’s internal management. We had the oppotunitiy to meet with the internal management, understand their business objectives, goals and realities, then conduct market analysis and at last present our plan back to them.

For Leadership, we finished a ‘leadership project’. The project topic is free to set, we will have to tackle a social issue Kingston is facing, then set a team goal. The meeting with the professor will serve as a project progress as well as a learning consolidation for the lecture contents and readings provided in class. This is a very meaningful class to me since we are allowed to put our learnings into use.

### **Visa Procedure:**

Type of Passport Holding: British passport

### **Visa Requirement:**

Exchange students who hold the British passport will have to apply the eTA online. When they enter Canada, they need to show their offer letter and their eTA. They also have to bring these two with them whenever they left Canada for trips.

Only exchange students who are staying for 6 months or above are required to apply for student visa

### **Orientation Events:**

They had orientation for commerce students on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of school. Students will be divided into groups. Each groups consisted of students from different countries and each group have to finish some team games and present one funny fact about the team.

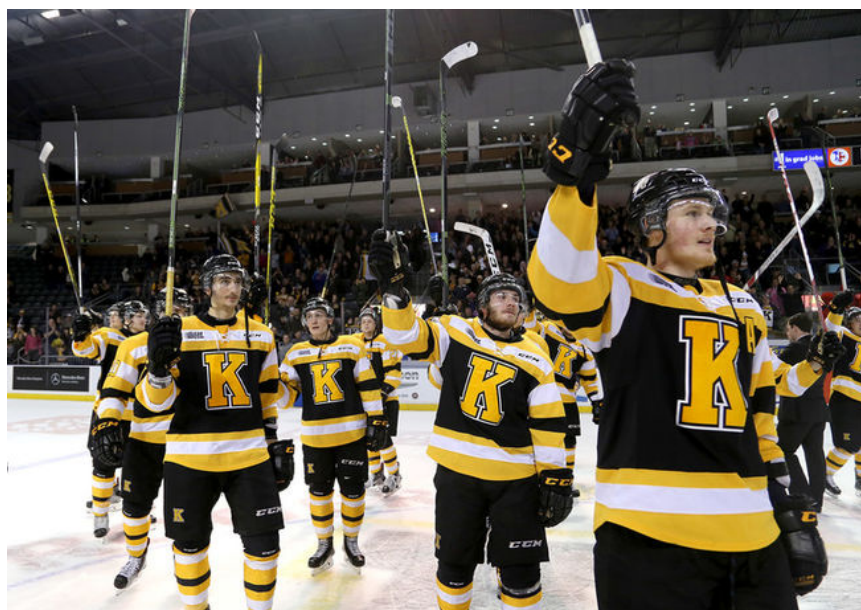
Date: 4 January, 2019

Time: 1:30pm-4pm

Venue: Goodes Hall

### Hockey Game

In the evening, commerce students were invited to the Kingston Frontenacs Hockey Game for free.



Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2019

Time: 7pm-10pm

Venue: Leon Centre,  
Downtown

### **International Service:**

I did not receive any pick-up services, nor any cultural activities. We were asked to head to the dorm ourselves. However, the international office are very efficient and are quick in responding enquires. Every coordinator are being very helpful before our arrival, they also help us with limited courses enrolment.

### **Accommodation:**

Jean Royce Hall

### **Application procedure:**

Apply the Hall online and the International Office will send you an email with the application link which you are required to type in all your room requests (types of room, date of arrival). You will be asked to pay a deposit 525CAD as 'room holding fee' then you have the whole January to pay the remaining fees.

Total fees of the accommodation: 3900CAD

**Availability of Meal Plans:** There are no meals provided

### **Course Registration:**

Course Registration Procedure:

When you applied for the exchange programme, the coordinators from the exchange office will notify you on a webinar about course enrolment. There are also an incoming exchange portal for students which include all the details on course enrolment, requirements and links to important internal systems e.g. SOLUS and Queens email.



Before Arrival



Course Information



After Arrival



Studying at Smith



Before Leaving

News ▾

Enrolment Management for upper year Commerce students

Posted Jul 22, 2019 8:22 AM



### Restrictions:

**There are some courses with a pre-requisite and without special permission required.**

#### Requirements for this type of course:

- Under each course description, it will indicate there is a pre-requisite.
- The pre-requisites for these courses are waived for exchange students; however, you are encouraged to use these pre-requisites as a guideline when choosing courses. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the expectations of each course you enroll in to be academically successful.

### Enrolment Method:

Students can self-enroll into these courses on SOLUS.

#### Courses with a pre-requisite & no special permission required

**There are also some courses that require special permission:**

#### Requirements of this type of course

##### Course Requirements:

- Under each of these course descriptions, it will indicate "This course is open to Commerce exchange students with permission only, space may be limited."
- There may also be specific pre-requisites required.

### How to Enroll:

To request for special permission, you will have to fill in a special request form. If you found no replies or updates on your request 1 week before the semester starts, email the coordinators from the exchange office, they will approve the request for you.

### Course Information:

All the course details will be posted in the incoming exchange portal around 1-2 months before the semester started

### Teaching and Assessment Method:

## **Financial Accounting II**

Class Format: guest lectures ( guests from Big4) , Lectures with class discussions, Group Case solving

Class Size: 20

Assessment Method: we are required to finish a 3 group assignment on identify and advise a company in solving accounting issues. There is one mid-term and one final, with 3 individual take-home assignment on book problems.

## **International Business Strategies:**

Class Format: Lectures with class discussions, Group Case solving

Class Size: 40

Assessment Method: We are required to finish 1 group project, 10 case preparations, 1 individual essay and 1 market analysis.

## **Leadership**

Class Format: Lectures with class discussions

Class Size: 40

Assessment Method: We are required to finish 1 group project, 3 individual assignments (3 6 pages long essays)

## **Auditing**

Class Format: Lectures with class discussions, guest lectures (guests from Big4)

Class Size: 40

Assessment Method: We are required to finish group discussions, 1 mid-term and 1 final

## **Business and Corporate Strategy**

Class Format: Lectures with class discussions

Class Size: 40

Assessment Method: We are required to finish 1 group project, 3 presentations, 3 individual assignments, Capsism (business stimulation)

## **Finance and Banking:**

Currency: CAD

Expenses: Around HKD 7-8K

Best Way to handle money matters:

In generally the price level of Canada is slightly higher than that to Hong Kong. As their portion are quite big to me, so my practise is to always bring a container with me, so I can leave the unfinished food for another meal. The school offered meal plans to the students in which they can dine in any of the school cafeteria. There is also FLEX dollars included in the meal plan. FLEX dollars can be used to buy snacks in non-school operating diners, e.g. Tim Hortons and Starbucks. Since most of the cafeterias have All-You-Can-Eat for all meals, I personally do not eat much found it unworthy. So I prefer preparing meals for myself which also greatly reduce my daily expenses. The area around the school also got a variety of food

to cater the needs of students from different countries.

Kingston is a safe city so you don't have to be afraid of the robbery problem. But I highly advise you to travel through the bus as it is completely free as the school has paid for all the students.

### **Climate:**

#### **Weather Information:**

During the semester, the weather in Kingston is cold and can drop to -40 degrees some days. In generally, it is the coolest from January to mid-March, snow storms and freezing weather mostly happened in this period. The city snows often as well, buying a big coat with a hood is highly recommended.

#### **Temperature changes:**

It will be cooler at night with around 10 degrees difference from day time,

### **Health & Safety:**

Availability and Usage of Health Centre:

There is a hospital near inside Queens University and students can receive medical service there for free.

### **Safety Matters:**

Kingston is a very safe city, they got police station everywhere and it's said to have no robberies there according to my professor. The school also provide Walk Home services for students.

### **Food:**

Since a huge part of Kingston is occupied by Queens University, restaurants are of great varieties. There are a lot of Asian food for Hong Kong students to choose from, however, Chinese food are relatively of lower quality and of higher price. Therefore, I do recommend to cook Chinese cuisines yourself using the ingredients bought from the Chinese market located in downtown.

The three biggest supermarkets are Loblaw, Food Basic and Metro. Metro is the most convenient store out of the three since it is located nearest to school and there are student discounts for Queens student every Tuesday and Thursday. Loblaw have the best quality food, however it is farthest away and need around 30 mins bus ride from Jean Royce Hall. It also offer student discounts every Tuesday. Food Basic offer the cheapest price, however they have the relatively poorer food quality, I suggest buying necessities there instead.

### **Transportation**

Kingston are accessible by roads. Major transportation there is taxi and bus. Queens students can take buses for free in Kingston. Uber are also available in Kingston.

### **Communication**

Language used is mainly English and French.



**Sports & Recreation Facilities**

There are over 100 clubs in SMU, but the one I mostly encounter with will be the International Student Association. They also have a 5 floors sports center with gym and sports room available for students for booking. There are also free sports classes for students to sign up.

**Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities**

Mostly through orientation activities and mingling events

**Cautionary measures**

As mentioned above, Kingston is a very safe city and is highly protected by the national force and police. But still beware of your own belongings when in crowded places

**Checklist of items to bring**

- Passport
- Money
- ID Card
- Study Pass confirmation for immigration