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1. Arrival Overseas/On-site Orientation

- The best accommodation option is the on-campus housing. The best living area on-campus for affordability and quality is Park Village and the Park Houses.
- There was an orientation during the first week we arrived. It explained how they do teaching and assessments for international students. They also covered all the opportunities that they have for exchange students, and who to talk to if we had any questions or concerns. It helped me make sure that I had everything in order for my classes and I was able to find out how their system works.

2. Academics

- The system Sussex was very different from UW. Each department was set up differently, so I can only explain how the Sociology department was organized. Each class (or 'module' as they call it) meets 2 times a week; once for a lecture, and another time for a seminar. During the lecture, it was set up like most classes at UW, where the professor lectures for an hour. But the seminar is a smaller amount of students with a tutor, and we would discuss the lecture and weekly readings. During lectures there was little student/teacher relations, but during seminar it was more interactive with the tutor. Both the professors and tutors were all available for office hours for any help that students needed. The assessments and grading was also unique. Instead of having papers and tests throughout the term, there was only one essay for each class due at the end of the term. Apart from that, there were just weekly readings for the seminar discussions.
- The instruction was very good, and was at the same level as what I have experienced at UW.
- I would recommend any course with Susie Scott in the sociology department.

3. Housing

- The housing options available to me were, on-campus, off-campus, and homestays.
- I chose to live in the on-campus accommodation because it was the most convenient. The school is in the countryside, so by living on-campus I was able to save money by not having to pay for transportation every day.
- I would recommend others to live on-campus as well. It is a good way to meet other students and save money.

4. Program/Exchange Site

- The campus is in the countryside, about a 20-30 min bus ride or a 10 minute train ride to town. The buses drive through campus and there is a train station right next to campus, so even though the school isn't in town, it is easily accessible. On campus there is a dinning hall, 2 pubs, a grocery store, and coffee shop.

5. Health and Safety

There weren't any safety concerns associated with my experience abroad. The campus, and England in general is very safe!

There was a health clinic on campus. The only health concern I experienced was the fact that there was a leak in my room which started to mold, and it took a long time for the facility team to respond to my maintenance request. It was never fixed during my time there, but they did offer to move me to another room.

6. Cultural Aspects

-I integrated into the culture and community through meeting people at the orientation week events. There are also many societies (clubs) that students can get involved in.

-I didn't experience any issues from cultural differences. There were only small things that I had to adjust to, like figuring out what way to look before crossing the street, getting used to using their public transportation system, and the difference in dining etiquette (you always have to ask for the check, they never give it to you otherwise).

7. Financial

- The best way for me to access money while I was gone was to just use my U.S. debit card and taking money out of the ATM on campus because my bank only had 1% for international fees. I would recommend that students have a card with a chip, because although my card worked at most places, there were times that it wouldn't be accepted because it didn't have one.

- I would recommend 1,000 dollars of spending money per month. My rent was about \$700 per month and food, transportation, & extra spending money was around \$300 dollars all together.

- I used Financial Aid to fund a portion of my exchange, and didn't have any complications.

8. Program/Exchange Administration

-The IP&E administered my exchange, and the services they provided was very helpful. Mike was always available to answer my questions via email, and the pre-departure orientation was very helpful and gave me all the information I needed.

9. Program/Student Type

This program is best suited for students that are good at working by themselves and are able to self-motivate. Independence is a highly needed quality, from the schoolwork to being able to successfully navigate England.

10. Overall Experience

I would say that I had realistic expectations, and that I had a better time than I had expected. I got along with my flat-mates better than I thought I would, and was able to adjust to the class structure very easily as well. I also enjoyed getting to go on weekend trips around Europe, exploring England, and being surrounded by the culture. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in England, and wished I could have stayed longer!

I lived off-campus at 13 Victoria road through the mature undergraduate/post graduate housing option offered by the university. It was a fantastic location in downtown Brighton. I would recommend living off campus because there is so much to do in town and it's a great place to be. Also, most of the students live off campus and just about everything is in walking distance, and if not, the public transportation is extremely quick, reliable, and easy to use. Commuting to campus was no hassle at all, especially with the buses directly to campus coming regularly (e.g. bus #25) and the train, which is the fastest way to get there.

The university has a 'Fresher's Week' the week before classes start where they offer socials and advertise for clubs, societies, sports, etc. I would recommend getting involved in extra things as soon as you can. They also have international students' and department socials', pub crawls, as well as other means of meeting people from early on. Take advantage of all the social opportunities and try to live with other students you think might be similar to you/in a similar situation as yourself.

Classes tend to be smaller and if you take more than one class in the same year/level in the same department you will most likely be with the same people. Only some courses are taught by one instructor, other, larger courses, may have 4 or more instructors that come and lecture on a specific topic then hand it over to another lecturer. Classes do not have the same structure as they do in the states. It is less clear what you are expected to do and learn. You may be given a list of optional outside readings on any particular subject, and sometimes there is no clear text. Also, exams allow you to succeed in a course without knowing everything that has been taught. You can pick certain topics and study them more than others and still do well. It is a very different system that, depending on the department, can be more or less difficult to get used to. Much more is based on essays. Also, grading is based on a publishing scale, so a grade of 70% is equal to a 4.0. 70% and above is exceptional work, 60%-70% is generally equated to 3.0-4.0, 50%-60% 2.0-3.0, generally speaking. Expect to use the library a lot in order to find the readings you need. Also, during due-dates, computers can be hard to get, so find the other computer labs outside of the library.

I was actually disappointed by the Sussex University education. It is much more subjective, and many of the instructors I had were not up to being questioned or challenged. I felt that there was just lecturing and no conversation present in the classroom. Grading is also less clear and may be more opinion-based. However, I loved the students and it was good that most of the courses I took at the University of Sussex counted for UW credit and direct requirements. The best part of going to Sussex was the experience itself. In spite of my lack of enthusiasm for the education, I found that the entire experience was absolutely worth it. Even noting the lesser aspects of my year abroad, there is nothing I could say that should ever be a reason to not go. Just go.

The campus is much smaller than the UW. There are multiple bars on campus and it is perfectly normal to go grab a pint after class. There is a medical facility on campus that you can make appointments for. It may take a while to schedule you in, but it works. If there is an emergency do not hesitate to go to any hospital for treatment or care.

The people in Brighton are awesome, the students are fun and welcoming, and the culture itself is fantastic. Brighton is a fun, safe, beautiful place to be and I loved living in the center. A great way to meet people is through the socials the university offers in the beginning, your roommates, going out for drinks with fellow students, but mostly by getting involved in extracurricular societies. The cultural differences were welcomed. Things are more relaxed and people are more social. The biggest change which was difficult to get used to was the university; the cultural differences I encountered with the people I met were more pleasant surprises than anything else. I came across much less America bias than I expected. It is just important to keep an open mind.

Since I stayed for the entire year I found that the best decision, financially, was to open an international account at Barclays bank. You can have someone from home transfer money into your account- I gave my account information to a parent and they wired the money over. There are some fees but having my money in a bank where I could easily visit the branches in person was worth it. Spending monthly really depends on you, your rent, what you plan to do, etc. Estimate about 400 pounds a month for rent, 40 pounds for transportation, food and drink are really subjective. However, if you want cheap groceries, go online to ASDA. They are super cheap and deliver your order- it's fabulous. Also, if you plan to travel, use Ryanair and/or easyjet, they offer cheap airfare. The university also organizes trips and you can buy tickets on campus. Prices vary depending on the trip but usually they're about 20 pounds- if you want to go, buy tickets early, they sell out fast.

I felt that the IP&E office at the UW helped me tremendously, especially Dana Bumpus. She was a fantastic help and resource. I can't imagine anymore that they could've done to better prepare me for the year abroad. I would recommend this program for anyone and everyone. It was an absolutely fantastic experience. England was wonderful, Brighton itself was amazing, the people are great, and the location is perfect for visiting London and, with cheap airfare, travelling around Europe easily and affordably.

When I left for Sussex I didn't have many expectations about what my experience would be like, since I actually didn't look into it much before taking off. The one thing I did want was to experience a different education system, which I did. I also wanted to travel, which I did. The rest happened because I landed and hit the ground running. I think the best thing I did was go into the experience without expectations, and everything turned out to be a great surprise.

JUL 27 2010

Brighton, England, Spring/Summer Term 2010

Arrival/Orientation

When I arrived at Sussex University, normally, they had shuttles running from the Falmer Train Station over to the University, however, there was about a foot of snow and the entire operation was shut down. The university couldn't run shuttles or open any buildings other than security, one cafe, and the dorms. There are several different types of dorms on campus. I chose the cheapest available option, East Slope. East Slope had a good location. It's up on a hill which has a bar on it and a main bus stop for the campus. In addition, the laundrette was right down the hill from East Slope as well as the two different grocery stores there are on campus. However, East Slope is constantly regarded as the worst housing on campus because of the quality. I believe that it's the oldest housing on campus. A lot of people thought the flats were disgusting, however, I didn't mind mine. The rooms in the flats were not bad at all! And I enjoyed having housemates. Most flats in East Slope hold anywhere from 8-12 people. We only had 6 in mine. We all shared a big kitchen, a dining area, and two bathrooms. The only complaint I had about the bathroom was the tiny shower. Not to mention, water constantly got sprayed on the floor and there wasn't a drain built into the floor, so you had to mop it up or use a towel.

Despite all of these issues, East Slope was a good place to live while I was there because my bedroom was spacious and there were a lot of people there, so you could interact with others. When you're all by yourself and you don't know anyone, that is the best way to meet people and to get to know them. I enjoyed having people around. However, East Slope could get quite noisy because of all the large flats who liked to party, so that was a downside. So, I guess I'd recommend either Park Village or York House. Those were the only two other places I visited while I was there. York House is where most of the international students stay. You have individual rooms to yourself and security is located in that building. In addition, one of the main computer labs was in York House as well as a grocery store. Park Village is a little more like flats. Each person has their own room but they share a kitchen and bathroom. Both of these are a little more expensive than East Slope. I guess where you'd stay depends on how you'd like to live and how much you're willing to spend. There are a lot more options than the 3 I talked about, but I never went inside any of them, so I don't know.

As for an orientation, since there was a lot of snow, most of the things they had planned for arriving students were canceled. However, within the first few days, a couple administrators held a coffee morning for international students as well as a trip into town for groceries and whatnot. This was a valuable thing because we were all lost and needed food and supplies, as well as guidance. Once school started, they did hold orientation and everything became very clear. It covered everything from how you use the internet in your room and paying rent to academics and how classes are run. It was very helpful to have a lot of information about what was going on. They also were always available for assistance if you didn't know what you were doing. You could always get help at the International Student Office. The orientation we had was very useful in helping me to adapt.

Academics

a. The classroom structure at Sussex University was very similar to that at UW. We had a weekly lecture in large groups in a large lecture hall and then a seminar group at the end of the week, which was used to review the information we received at the lecture but in smaller groups where it was easier to discuss. The only big difference between them was that we only had one lecture per class per week at Sussex versus several lectures per class per week at UW. This was both good and bad. It meant that you were only studying one big subject per week, however, you had a lot more free time and most

students didn't spend it studying. Since drinking is legal at 18 there, many students didn't seem to care much about academics. Coming from a place like UW where your classes are taken seriously regardless of what year you are, to somewhere where most freshmen didn't care at all about classes because their first year didn't count for their degree, was distracting. However, you have to be independent enough to know for yourself how much you need to study and do the readings.

Instruction was about the same. The professors were extremely confident and intelligent in their subject matters and conveyed the material smoothly to their students. Even the seminar tutors, who were graduate students in that field, knew what their subject was and taught it well. My experience with seminar teachers at UW is the same.

Teacher/student relations were a little different at Sussex University. I feel like you can get to know your professors much better at UW than at Sussex, because at Sussex they were the last resort for help. You would always seek advice from your seminar tutors first. They were more like UW professors as far as student/teacher relations goes. They were more personable, knew you by first name basis, and could help you out with your work.

Grading and exams was not something I liked at Sussex University. Most final exams were held during the last five weeks of Summer term, which means that even people who took classes in 2009 Fall term, had their exams in June of the following year. I felt like they drug out exams too long as well. My exams weren't until 5 weeks after my final class. You don't need 5 weeks to study something you had been studying the entire term. At UW, finals only take a few days and they're over and done with. In addition, my classes were usually graded considering only one essay and one final exam. I had one class that was graded 100% by my final exam and one class graded 100% by one essay! Talk about stressful! Also, they never offered extra credit for anything. I just don't feel like a 14 week class can depend entirely on one exam! And, for the exams, they didn't give you a study guide so you just had to randomly pick a few topics to review really well and hope that they'd be on there. The whole system was quite different from what we have at UW. I much prefer UW's exam style where you have a good idea what is going to be on the exam, so you can study really hard for it as well as being given quizzes/mid-terms throughout the term to help level your grade out. In addition, grades are out of 100% percent as they are here, but it's very unlikely for anyone to ever get over 75%. They consider 70% to be top marks. The whole system is confusing.

Administration was good. They were on top of everything and well organized. If you ever had a question, they responded to you quickly just as they do at UW.

The library, computer, and classroom facilities were the same there as they are here. There is only one library, but it's large. There may be less computers/printers available there however since anytime I went to go use one, there was a long line. UW's computer labs far exceeded those at Sussex, but the facilities were good overall.

b. The quality and content of instruction was good. You learned a good amount of information there. I did have one class that I didn't enjoy as much because there were rotating professors. Each professor taught a different section and each section lasted for 3 or 4 lectures. Some professors were much better than others, so the quality of instruction depended heavily on which professor you had. At UW, I've never had a bad teacher. Everyone has been good at what they do. Even though I may not have liked one or two professors at Sussex, the quality of education was good.

c. As far as courses go, I would recommend taking "Explanatory Concepts in Political Science",

"The Allure of Things", and "The International System Today: Regions and Institutions". All of these classes touch on fundamental issues pertaining to Political Science and International Studies. The Allure of Things was a class that made you think outside of the box constantly and broadened your horizon. The other two classes were good because they taught you principle theories and ways of approaching both International Studies and Political Science.

- d. My study abroad coursework related to my UW education in that I took classes that specifically reflect my major degree program and it was useful learning these things from a different perspective. I felt like the professors and students approached learning differently there and it's good to try and learn from multiple points of view. Doing that, I feel like I have a more vast scope of knowledge pertaining to my subject matter and that could not have been possible without studying abroad and learning from a different system.

Housing

At Sussex University, you can choose from all the different dorm options which are mostly on-campus and they have more expensive dorms more off-campus that are more like houses or you can stay completely off-campus by renting a house or room or by staying with families who rent out their rooms to students. I had friends who stayed off campus with families and some liked it whereas some didn't. It depended on where they ended up. Some of my friends stayed in houses with people they didn't like and where they felt a little unsafe. I knew people who rented a room with other students in houses. Although, that was usually done more so by people who were English natives or had been living there for a while. I chose staying on campus in East Slope. I chose East Slope purely because it was the cheapest available housing. I would wholly recommend staying on campus because you save a lot of money in transportation costs. You don't have to leave campus unless you want to if you live on campus. They have grocery stores and everything on campus, so on campus housing is your best bet. Not to mention, you'll be closer to your classes and friends.

The only thing I did not particularly like living on campus was that most of the people living on campus were the younger students, so there was often a lot of noise and disturbances. However, if you don't mind a little noise occasionally, on campus housing is the best and the cheapest!

Program/Exchange Site

The campus at Sussex University is MUCH smaller than UW. You can walk from one end to the other in about 10 minutes. Also, the campus isn't nearly as pretty as UW's. The buildings there aren't very attractive and there aren't any fountains or anything like that. They don't have a quad area or anything like that. The campus itself is located about 15-20 minutes outside of Brighton. There is one thing I adored about their campus and that was that it was surrounded by a forest with a ton of walking trails through it and on the other side was a large park and cow fields. You could go for walks anywhere and feel completely safe. I never felt unsafe at any point while I went to school there. Theft and personal attacks are almost never heard of, whereas at UW, you have to watch your stuff like a hawk. I feel like safety and security are fantastic on campus at Sussex University. The surrounding area around the campus is gorgeous at Sussex and I highly recommend experiencing it!

Health and Safety

I felt a million times safer in England than I do here. You're pretty much safe any where you go in Brighton and that is one thing I really love about it there. I never heard of any theft the entire time I was there! Nor did I hear of anyone being attacked! There's a nurse's office on campus that I used and

they are good at helping you out. I didn't have any safety or medical concerns while I was there.

Cultural Aspects

a. Meeting members of the community and integrating into the culture was not difficult at all! The school offers a wide range of sports activities and everyone was super friendly! Most of the English people I met were through my classes and many were very nice and easy to interact with. You have to be willing to give up choices at the grocery store and be able to adapt to not having certain luxuries, but once you do that, you're pretty well adapted. I noticed there that in the grocery stores, they don't often carry what you want, so you just pick something else. In addition, there aren't a million McDonald's or Starbucks everywhere, so you just substitute with what you find. And that's all part of the experience. To be honest, it felt good not to see all those American symbols everywhere. Trying new foods and ways of shopping are all part of the experience. Besides, they pretty much let anyone enter their sports clubs and whatnot. It seemed like they were eager to learn about American culture just as much as I was eager to learn about theirs.

b. They seem to be much more liberal in England than here, so be prepared for that. There are many unions there and all of them seemed to always be on strike. The students and teachers were always on strike for something and there were many more mass demonstrations. Granted, they're all non-violent, but many of them were against the cutting of funds for the university. It was hard for me who pays several thousand in tuition, to see someone striking against having to pay only 200 pounds per year! In addition, people seem to cuss more, drink a lot more, their jokes are more offensive, as well as their general sense of humor. However, if you can accept these as I did, their culture becomes like a family. Everyone can talk to everyone else with ease. There aren't as many cultural divides there as there are here. People are super friendly and seem to care more about politics and stuff than younger generations here do.

One thing I encountered personally while I was there was that I met a few anti-Americanists. In fact, there seemed to be a general anti-American notion almost everywhere on campus, but you have to realize that as a people, they're fed negative notions of America so many notions are biased. In addition, many hadn't been to America and had never personally experienced anything they hated about America, so a lot of these anti-American sentiments can be discredited. I never felt personally insulted by them because I know that many people outside our country do not like American policies or whatnot, but it was good to argue with their preconceived notions. If someone confronted me about being American, I didn't feel attacked. It gave me the opportunity to see America from someone else's point of view and to be honest, it made me feel more grateful than ever to be American, because only until you can see your country from someone else's eyes will you realize the full scope of what your country is and I'm blessed to have experienced that. I recommend that everyone does the same.

Financial

a. The best way to access/transfer money from the U.S. will depend on who your bank is. Some banks have sister companies that allow you to access money free from the ATM without being charged. For example, U.S. Bank partners with Barclay's Bank, so you can withdrawal money without being charged. Most banks charge a fee for taking money out of the ATM. English domestic banks don't charge you, just your home institution. I recommend always having some cash on you for the bus. Your debit/credit card is probably the best way to go for most people because they usually charge a much smaller conversion rate for exchanging money from one currency to another, but again, check with your own bank. Also, make sure you let your bank know where you will be and when so they can place

a note on your card so your account doesn't freeze when you travel abroad. This didn't happen to me, but people I know had this problem and it can be annoying!

b. Setting aside spending money will depend entirely on whether or not you plan on traveling or how much you spend on groceries. Rent for me was around \$2000 for the entire six months. I bought a weekly bus pass for \$15, so about \$60 per month on transportation. Also, the exchange rate of wherever you go will make a big difference. Everything was more expensive for me because the US dollar is valued lower than the British pound, plus, the cost of living is a little higher over there. Groceries aren't too bad. I probably spent about \$75-\$100 per month, however, I cooked all of my own meals. If you eat out, it will be significantly more. Altogether, I probably spent close to \$7000 for 6 months. Much of that was used for traveling, but essentially, I would allot about \$300-\$400 per month for rent plus food and transportation, it would be around \$600-\$700 per month. You would of course have to exchange that amount into their domestic currency.

d. I did use Financial Aid to fund my program/exchange and I didn't incur any complications. The only thing that I had an issue with was recently when I returned, because Sussex sends out their grades a month after UW does, Financial Aid cannot process next year's aid until they receive my grades from abroad and that whole process is a little stressful. However, I've been in contact with the International Programs and Exchange office and they've been most helpful in sorting out this issue with me.

Program/Exchange Administration

The IP&E did administer my program and they were very helpful before I left in getting me ready to leave and being there for me whenever I had any questions. There is however one thing I'd change and that is how well they tell you what's going on when you return. When I got back, I had no idea what I needed to do or what was going on. I had an issue with Financial Aid because my grades haven't arrived yet and I don't know what my classes will count as, etc, but this issues will dissolve once your grades arrive. To deal with these issues, I emailed their office and immediately, they got back to me and told me what was going on. So, the only thing I'd do, is tell people about the returning process before they leave. For example, tell them that financial aid might suspend their aid for the following term only because they haven't received their grades and that this isn't a terrible thing. It's all just paperwork, but this should be explained so that students know what to expect. Other than that, everything went really well!

Program/Student Type

Being far from home is never easy, but you have to be independent and resourceful to travel by yourself. If you constantly depend on others for help, this type of program probably isn't for you. I had a roommate who could not adjust and nor would she try. If you're having a hard time adjusting, you have to try. There are resources available to help you, but you have to take the initiative, no one will do it for you. All of the traveling to and from the country is done by you alone. There were times where I wanted to have a friend there to help, but the reality is, you're by yourself. This kind of experience is amazing in that it prepares you for life. You learn that nothing you want to do will be done unless you yourself do it. You can't depend on others your whole life to do everything for you. The emotions can be overwhelming, but nestle into the setting and it'll surround you. Before you know it, you'll be having the time of your life. I wouldn't change this experience for anything, but it was challenging. The biggest thing, don't be afraid of the unknown. You have to be willing to try new things on this type of program, even if you're uncomfortable. You make friends soon enough and there is a good staff there to help.

This type of program is perfect for teaching you to stand on your own two feet as an adult and to help prepare you to enter into the world on your own. Nothing compares to this strengthening experience!

Overall Experience

Honestly, I didn't know what to expect when I set out to study at Sussex University. I had been abroad before when I studied in Switzerland, but that was a short program and taught in French. This program allows you to choose the classes you need or want to take, so it feels like you're just heading off to a new university and starting over. I didn't have any expectations academically or personally because I didn't know what to expect. I knew that it would be challenging and I knew it would be a good experience. It was just that. So, I guess the few expectations I did have were true. I also expected to confront some stereotypes about Americans or some issues with anti-Americanism, and I did, but since I knew that I would confront those, they weren't issues. The only advice I can give is that people shouldn't go into any program with preconceived notions of how it will be, they should just go into giving it their all and being willing to absorb new information without resisting change. Change is inevitable, it's just a matter of how you change or where you are when you do it. These programs can offer people the experience of a lifetime and that shouldn't be taken for granted by going into it with too many expectations.

DHV

AUG 25 2008

IP& E Evaluation Report
(For Uni. Sussex)

1. The University of Sussex has great accommodations both on and off campus. I lived off Campus in a fairly large house on 13 Victoria Road. The rooms were ample; some of the more expensive rooms were huge. They weren't more than what I paid for mine though. The neighborhood is quiet and only a 5-minute walk from the high street (main shopping street). The orientation was ok, it didn't really prepare me for what was expected but it did cover attendance, and the stressed the importance of reading the student handbook. It is important to read that thoroughly as it explains the procedures for turning in course work. Which in most cases is very different to how things are done in the States.
2. As far as the library and classrooms are concerned they are comparable to the UW's facilities. The instruction can be a bit dense and hard to follow at times. I found them using vocabulary that I wasn't familiar with and tried to keep a dictionary handy. The system there is set up like a master program would be here, where you might have a lecture and then you have a seminar the following day. So you get plenty of time to review with the tutor (professor). Grading was in most cases 100% based on one paper or one final exam. So the quality of work expected is much higher, since you have basically all semester to work out your paper or prepare for your test. It is also a much different grading scale, and the first time you receive your grades it can be very humbling. Read up on the grading system before you go, because a 70 is an A. I wasn't a big fan of the instruction, I felt it was left too much to the students and wasn't guided enough. I thought that for this level of education there should be a more structured approach. But it might work well for some. All my classes were in my field of study but I enjoyed them, even though I didn't do as well there as I probably would have done here.
3. I would recommend that any students considering Sussex consider living off campus. It takes a little longer to get to class; 20-30 min. by bus 10 min by train. I thought being so close to the city and the beach was well worth the bus ride. Brighton has a very active nightlife if you like clubs and living closer to the city means you can stay out longer, and not have to worry about catching a night bus home.
4. Going to England, you would expect to go to an old University that has been there for hundreds of years, but this isn't the case with Sussex. Sussex is part of the "Red Brick Universities" which were started in the 50s or 60s. So you can imagine the campus is filled with red brick buildings done in 50s architecture, it leaves something to be desired. Brighton though is an amazing place to live. It is a beach resort town and very eclectic. It is known as being the UK's gay capital, and as a result it has a very tolerant and very diverse community.

5. There isn't much to worry about in Brighton. I never had any problems but there are a few places to stay away from. There were reports of students being mugged, but if you stay in groups when going out and stay away from the bad areas, then you will have no problems. I never had anything happen to me. But don't always try to go out with someone so you don't make yourself a target. Being a student in the UK, you get free health care and you can sign up for that before you go. I only needed to go once, and my experience was very good.
6. I have never had any problems meeting people but I found the English extremely pleasant, some could be a bit reserved but that is the way a lot of them were raised. England is definitely a 'pub' culture and that is a great way to meet people. There are thousands of pubs and where I lived there were at least 6 pubs within a 5-minute walk. There is always going to be jokes about Americans directed at you or at least within earshot, but you just have to let those things slide. Most of the time they won't be in a threatening way, so you can always have a comeback ready, it can get old after awhile but you get used to it.
7. As far as financial advice I would say open an account with Lloyds or Nat West. I had some trouble with Nat West in that they required a lot of information from the University to open an account, whereas Lloyds just needed a passport. Then once you have an account open, find out all the info you need to wire money from home to the UK. I just had a friend wire the money from here to there. That is the best thing. Depending on your financial situation the cost of living in England can fluctuate. There are lots of places to buy groceries in England. They have Marks and Spencer's, which is fairly expensive and sells mostly ready-made meals. Then there is Waitrose, which is expensive but has great quality food. The best and most reasonable are Sainsbury's and Tesco's. One important thing to do when first getting to Brighton is to go to the "One Stop" that is where you can get all your transpiration needs. You can pick up a student rail card which gets you 1/3 off rail fares and you can also get a bus pass, if you will be there for the whole year it is a good buy. Some people prefer to take the train though. You can also get special deals on rail tickets if you buy in advance. They also have a great deal from Brighton to London for only 10 pounds. My financial aid was just enough to cover most of my rent so all I had to worry about was food and books. Most classes at Univ. Sussex don't require textbooks and you just have to buy a reader, which can range in price from 10 to 30 pounds. It is important to work out a budget as soon as you get there. Try buying mostly non-perishable food like rice. Find out what you need and try to stick to that budget. That way you can keep track of your funds, and figure out if you can do any traveling while you are there. I did some traveling around England and over to Europe and down to the Canary Islands. England is a great jump off place to get anywhere in Europe and you can usually find cheap flights on Easy Jet and Ryan Air. Just make sure to read about what costs extra on those cheap flights.
8. The IP&E was a relatively painless experience. As soon as I got accepted everything was more or less taken care of. I didn't really have any problems here or over there. Before I left the states I was in contact with my advisor in England and she helped me get signed up for all my classes, and I didn't have any trouble getting into any of them. But it is good to have a back up in case one of your

classes is filled already. But the IP&E was great and I had no problems leaving or returning. My grades were sent to the IP&E office and then I just took my grades to the appropriate department and got the signatures to get my grades converted. It was easy and painless.

9. I would recommend any students planning to go to England to study, brush up on their writing skills. England's youth are trained at a very young age on how to write essays and I found that my writing style was very different from what they expected and I was docked points because I didn't write in an academic style. My papers did well here, but in England I was very disappointed with my results. Try and read some English academic papers before you leave and get a feel for their style.
10. I would not trade my experience in England for anything. I made some great friends from all over the world, just in Brighton because the campus and community are very diverse. I was able to travel to France and drive all over Normandy and spend a week in Paris, I got to Belgium and saw Bruges and Gent. I traveled all over England. Some of my friends traveled home with some of the other foreign students and stayed with them in their homes during our breaks, which last for a month. I learned a lot about the English culture and made some great friends and I will always have a place to stay should I ever go back to England, which I definitely will. London is only an hour by train and there is a lot to see and do. The IP&E program makes it affordable and a painless transition to your host University. The experience of learning about other cultures and living within that culture is priceless, and doing it at this stage in ones life is the best time to do it.

DH ✓

IPE Study Abroad Evaluation
University of Sussex, Brighton.
Autumn Term

MAR 17 2008

December 12, 2007

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

I arrived two days before I could move into University provided accommodations, so I spent my first two nights in London. For the University of Sussex, I would recommend staying in London so as to get over the jet lag and get used to England. If you wish to go straight to the University, try to fly into Gatwick, which is only about a half-hour from Brighton. Whichever way you arrive in England, odds are you will take a train into Brighton. Don't leave the station. I recommend that students take a train to Lewes, which is right next to campus. You can take the Bus #25, which goes into Campus itself, but you have to walk half-way to the sea. The same is true if you come on a coach, except you have to go uphill instead.

Once at the University of Sussex, there were some meetings for Visiting and Exchange students (V&E), though they were generally useless. I would recommend taking the library tour, just to find your way around. Also, the one thing that was useful was a smaller orientation for Social Science students, where the grading was explained. This is important so you don't get surprised/depressed when you get your first grades back from either your assignments or papers.

2. ACADEMICS:

The first thing that should be noted is that there are much less classroom hours than at the U of W. The standard seemed to stay 3-4 classes a term (10 Weeks), but, at least for my classes, it was only two hours a week for each class. One hour was for lecture and the other was seminar (or quiz section at the UW). Another major surprise is that in quite a few classes, attendance is taken! This does factor into the student's final grade, so skipping class can be a bad habit to get into. Otherwise, classes run similar to quiz sections at the UW, though each one seemed to require the student to present the material for one of the weeks.

The grading was, I thought, fair and reasonable. As I was not there for the end of year exams (yes, the tests for quite a few classes happen at the end of the academic year, despite the class being in the autumn term), my grade was based purely on my paper, participation (presentation), and attendance. I should point out that in grading terms, 50-60's are considered very good and are not failing, something that was made clear in one of the orientation meetings.

When it comes to the facilities, I think those of us at the University of Washington are spoiled. The facilities for classes were clean and well kept (as much as one would expect of a classroom), though were not as up to date as the ones at the UW. Also, there is only one primary library on Campus and was, I thought, oddly laid out. There were supposedly computer labs for student use, though as I never had need of them, I don't know what kind of shape they are in.

Overall, I thought that the instruction was acceptable. I wasn't fond of the structure of the class, with so few hours of contact with professors and seminar instructors, but what was there was acceptable. The professors were okay, though I thought the seminar tutors were what made the classes interesting. Despite the classes I

took only counting as elective credits, I still thought the subject matter was interesting and taught well (at least in seminars).

3. HOUSING:

The University of Sussex will send a housing packet, which has a wide variety of options for University-Provided housing. You can, of course, look for other accommodations, but if you have never been to Brighton before, that probably is not a great idea. As it is, the University offers accommodations both on campus and in Brighton, which is worth looking into.

I ended up staying in the East Slope Residences. I had originally decided to stay there because it was the cheapest, but once I got there, there were other reasons to choose east slope. The ES flats are arranged (mostly) in groups of six bedrooms with a shared kitchen, eating room, and shower and toilets. What I liked about this is that it fostered a sense of community in the flats.

I would recommend East Slope for a few reasons. One, it does foster a sense of community, which is nice, especially being a foreigner. It's also the cheapest, which is also a benefit. That said, there are some problems, mainly that ES is old. Our hot water tap didn't always work at the beginning and maintenance is slow to respond (though I hear this is common throughout campus housing). The beds are not great and the place can be a bit drafty at times. Still, it wasn't that bad and I would say that the rooms are no worse than those in McMahon at the UW. Still, if you want something newer, there are others that cost a little more.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

The U of S is located right next to Stanmer Park, which has the village of Stanmer in it, and Falmer Village. There are large rolling pastures that are open for walking, which is quite pleasant on a sunny day (mind the cow droppings!). A few miles away (a short bus or train ride) is Brighton. The city is quite nice, at least on the water front. The beach is clean, though made of smooth, round stones.

The campus itself is adequate. Though perhaps not as sprawling as the UW campus, it is fairly large. I thought it was a bit bland, though the scenery outside of campus made up for that. As it was, for a school that I have heard (at least over there) is a good school, I found the campus lacking. Also, as mentioned earlier, the maintenance isn't the fastest when responding to issues on campus, especially the housing.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

I honestly did not have any concerns in this regard. Like in Seattle, avoid making stupid decisions such as walking out at night alone or leaving valuables in the open. The only bit of crime me or my flat mates were exposed to was the theft of our electric kettle, which we later learned was in retaliation for us blaring bad music on a Friday night.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

When I went to England, I found the best way to integrate with the cultural is to just be open to meeting people and putting yourself out there. The two best ways to do this are pubs and clubs (the school kind). Pubs, especially during Fresher's week, is a great way to meet people. I actually met my best friend from over there, who was a student from Austria, by going to a pub. By going with my flat mates, I was able to meet the friends of my flat mates and thus extend the number of people I knew.

School clubs are also good for integrating yourself in the culture. I joined the archery club, where I also met some great people as well as learn a fun skill. They are also a cheaper alternative to going out drinking (I would say a pint averages about 4 British Pounds, or over eight US dollars).

England, being an English speaking country as well as what we would call a "Western" country, is not all that different from the US (well, it is, but not in ways that make it really difficult to get along there). While I was concerned about having difficulties because of the animosity to the US at the time, these concerns were more or less unfounded. Of the people I met and spoke to, none held my nationality against me (though jokes about Americans did come up every once in a while).

Really, so long as you avoid being a stereotypical "ugly American," most people shouldn't have too much of a problem.

7. FINANCIAL:

For only being there for one quarter (or semester), I would recommend online banking and debit cards for getting cash. And yes, I would recommend cash, if only because it's a bit of a guess as to which stores will accept American credit cards and which don't. Now there is a small fee for your bank to convert the currency, so people should check with their financial institution before they go. The fee I was charged was minimal, so it wasn't an issue.

As for budgeting, I gave myself about \$300 a week (or 100 British pounds at the time). This is a bit of money, but with England being more expensive (and not just due to the conversion rate), I think it was justified. That did not include housing, which I paid in bulk at the beginning of the quarter and was comparable to UW housing prices (at the time). That said, since I have arrived home, the Dollar has devalued greatly when compared to the Pound and the Euro, so expect to budget more.

Now one thing that costs more than I realized are the trains and the buses. Yes, as many Americans have heard, their system is very good and goes practically everywhere. But it will cost you. If you plan on going to the continent or even to Scotland or Ireland, look into budget airlines like Ryan Air as they are much cheaper and faster than the train, especially if you book a few weeks in advance. The buses don't run like they do in Seattle. They don't require exact change (a bonus) but this means it will take a while to load people on at a stop (a negative) and they cost more. A one way trip (they don't use things like transfers) was 1.90 pounds (almost three dollars) and a day pass was three something pounds. It was actually faster and cheaper to just take the train from campus to Brighton!

As for financial aid, I did receive a loan, which was no problem as it was deposited directly into my bank account after it was used to pay tuition.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

The IPE office, for the most part, did a decent job of facilitating my study abroad experience. However, I felt they definitely lacked some efficiency. Emails weren't always responded to and there was a bit of a hitch in my concurrent enrollment form that I had to call from England to get taken care so that my financial aid would be distributed. Pretty much I would recommend that, if you go through the IPE office, keep their phone number on hand and be willing to call them even from overseas. The issues I experienced weren't major and were easily taken care of over the phone.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

I think this program is good for anyone who wants to experience another country and have a good jumping off point to go visit Europe as well. Students who are willing to be open and meet new people and try new things are probably going to get the most out of going to England than those who are not.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

I thought my expectations were realistic and I was not disappointed. I went over, not really for academics, but for the experience, which I got in spades. I met new people, learned more about myself and visited some truly remarkable places. And in my spare time I took some classes and got an academic education! There were rough patches at times, both academically, financially, and with my new friends, but those are normal whether one is here or there. So overall, I had a very good experience in my time studying at the University of Sussex.

February 22, 2010

International Program/Exchange Evaluation

University of Sussex (UK)

1. Arrival Overseas/On-Site Orientation:

a) The one piece of advice I would have for newly arriving students would be to fly directly to Gatwick airport rather than Heathrow. From Gatwick students can take either the train or coach directly to the Sussex campus itself or at least into downtown Brighton in under an hour. It is much less stressful than having to navigate one's way south all the way from central London.

b) I participated in the Sussex in September program tailored specifically for international students and consequently the orientation program was enormously helpful and comprehensive. Multiple welcome receptions, outings and events were held to acclimatize everyone to their new surroundings and I found them to be very useful in terms of meeting new people, finding my way around town, and learning about the university's procedural customs. The entire Sussex in September program is in and of itself a great way to prepare for a proper term at Sussex because you essentially have the campus to yourself for a month and take one course with an extremely small class size made up of people just as new to things as yourself. It comes highly recommended.

2. Academics:

a) Classes at Sussex compared to the UW are much less regimented and instructor directed. Seminars do not meet as frequently as they do at UW and assignments are fewer and farther between. Essentially the entirety of your grade comes from a few essays, attendance and in some cases participation. Moreover, the essay writing process requires students to be independently motivated as professors are typically unwilling to look at your work before it is handed in. All work MUST be submitted on time to the departmental office and in the proper format, Sussex is very stern about its administrative policies in this regard.

Library and computer facilities are not as available on the Sussex campus as they are at UW, library hours on weekends particularly are rather short. The computer labs are smaller and come equipped with generally lesser technology than those at UW. Technology issues (both wired and wireless internet connectivity) were likely the most frustrating parts of my stay at Sussex.

b) The quality of instruction was commensurate to UW. My professors were all helpful and knowledgeable and made explicitly clear all of their expectations for the course early on. What's more, all of my instructors were very nice and approachable. I have nothing but flattery for the lot of them.

c) I would recommend taking "English Folklore" as part of the Sussex in September Program largely for the group excursions around the Sussex Downs we took as a class. Also, I would recommend "The Death of Socialism" for those interested in lively, vigorous political debate.

d) The politics courses I took were highly correlated to my coursework at UW, in that they dealt with familiar concepts and assigned many familiar authors. My English Folklore course didn't really have

much to do with any of my major work, but for someone inclined to study in England it was still a worthwhile endeavor.

3. Housing:

a) Several housing options were presented though I wasn't able to actually choose my accommodation; rather I ranked the options by preference and Sussex assigned me to a residence. Of these options they are all essentially on campus dorms and they differ in terms of the amenities offered and consequently in price.

b) My first preference was to live off campus in Brighton itself in a university owned private residence just to immerse myself in the culture as much as I could. But my second choice – which I received, was to live in York House where the majority of international students are housed.

c) I would recommend living in Brighton if at all possible, Sussex is a really calm and peaceful place but it is also a bit isolated from the hustle and bustle of downtown Brighton. Still, any of the campus residences are nice—save perhaps East Slope which I might liken to a cesspool of fresher wildness and debauchery. And such places at this point in my existence, I tend to avoid.

4. Program/Exchange Site:

a) Sussex is a fairly typical college campus placed in a rural setting. There are supermarkets and cafes across the campus, but not a whole lot of shops and cosmopolitan recreational stimuli in the proximate vicinity. For those types of things one will need to head into Brighton.

Brighton itself is awesome, there are a ton of fun things to do (The Lanes, Churchill Square, Komedia, the Pier, Karaoke at the King and Queen, the Aquarium, The Royal Pavilion, etc.) and you'll quickly be made aware of all these once you arrive.

I would especially recommend venturing a little farther out of town and exploring some of the less obvious and easily available scenery and activities. The Chalk Cliffs at Seven Sisters in Eastbourne are gorgeous and well worth a day's hike. Rottingdean has all the makings of a quaint English country town (village green, parish church etc.), and it is home to Rudyard Kipling's former residence which is worth a look. Winchester is also a must see for the castle and (especially) cathedral alone, I made it into essentially all of the major European churches and Winchester was rather unexpectedly my favorite and arguably the most striking visually. Visitors to Sussex should definitely make the trek.

5. Health and Safety:

a) I had no personal issues demanding access to any hospital facility, so I can't offer any meaningful account of them, but upon arrival at Sussex I was made aware of both the on-campus health facilities as well as the Brighton Hospital. A friend of mine received a cut on his hand severe enough that it required stitches and he was tended to quickly and easily. You may take that piece of anecdotal evidence in whatever way you will.

6. Cultural Aspects:

a) The British students I found to be a bit standoffish at first, especially towards the American students, who account for a large subset of the international population at Sussex. But if you actively engage them I found the English to be friendly, lovely people for the most part. I made quite a few friends playing informal "footy" matches at Stanmer Park, which is quite a common past time as one can imagine considering it is England after all. But if Soccer isn't an individual's forte basketball and ultimate Frisbee are quite popular as well. The nightlife in Brighton is extremely fashionable as well, with club and pub

nights ubiquitous, everyday occurrences these are good places to meet all kinds of people, even those outside of the Sussex student population.

b) The cultural challenges I encountered were fairly minimal, speaking the same language made any cultural barriers relatively easy to overcome. I can definitively say that I experienced zero "gender issues" whilst abroad. Getting used to the new slang, and local vernacular was a bit interesting at first but it didn't present any real communicative problems. The only instance where I was a little miffed at a difference between a US and UK norm was in the classroom, it was quite common for discussions to become somewhat heated, and to my initial shock voices were often raised, although this is quite common and not as vitriolic as I at first perceived.

7. Financial:

a) The best way to access money is to simply have a major US credit or debit card, I used Visa and didn't run into any problems. Some stores may require your card come equipped with a "chip" which we don't commonly have here in the states but if that is the case ATM machines abound and money is easily accessible.

b) I would recommend estimating spending around 800-900 dollars a month, with the majority of that going to rent. If you are just living on campus and preparing your own meals for the most part, that should certainly be enough to get by. If you intend to travel extensively then your expenses will rise accordingly.

c) I didn't incur any real unexpected costs; I would just say that it is unwise to buy the bedding and utensils Sussex offers when you first arrive. They can be found for much cheaper and of a much higher quality somewhere like ASDA near the Brighton Marina. Also, expect bus fares to be a little steeper than you're used to in Seattle.

d) I did receive some financial aid to fund my stay and there were no complications, the funds were deposited directly into my bank account as if it were any other fall quarter back home at the rainy U of W.

8. Program/Exchange Administration:

a) As my Study Abroad program was a direct exchange I did make use of the IPE office's administrative services. The website in the initial information gathering and application stage was invaluable and all of my drop-in meetings with the IPE advisors were timely and helpful as well. The only thing that could have been improved upon would have been more specific details about the Sussex programs themselves, I had to pursue participation in the Sussex in September program myself and incur the costs as well outside of the direct exchange. As it was definitely worthwhile and possibly the best part of my stay, I'd like to see UW include it as a part of their own direct exchange program as it seemed to be with a lot of the other major US universities.

9. Program/Student Type:

a) I think any UW student who enjoys the UW atmosphere and the cultural vibe of Seattle would thoroughly appreciate Sussex and the town of Brighton on an aesthetic level. To really get the most of Sussex academically I think a student needs to be really self directed and willing to engage with material and other students, as it is rather easy to do very little and sort of get by, especially with the infrequent assignments and seminar times. To this end, you can only get out what you put in.

Also, anyone who would like to travel around continental Europe would do well to study at Sussex as it is situated near a very nice hub for cheap flights (Gatwick) to many major and minor destinations. Sussex overall I think caters to all kinds of people really, as there are really a large number of things for a visitor to take away from their experience there.

10. Overall Experience:

a) Sussex absolutely exceeded my expectations. I was able to do everything I had planned to do and desired to do going in. What was even better was the fact that Sussex offered me things I couldn't have conceived of before having come. I feel so lucky to have been able to stay there, and I really think that if you're reading this you should likewise consider making the voyage and seeing the place for yourself because it really is quite wonderful. It will not disappoint.

1. Arrival Overseas/On-Site Orientation

- a. I was lucky enough to have a British friend who made my arrival in England much easier. As a result I have very little sound advice to give future travelers in terms of appropriate accommodations and travel arrangements upon their arrival in England. Based on what other participants told me, though, I would suggest arranging for a coach bus to and from Heathrow or Gatwick airport; the trains are just too cramped and difficult to maneuver with large bags and only one set of hands. The coaches are relatively inexpensive and a great way to get to Brighton.
- b. For the most part, the orientations that took place at Sussex were not drastically different than any other college orientation. They spent a lot of time telling exchange students not to plagiarize or cheat on exams. The most helpful thing for me was the explanation of the grading system. It's quite different from the American system, so it was nice to gauge what would be required of me throughout the year. Similarly, they gave some helpful financial advice for exchange students.

2. Academics

- a. For the most part, the classroom structure, teacher/student relations, and facilities were very similar to American colleges. The biggest differences were definitely in the area of instruction and the grading of exams, papers, participation, etc. Often times the professor that taught the class, did not dictate what material was taught; that was decided upon by an administrator or member of the department, prior to the teacher's appointment to that class. Lectures and discussion seminars occurred just as they would in an American college, but the grading system was very different. There was no record of attendance, and no grade was given for participation in class. Similarly, there were no small assignments throughout the term that then all cumulated into one final grade. Instead, an entire grade for a class was based on 1 essay and/or 1 final exam. On very rare occasions there was a group presentation involved that contributed to the grade. Otherwise, it was all based on one element.
- b. While the quality of the professors/lecturers varied from department to department (as is typical at most universities, I imagine), the quality of the TA's was very consistent. During the entire academic year, every TA I had was extremely intelligent, great at engaging students in discussion, very committed to their own studies, and in general a very helpful resource. At American colleges, it is often hit and miss with TA's, and sometimes they can have a negative impact on a student's final grade. But in England, I never worried about that. They were consistently solid.
- c. Sussex has a very reputable International Relations department, and I enjoyed every class I took. I also gained a lot of useful knowledge in all of my anthropology and development studies courses. I did not necessarily have a favorite professor, but one of the most passionate professors was Louiza Odysseos who taught the class "Gender: Rethinking Politics."
- d. Because of the highly rated International Relations department at Sussex, I felt confident that I was gaining useful knowledge that directly related to my International Studies degree at UW. However, I have yet to find out how cooperative the departments at UW will be in assigning credits to my Sussex courses.

3. Housing

- a. I had the option of living off campus, in university sponsored housing off campus, or in the dorms.
- b. I chose the dorms, because I wanted to have more opportunities to meet locals and interact with them as much as possible.
- c. If a student struggled with dorm life at UW, it might be a different story at Sussex. No one has a roommate; everyone gets their own room. And dining halls do not exist; everything is self-catered. I struggled with the lack of cleanliness that comes with living with 11 other people in a house with 2 kitchens and 2 bathrooms, but I enjoyed it more than I did when I lived in the dorms at UW.

4. Program/Exchange Site

- a. While the campus is not all that exciting, the town closest to Sussex (Brighton) is wonderful. It is a very colorful (literally and figuratively) town with lots of activity. It's also geared really well towards college students, which makes many things more convenient and affordable for those on a budget. Plus, Brighton has a beautiful beach front, with a great pier and fun dance clubs right on the promenade.

5. Health and Safety

- a. I was very conscious of my belongings at all times. I took no risk. I had been warned repeatedly about pick-pocketers in Europe, and I did not want to fall victim to that. It is all really just common sense though, i.e. don't get so drunk that you cannot remember where you left your purse, don't carry too much cash on you at once, don't leave bags alone, lock your bedroom door when you leave the house, etc.

6. Cultural Aspects

- a. I chose to live in the dorms as a way of integrating myself into the community. I also made the effort to participate in all of the orientation week activities, which included things like a free concert and a pub crawl.
- b. England is very similar to America in many respects. And I never really found myself overwhelmed by cultural differences. But I was *constantly* aware of the fact that I am an American. It's important to remember to be humble and open-minded when speaking to non-Americans. Their opinions of us are not always gracious, but a bar in a foreign country is not the place to start a massive fight about why the American way of life might be superior. Essentially it is important for study abroad students to remember that wherever they are is **not** their hometown where patriotism is greatly rewarded. It is best to be unassuming and modest when at all possible, while still having thoughtful discussions about important topics like politics and religion.

7. Financial

- a. Students need to make sure they have online banking set up. It is best to discuss things with your banking institution before you leave the country, and find out what the best course of action is.
- b. Per month, I required approximately \$900. This probably would not have been so high, if the exchange rate had been better.
- c. The exchange rate messed up what I had calculated as being an appropriate amount of money for the year.

8. Program/Exchange Administration

- a. In my opinion, the IPE office was extremely incompetent. Not only was I notified halfway through the year that my IPE advisor would be leaving, but I also had a difficult

time getting helpful responses from others in the office. Additionally, my registration for senior year was completely compromised because the IPE office did not inform the registrar's office that I was indeed concurrently enrolled at UW, and should therefore be given the correct class standing in order to register for my senior capstone classes. It was quite the headache that my academic advisor from the Jackson School ended up resolving for me, as the IPE office was no help. Similarly, my financial aid for the following year was withheld because I had not completed the minimum academic progress. This confused me greatly, given the fact that I had paid the fee for concurrent enrollment, which I assumed at the time meant my standing at UW would be preserved, and these things would not become the types of emergencies that they did. When I called the IPE office to inquire as to whether or not they could contact the financial aid office and explain that I was in the process of transferring my credits, they told me they don't deal with the financial aid office at all because "not all their students require financial aid." I found this to be a very poor excuse. I believe that the outrageous concurrent enrollment fee I had to pay to participate in this program should have guaranteed me less headache when it came to issues such as these. Similarly, if this program is going to be advertised as a "Direct Exchange," things need to be a little more direct; the academic logistics should be coordinated between schools so that students know how their Sussex classes will transfer, etc. The "Direct Exchange" label should not apply solely to the fact that students pay UW tuition while attending Sussex.

9. Program/Student Type

- a. I think anyone who is looking for an experience that will broaden their understanding of life outside the American (social, economic, political, etc.) bubble, will find this program extremely beneficial. Be warned, however, that living away from home for 9 months can be exhausting and isolating. I felt very out of place upon my return, and I'm still re-adjusting to American life after being home for nearly 2 months.

10. Overall Experience

- a. My academic expectations were quite realistic; but I have always been lucky enough to be able to maintain a strong work ethic. Personally, I don't know that I had necessarily specified my expectations, but I will admit that I was slightly disappointed by a few aspects of my personal life while I was in England. I met great people, and made new friends, but I don't know that I will necessarily keep in touch with all of them, and that disappoints me. It means that I did not foster strong enough relationships with them when I had the chance. Similarly, I wish that I had become more involved in campus life by joining a club or participating in a sport. Similar to American universities, your experience really does depend on what you put into it.

Brighton, United Kingdom
Autumn 2014

University of Sussex Evaluation Report

1. I strongly recommend students studying abroad at Sussex to pick one of the on-campus residences because they really help you connect with the university student community. Personally, I lived in East Slope, which is considered the “ghetto” of campus since it is the cheapest option and it is known to be the most social residence—rumors are that it will be taken down within a couple years. I did not attend most of the optional orientations for international students at Sussex due to scheduling conflicts.
2. Instruction while studying abroad was surprisingly very different than in America even though we all technically speak English. Classrooms are led by an instructor, convenor, or AT. Instruction is based primarily on lectures but there are also group projects and other tasks. Teacher/student relations are similar to UW and vary depending on the particular teacher. Grading/exams is completely different from UW since the entire grade is based off of one or two exams/essays/projects and the difficulty of each professor varies by a large amount. Since there is no particular teacher evaluation system, I would recommend picking S/NS for as many courses as possible unless you are sure that you would get one of the best grades (called “marks” in the UK) in the class. Administration appears to be less efficient than UW but that could be because the whole process was confusing to an American like me. Library, computer, and classroom facilities are of lesser quality than UW, close early and open late (there’s no 24/7 library like at UW). I would say that the overall quality of instruction is slightly worse than UW but this varies a lot based on the professor and class. I recommend Financial Markets and Trading, which is taught by a hedge fund manager and former investment banker. The coursework relates to UW since there are transferable skills such as financial analysis that I learned in those classes.
3. Housing options include on-campus residences as well as off-campus apartments in Brighton. The off-campus apartments in Brighton are very far from the campus since the campus itself is far removed from Brighton, unlike UW where apartments are close to campus. It takes multiple train stops to get to Brighton. I chose on-campus residences (and I would recommend others to do the same) due to being closer to my classes and I was given the opportunity to rank my preferences for particular residences, and I was later assigned to East Slope.
4. The campus is in a pretty rural place but Brighton is a small city known for its beaches, nightlife, and tourism. After a few days, it should be easy to find your way around campus but the city is big enough that you would get lost in it so come with friends. London is another level but it’s about an hour ride to get there (2 hours to get into Central London) by train so I would not consider London part of the surrounding community as I thought it would be when I started studying abroad.

5. Healthcare is free--even for international students. However, the line to make an appointment is much longer than at UW and in Seattle. The quality is alright. I can't think of many unsafe districts in Brighton but the students at Sussex have no respect for property. While I was not a victim of theft, I was watching my stuff with full attention to prevent theft. Literally every night there are parties until sunrise at the residences and there is almost always people smashing up the residences so do not leave your stuff in the common areas and double check your locks. Do not attend any of the on-campus parties or you will get fined when someone inevitably smashes something.
6. I integrated into the culture pretty well but surprisingly, British slang is completely different. Formal British English is probably easier to understand than slang. I met most of my friends in the community either through classes, parties, or student clubs, similar to how I did at UW. Pubs are a big thing at Sussex and so are nightclubs. You will be approached by dozens of promoters on a weekly basis and promoters walk through the residences to put up flyers every night (even though they're not supposed to).
7. The best way to transfer money is to use a travel credit card that does not have foreign transaction fees since wiring money and converting currencies has a lot of fees. Brighton is probably twice as expensive as Seattle and the food prices at the Co-op are absolutely insane. Rent prices are pretty similar to UW dorms but I lived in the cheapest residence at Sussex. Transportation is slightly more than in Seattle. Overall, I would budget at least a couple thousand dollars of spending money a month but much more if you are traveling to other European countries on the weekends, which is something most American students in the UK do. There were a lot of unexpected expenses such as not knowing to use an NUS card (buy one if you shop a lot at the on-campus Co-op that is the only grocery store on campus). I did not use Financial Aid.
8. The program was through IP&E. The service was effective. Services that could be improved include more communication with students currently abroad (for instance, knowing about evaluation reports like the one here from students who previously studied abroad would have helped a lot).
9. This program in particular is well-suited for people who enjoy nightlife and partying until 6am every night of the week. Almost everyone in the residence I was in partied every night. I would not recommend it for people who want to use on-campus recruiting for jobs or internships as it does not exist at all (UW does not have much on-campus recruiting for investment banks or consulting firms but there are some local firms that recruit—at Sussex literally not a single firm came to recruit).
10. Overall, I set some really big goals for myself when studying abroad. I wanted to travel to many different countries, which I did during the weekends as well as before & after the term. I wanted to network with financiers in London, which I did. However, I wanted to have more on-campus recruiting for finance firms and was very disappointed that there was none. In addition, I wanted to be challenged in my classes but not be stressed out in terms of grading but I was not challenged in the way I wanted to be yet I was stressed out since grading is based off of 1 or 2 exams/assignments and there was no information out there on which professor to take (which is common in Europe).