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International Program/Exchange Evaluation Report

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

Semester 1, 2012 (Winter/Spring quarters)

SEP 14 2012

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

Upon arrival in New Zealand, you will most likely already have figured out your accommodation for your stay. I would recommend staying on campus in the apartments or dorms. If you arrive early, it is very easy to stay in hostels in almost any city for a cheap rate. Especially in Christchurch, housing is extremely hard to find so your best option is to stay on campus in student housing. Depending on your arrival, you may have a few weeks or only a few days before your international orientation. Orientation will provide you with a lot of information about the school and the area around it. It will give you insight about things such as who can help you with what, what laws you must abide by, what to do in an emergency, and even general cultural norms which may be a lot different than what you are used to. I obtained a lot of useful information at my international orientation. They helped me with figuring out health insurance, my class schedule, and how to purchase and drive a car legally. If there is one thing to take away from this, it is to not miss out on your orientation.

2. ACADEMICS:

One of the first things to note about going abroad is the size of the university. The University of Canterbury is a much smaller school than the University of Washington. This brings a whole different atmosphere to the university. Class sizes are much smaller and it is a lot easier to develop personal relationships with teachers and students. There are no TA's and there are often 2-4 different lecturers per class. This may be due to the fact that they are on a semester schedule instead of a quarter schedule. That also changes the tempo of the class. They move much slower through concepts and there is a lot more time to study and complete projects. This, however, also means that there are larger, harder projects that you cannot wait until the last minute to complete. You will not find much difference in facilities (libraries, computers, classroom technology); they are very similar to UW. Administration is also not very different as they are helpful and easy to reach.

Although this may be my personal opinion, classes seemed a bit easier to me than UW classes. The teachers are excellent and very professional, but when compared to UW the coursework seemed to not be as difficult. This may not be the case with all classes so do not take my word for it. I am a Biology major here at UW and I chose to take two biology classes (Ecology and Principles of Animal Physiology, BIOL 270 & BIOL 250) and a history class. The history class was New Zealand History Global, which I strongly recommend. I think it is important to learn about the place you are staying and this class did just that. It was also an extremely easy class (again, my opinion). It was nice to have at least one class that was not

very difficult to allow me to have more free time for other things. One last thing to note about the classes is that the majority of exams (not including math/engineering classes) were essay and/or project based. I did not have one multiple-choice question while I was in NZ.

3. HOUSING:

The three options we had for housing were on campus dorms, on campus apartments, or off campus housing. Off campus housing is extremely difficult to find and makes it much harder to meet people. I strongly recommend on campus housing. The dorms would be okay but they are mostly for freshman/younger students. Most of the international students (and older students) stay in the apartments. Specifically, the Ilam Apartments are where I would recommend study abroad students stay. They are 4 or 5 bedroom apartments with full kitchens/appliances. You have your own room (which locks) and you will most likely be staying with a few students that you won't meet until you move in. The apartments are very social; not only within your apartment but within the entire complex (there are about 10 buildings with 4 floors and 4 apartments on each floor). I think you would definitely have the best social experience living in the Ilam Apartments.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

The campus is very beautiful and it almost gives off a kind of tropical vibe. There are many cool plants, fountains, streams, lawns, etc. All of the housing is extremely close and you can walk to any of your classes in less than 10 minutes. At the time of my exchange (2012), there was a lot of construction being done to repair earthquake damage. This is the case on campus and across the entire community. The entire CBD of Christchurch was completely destroyed because of the earthquakes, so do not expect to spend much time downtown (although there are a few bars/restaurants to go to that are worth it). Downtown is about a 15-30 minutes bus ride from campus. Down the street from campus is a gas station, grocery store, a few bars, restaurants, a bike store; pretty much everything you need. There is also a mall a few miles down the road. The nearest beach is about a 30-minute drive (hour bus) and is definitely worth it to go. There are beautiful parks and botanic gardens all over the city. Right next to campus is an extremely large park where a lot of rugby, soccer, and frisbee take place. All I can really say is explore the entire community! There is a lot to see and it is all definitely worth it.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

If you take the proper safety precautions, I have no doubt that you will be completely fine. I did not experience any health problems, theft, or any such things. New Zealand is a very laid back place and you will find that most of the people in the community are generous and caring. Just make sure you have the proper health insurance incase you get hurt bungee jumping or rock climbing.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

The easiest way to integrate yourself into the culture is to put yourself out there. When there is a social event, go. If there is pick up soccer every Tuesday, go even if you don't play

soccer. As long as you put yourself out there, you will meet people and the New Zealanders will embrace you. They are adventurous, laid back, and outgoing so if you show them a little bit of that you will fit right in. Aside from their laid-back nature and accents, New Zealanders really aren't much different than us Americans. I did not experience any cultural differences or challenges. In fact, I found it easier to get along with random people there than here in America.

7. FINANCIAL:

The best way to bring your money over is to bring as much cash as possible and set up a NZ bank account. I know this is not ideal, but you are going to want to transfer as much money as possible because of the exchange rate and interest rate on overseas transfers. You will most likely have to transfer funds later and it is easiest to just do an e-transfer. The best way to do it, if you are having some visitors, is to have them bring you more cash when they come visit.

Although it is hard to say, depending on your lifestyle, I would bring at least \$1000 a month for spending money. You will most likely pay for housing and tuition before you leave so this is excluding these expenses. Just about everything you buy in NZ will be more expensive than it is here in America. That's just the way it goes. I would also bring an extra \$1000-\$2000 just for travelling over your school breaks because you will most likely want to bungee jump, skydive, mountain bike, snowboard, etc. It seems like a lot of money, but trust me when I say that it is 100% worth every penny.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

The IP&E was very helpful in solving certain problems when it was needed. They were quick to respond to my emails and were able to help me through issues even though they were on the other side of the world. The only thing they need to improve on is helping you through the insurance process. There was a big misunderstanding with insurance (life/health insurance) when I went to NZ. I was told to get certain insurance before I left but it ended up being unacceptable by the standards of the University of Canterbury. I then had to purchase insurance that was more expensive.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

This program is best suited for someone who is laid-back, outgoing, adventurous, and independent. I think outgoing and independent are the two most important characteristics you need to have if you are going to New Zealand. You need to be able to meet people on your own, travel on your own, and solve problems on your own. In NZ, you are most likely going to do some travelling and a lot of this could be on your own. You also will most likely do some hitchhiking or picking up hitchhikers (it is very easy to hitchhike in NZ and very cost effective) and camping and/or staying in hostels. These are things that most Americans are not used to and it takes a person with these qualities to have an awesome NZ experience.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

In all honesty, I wanted to go to New Zealand to have the time of my life. I have always enjoyed travelling and this was the first time in my life I was able to travel alone. It was really cool to actually live there for 5 months. I really didn't even think about school until school started. At first it was kind of hard to get back in the swing of things but classes just passed by without any problems. There were a few weeks where school became difficult, but in the overall aspect it was very easy to manage fun and getting my work done. I got to see the entire countryside from top to bottom, got to surf most days of the week, and definitely had the adventure of a lifetime. If you go into it with this kind of mentality I guarantee you will have the time of your life. I came home exceeding my expectations both academically and personally. Just remember to play tremendously hard and work not as hard (but kind of hard, enough to get the grades that you want, which shouldn't be too bad).



IP&E PROGRAM EVALUATION OUTLINE:

University of Canterbury – Christchurch, New Zealand
Semester 2 2011 (July-November 2011)
Hayley Edmonston
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1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

I moved straight into the university apartments when I got to Christchurch – they even had a cab pick me up from the airport so it was really easy.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

There was a short 2 hour orientation about how to finalize classes but it didn't cover much other than that and I didn't find it to be very helpful. I had to figure out a lot of things for myself (how to get textbooks in the library, where to get a cheap cell phone, the structure of classes) but it wasn't too hard. The orientation was a really good place to meet some other people so that's where I made the connections that led to my group of friends. Aside from the orientation the student apartments have a lot of events in the first two weeks of school so that was really good for meeting people and forming friend groups.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the UW's system:

I found the university to be very similar to the size and structure of UW (I took sociology, history, and philosophy classes so this could be different for people in science etc). You take four classes over the semester that meet for 3 hours a week each – I had much more free time than I'm used to having at home. They follow a similar format of lecture/quiz section (called tutorial) and the class sizes were pretty similar. The main difference I noticed is there were way more papers and less of an emphasis on tests than I was used to and I didn't do as well on essays as I would have expected to at home, probably because they expected different things than what I was used to. I talked to my TA about why I was graded the way I was and that helped me a lot to understand what I was missing. In general teachers and students were very friendly and accepting. The main library is really nice and you can check out all of your textbooks there for a few hours at a time so I did that instead of buying books. You can also print for cheap at the library and they give you a certain amount of free internet per month, which is very important since internet is quite expensive in the apartments. The campus is nice, pretty similar to UW only a bit smaller, and the coffee is great!

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

Content and quality were good, similar to home.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

Mostly I recommend taking classes that are similar to ones offered at UW (for example straightforward ones like biology or intro to political science or something) to make getting credit easier once you get home!

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

I just took 100 level classes that sounded interesting but I didn't expect any of them to count for my major or anything. If I could do it again I might try to take some classes that were similar to classes required for my major so I would have still been making progress on my major while I was abroad. It was fine though, I went during fall quarter so I still got 20 credits during that time so it didn't put me behind. I would recommend not taking any classes that sound hard so you'll have plenty of time to travel on the weekend! And take at least one class that's specific to NZ because you should be learning while you're there and at least know something about the country – for example there are lots of history and Maori studies and Antarctic Studies classes that my friends really liked.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

I lived in the university apartments, which is the easiest and in my opinion best option for exchange students. I could have tried to find a room in a flat when I got there but that sounded really stressful so a place I was guaranteed that had furniture and other (mostly exchange) students who also wanted to make friends made the most sense.

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I lived in Ilam Apartments, which is where they offer a deal for exchange students. They're small but pretty nice and right across the street from campus. They put on a lot of activities so that was a great way to make friends. It was also good having all the exchange students living in the same complex so it was easy to get together with people – most of my friends were other exchange students. I would recommend requesting on your application to either live with Kiwis or people from other countries because most exchange students are American and I had a lot of friends who were disappointed to be living with almost all Americans (although most people also befriended their flatmates while I didn't get along with my Kiwi flatmates very well so it's all luck of the draw). You get your own room and a communal kitchen and living room and most apartments have 5 students in them.

c. What would you recommend?

I would definitely recommend Ilam Apartments because it was so easy and a great way to meet other exchange students. Take it with a grain of salt though because it can be really hard to break out of that exchange student clique and you should definitely try to make Kiwi friends while you're in NZ!

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

The campus is pretty but very suburban. It's about 3 miles from city center and the area around campus is just houses and strip mall and a shopping mall. There's not really very much to do within walking distance from campus aside from hang out in the apartments or in the green space outside. That said, the campus and area around the apartments is really nice and has lots of paths and gardens. The bus system is really easy so you can be on Riccarton Rd, the main street to downtown, in a few minutes and there are lots of shops and a few bars there. Of course because of the earthquakes city center is mostly closed so all there is to do down there is the park and gawking at the damage through the fence – Riccarton Rd is where most of the activity is now. I'm writing this as of January 2012 so this might change if there are more earthquakes or if they reopen more places. Christchurch is sort of a weird place to live in light of the earthquakes – not exactly hopping with things to do and a little sad at times – but I also found it to be very interesting and a valuable experience to get to know a community that's gone through what Chch has. I went for the central location for travel, not for the city, so I wasn't disappointed at all.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

New Zealand is one of the safest countries in the world so no worries here – I even went hitchhiking around for a bit but don't tell my advisor!

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

Like I said, I made most of my friends through the Ilam apartments and they were all exchange students. I really wanted to meet Kiwis as well so I tried to talk to people in my classes and then I joined the Tramping Club (hiking club). This was really great if you're into that sort of thing – they organize trips every weekend, rent gear, and have weekly meetings so it was a good way to meet people, get out and do things that were a little more off the beaten path, and find out about things to go see in the area. I had a lot of friends that joined snowboarding and rock climbing clubs and had similar experiences so I'd say joining clubs is probably the best way to meet Kiwis and that's something I'd really recommend to anyone else going because it's harder to meet locals than you might think.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.

NZ is pretty similar culturally to home, as in any Western country. There are some small differences though – mostly just accents and that people are more friendly and easygoing than at home. I can't think of any bad cultural differences or challenges that I had.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

I just used my regular bank account from home and got money from ATMs – there was a fee of \$5 I think so I'd just get \$200 out at once. You can also use American debit or credit cards (mine had a fee of like 50 cents per transaction) almost everywhere – you just have to do it as "credit" and not "debit" and don't enter your PIN number or it won't work. You'll get the hang of it!

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

It's hard to estimate – I definitely think the cost of living is a little higher in NZ and then on top of that I was going on trips almost every weekend. I paid for the university apartments in one lump sum before I left and that was about \$3000. My plane ticket was about \$1500. IPE fees and insurance are probably another \$500. I probably spent about \$200-300 per month on food. Beyond that was fun money – it really depends what you do and how cheap you try to travel for that one. My friends and I were very stingy so we usually would rent a car and fill it with 5 people (rental cars are really cheap, like \$30 per day!) and then we usually camped for free because we were doing a lot of hiking. Flights within NZ are really cheap – almost always less than \$100. Overall I found it to be a pretty affordable place to travel. I think I spent about \$1500 on fun money over the semester and then five weeks of travel after – but again, I was really stingy and did a lot of camping, couchsurfing, wwoofing, etc.

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Just the general cost of living is a little higher – I saw it most in food and gas.

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications?

I have a scholarship that covers most of my tuition and I had to pay tuition in summer quarter but my scholarship money didn't come in until October. I just paid my full tuition and then the scholarship money was deposited into my bank account a few months later. This wasn't an issue for me. I think in general financial aid and scholarships are very accommodating of study abroad and you can probably make an arrangement if you need to get it earlier than you usually would.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

The most important thing to know about doing a direct exchange is that you really have to be self-sufficient and on top of things. Since every university is different the advisor might not know the specifics of your school, when the deadlines are, what they want, etc so you have to be very organized and be in touch with the advisor from your university abroad to make sure you get everything in on time. I had a pretty extensive checklist to make sure I didn't forget to mail anything over (it takes two weeks!) or get my visa or anything like that. But it's really only chaotic for the month after you get accepted and then you have plenty of time to get everything in order before you go. For me it was fine to figure things out on my own but I can see some students needing more support from IPE in figuring out exactly what they need to do and when.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

Like I said, I think you need to be very independent and responsible and proactive to do well in a direct exchange situation. You should know that the first week or two when you don't know anyone will be hard and you have to be willing to go through that and keep putting yourself out there and trying to make friends until eventually you'll find your place and settle in. I chose this program because I wanted to be a little out of my comfort zone and I didn't want that easy fallback of other kids from my school or even my country. I was a little disappointed that it was so easy to meet other Americans and so hard to meet Kiwis so I would really emphasize that and that it pays to go out of your way to make local friends. Aside from the chaos before you leave and the loneliness for the first week or two, though, I didn't find my time in NZ to be very difficult at all – it was incredible, I loved every second of it and by far the hardest part is being home!

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

Before I left I was afraid that I had unrealistic expectations because I did hope that my study abroad experience would lead me to lifelong friends, lots of travel, personal growth, and the usual cliché "life changing experience". I have to say – it was better than I even imagined. I might be one of the lucky ones but it was hands down the best six months of my life and to anyone who's even considering studying abroad, DO IT. You will never regret going for something but you will regret not being brave enough to try. It's hard to leave your friends behind for a quarter but they'll be there when you get back and you should not let this opportunity go by. For me at least, Christchurch was the perfect city to study in – centrally located for traveling, small enough to be different from Seattle but still stuff going on, interesting in light of the earthquakes. I honestly think New Zealand is the perfect country to study in because the people are so friendly, it's different from home but not so much that you can't feel at home there, it's small enough that you can see almost everything in six months but still big enough to keep amazing you, and I'm convinced it's the most beautiful place on earth – mountains, tropical beaches, cool volcanic areas, rolling green hills with sheep, and lively cities all within a few hours of each other. I'm rambling but I cannot put into words how amazing my time in Christchurch was and how seriously I urge anyone considering going there to go for it. And please please please email me if you want to talk to someone about New Zealand, I have many pictures and stories to share!

IP&E Program Evaluation:

Christchurch, New Zealand
Spring/Fall 2007

DH ✓
JAN 28 2008

1. Arrival Overseas/On-site Orientation:

- A. If you have never visited New Zealand before, the University arranges an airport pickup to take you to your location. If your timing is right, you would be delivered directly to your student housing. Otherwise I recommend staying in a hostel until your permanent residence becomes available to you.
- B. The University held an orientation for all overseas students. They talked about everything possible, from buying a car, renting a flat, catching the bus, to sexually transmitted diseases. They told you what to expect and what type of situations you should try to avoid while living in the country. The most important thing that helped me to adapt was knowing that I was not the only person integrating to a new culture and I knew where to get help if I needed any.

2. Academics:

- A. The classroom structure at the University of Canterbury is similar to that of UW. It is a typical lecture setup with the same type of instruction you would receive at a US school. The student/teacher relations are a lot more relaxed and personal than in the states, you tend to find more one on one interaction between professor and students. The grading system is based on a bottom up scale instead of a top down grading scale like at UW. Instead of the teachers assuming that you got everything right and taking points off for what you have said wrong, the university assumes you know nothing and you have to earn every point. For this reason, grades are much lower and an A is actually set at an 85%. Also, they are not on the GPA (numerical) system but on the ABC system. Every final exam has at least one hand written essay with the exam period typically lasting 3 hours. The administration is setup much like UW, always willing to help. Unlike UW, UC has one main library that students frequent. One major plus to their 11 floor library is the comfortable study area on the first floor complete with bean bag chairs for your comfort. They have considerably less computers for student use than UW and you must also pay to use the internet.
- B. The instruction is that of a typical university in the states. You are learning at a slower and more relaxed pace than you do at UW, creating a better learning environment and allowing me to retain more information than I usually do at the fast paced environment of UW.
- C. I would recommend any Maori studies courses. I took two: Maori, Science, and Indigenous Knowledge and Te Ahika: Introducing Treaty Society. My friends took other various Maori studies classes and they all had great reviews. These classes are taught by world renown instructors and it is practically the only place in the world where you can learn about the indigenous people of New Zealand.

- Also, the University has a great Antarctic Studies and Forestry program.
- D. Most of my course work abroad corresponded to I&S and VLPA credits, although I did take one class in my major, biology. So my courses abroad helped me fulfill general requirements.

3. Housing

- A. As a direct exchange student, finding housing is up to the student. There are many on campus options available, from dorms to on campus apartments. You are also able to choose to flat or rent an off campus apartment. (They are usually readily available.)
- B. I choose Ilam Village, the international on campus student apartments. I wanted the closeness of on campus housing with the ability to cook my own food and to have my own room. Also, I thought the social activities would help me make new friends easier. (Much like Stevens Court Apartments at UW.)
- C. I would recommend Ilam Village or other on campus apartments because it provides the opportunity to meet people and interact at social events. Also, Ilam Village allows you to meet many other study abroad students in your same situation making it easier to bond. If you want to meet or live with kiwis (New Zealanders) I would recommend the on campus dorms or flatting since Ilam Village is mostly international students. If you are staying in New Zealand for a short amount of time (six months or less), flatting may be a more stressful option since you have to sign up and pay for utilities on top of rent.

4. Program/Exchange site:

Christchurch is on the South Island of New Zealand. In a country of 4 million people, the British inspired city of Christchurch is the second largest city with 350,000 residents. Downtown offers all the best of a larger city on a small scale. The University is located about 10 minutes from downtown in a district called Ilam. The University is small compared to UW with a 70s feeling campus. The Avon River leisurely strolls through campus along with the scattered palm trees and other indigenous plant species. The campus is relatively compact and easy to get between one place and the next during passing periods.

5. Health and Safety:

The South Island on the whole is a very safe place to live, even hitchhiking is still considered safe and is still in frequent practice. Theft is relatively low and there is a relatively low crime rate overall. There is a health clinic on campus and a hospital about 5 minutes from campus, making medical treatment easy to come by. The only major health problem they are currently having is the spread of STDs through the college and high school communities.

6. Cultural Aspects:

- A. The quickest way I met members of the community is through the activities and friends I made at Ilam Village, my housing community. They took us out and showed us the hot spots around the city as well as the night life. I also met kiwis

in class who took me out and joined the tramping club.

- B. On a whole, the transition between cultures is not a great one. I had more culture shock arriving back home than I did on my arrival to New Zealand. Since I lived in international housing, the largest culture shock I experienced was living with people from around the world. The best way I overcame that was by talking about the expectations and rules of our living situation. The cultural differences between kiwis and Americans are slight and easy to overcome if they do present themselves. As a side note, the openness of the gay community is great and they had legalized gay marriage. For some people, this is hard to overcome.

7. Financial:

- A. The best way to access money between the US and New Zealand is using the sister banks of Bank of America (US Bank) and Westpac (New Zealand Bank). Since these two banks are sister banks, you can withdraw money from your Bank of America account using a Westpac ATM with no international fees. This saves you a \$5 fee every time you withdraw money. Also, if you get a good international fee rate on your credit card, that would be a good idea to use on big purchases.
- B. I would have at least a \$1000 dollars of spending money a month. This would include rent of about \$150 a week, meals, and transportation. More money would be necessary for additional activities and trips.
- C. Unexpected expenses that will occur is the high cost of internet and cell phone charges. I ended up not getting a cell phone because of the high cost, but internet is 3 cents for every MB used. This charge occurs at the library and on campus housing. It is very expensive to get the port open in your room for on campus housing. The internet system is slow and rudimentary.
- D. There were no complications with my Financial Aid funding my program. Everything ran smoothly.

8. Program/Exchange Administration:

- A. IP&E administered my direct exchange. My study abroad advisor, whom I still haven't met, was slow at responding to questions and I frequently had to use other advisors in the office. The Front staff are very nice and help you to get your paper work done and are eager to answer questions, which is nice when your study abroad advisor takes so long to respond.

9. Program/Study type:

This program is suited for all students wanting to study abroad in New Zealand, especially the students who are worried about culture shock.

10. Overall Experience:

The overall experience was fantastic. It was truly an experience of a lifetime and when the six months were over and it was time for me to go home again, I was quite disappointed. The ability to interact with multiple cultures through my living situation really allowed me to experience more than just one culture. My

expectations for my academic life held true, I completed some of my general requirements in a way that most UW students don't get to experience. I had the opportunity to take classes that were only offered at my University abroad, opening my eyes to life in the Antarctic and the aboriginal life in New Zealand. I was able to grow as a person and overcome some of the cultural stereotypes that I had for other cultures. I made lifelong friends from around the world whom I will truly miss until the opportunity to visit each other presents itself. I have a better understanding of the other experiences people live through and conquer and now know what I truly am capable of.

University of Canterbury (UC)
Christchurch, New Zealand
February- June 2010
ashington.edu

EB ✓
AMB ✓
JHW

Arrival Overseas/ On-site Orientation

- Accommodation
 - I chose to live in the Ilam Village which was apartment style dorms across from campus. I was allowed to move in on February 1 and orientation was not until the 3rd week of February.
 - If you choose to stay in the Ilam Village while studying there, they offer a great opportunity to stay in their "sister village" in Australia. You are allowed to stay your "unused time" there before or after studying abroad depending on which term you go. I stayed at the University of New South Wales in Sydney which was a great experience.
 - If you chose not to live on campus a good place to stay temporarily upon arrival is the Academy Motor Lodge on Clyde Rd. which is very close to campus.
- Orientation
 - University of Canterbury had a two-day orientation to help us adapt to a new campus and country.
 - The orientation was academic in that they talked with us about possible differences in UC academics such as class size, work load, type of work, etc.
 - It familiarized us with the campus as we had to do a "scavenger hunt" to find different buildings and spots on campus.
 - It was also informative in regards to safety in New Zealand especially in regard to road rules, tramping (hiking), camping, and being prepared for the weather (4 seasons in a day).

Academics

- Classroom structure
 - The classroom structure will vary based upon the classes you choose to take. I found that it is similar to UW in that the 101 type classes are huge lectures but as you are in specific major oriented upper level classes they are actually smaller than what I have experienced in UW.
 - Many classes also have tutorials (quiz sections) that are very similar in structure and size to UW quiz sections.
- Instruction
 - I found many of my classes to be more "hands on" than UW classes, but I think that varies with the classes you take.
- Teacher/Student Relations
 - Similar to UW, instruction is more personalized in the smaller classes but professors are always willing to help if you reach out to them.

- Grading/Exams
 - The grading was similar to several UW classes in that for several classes your grade is simply based on a midterm and a final or a paper.
 - There are certainly classes with "busy work" but for the most part I would say it is very similar to UW. After all we have all had the "busy work" classes at UW too.
 - You are expected to keep up on readings (which there tend to be many) and "assignments" but it is essentially independent work.
- Administration
 - I found that everyone at UC is incredibly friendly and easy to get in touch with. I had a much easier time with arranging meetings and handling "business" at UC than I do at UW.
- Library, Computer, and Classroom facilities
 - Their facilities were great and usually readily available. The computers in the bottom floor of the main library were often slow and crowded, but on the 5th floor there is a large computer lab that is available to use even after the main library is closed.
 - You can also connect to a wireless connection on campus at any time.
- Quality and Content of Instruction
 - None of my classes really strayed from their given topic and were all taught in an effective manner. Here is a short description of my opinions on the classes I took.
 - TREQ110 (Conversational Maori for Absolute Beginners)
 - The teacher wanted you to learn but wasn't going to press you to do so.
 - Hard to keep up on due to the fact that we were not given daily homework. It is necessary to keep up with it, however, to get the most out of the class (and pass the midterm and final later on)
 - ANTH 238 (exploring the past)
 - The teacher was very enthusiastic and wanted you to be excited about everything we did.
 - There were weekly readings, but the class was very hands on in that we went to fieldtrips often and wrote journals to reflect on our visits.
 - It is definitely important to keep up on the journal and not wait until the end. At the end of the term there is also a group project that does take some time.
 - CMDS 369 (Aphasia and Related Disorders)
 - The class content was excellent and very interesting (keep in mind this is in my major)
 - We had hands on activities and case study papers and exams (including a video exam) which really tested if you truly understood the content.
 - The teacher was very nice but was often slightly "dry" and didn't seem completely confident while teaching.
 - CMDS 320

- Not relevant due to the fact that I had a guest professor from the states.
- Recommendations
 - TREO110- it was fun to get to know the native language despite the fact that the culture isn't really abundant in Christchurch. Bonus: you get \$250 for passing the class.
 - I did not take this, but I have friends that took the Maori culture class and enjoyed it.
 - If you are into Anthropology and History then ANTH238 is worth your while. I am not but I did still enjoy it.
 - If you are a SPHSC major or are interested in the field, I would recommend any of their courses.
- UC Coursework in Relation to UW education
 - I took two classes in the Communication Disorders Department at UC that related to my UW SPHSC major. The program there, however, is 4 years and is incredibly intensive as they do not need to go to graduate school to be certified.
 - As a third year student at UC I took courses that I would not normally take until graduate school at UW. I did however receive general SPHSC credits to count toward my major.
 - When I went to UC I had already fulfilled my UW I&S, VLPA, etc credits so did not really need other courses to fulfill my UW credits. I ended up receiving general credits to count toward graduation but did not try to get credit for specific classes.

Housing

- UC offered student accommodation on campus and provided information for homestay.
- I chose the student accommodation route in Ilam Village because I wanted to have the student life and was not sure if I would have wanted to live with a family.
- I really enjoyed Ilam Village because I was with other international students that wanted to travel and explore. It was upsetting at first that I was "surrounded by Americans" when I went to New Zealand to experience their culture but it ended up great. Most of my New Zealand friends had work, family obligations, etc so would not have been able to travel weekly to explore the country.
- It would be less expensive and, depending on the person, a better fit to flat off campus but it would probably be hard to arrange before going abroad.

Health and Safety

- Health and safety was great. When I got sick I didn't have to pay at all for a doctor visit or prescription as it was covered by the UC Student Safe Insurance that I was required to get.
- Like any place, there will be unsafe areas and bad people, but I felt very comfortable and safe throughout my time there.

Cultural Aspects

- Integrating into the culture and meeting people

- Due to the fact that I was living with primarily international students, I met Kiwis through clubs and classes.
- The university has a great club day the first week and offers fantastic clubs from wine tasting to rock climbing. I would highly recommend joining clubs but be careful not to join too many or you won't have time for all of their activities.
- I never experienced culture shock as the environment and language is not very different from the states. Some accents were hard to understand at times but it is easy to adjust too.

Financial

- Accessing/ Transferring Money
 - The best way to access money was to set up a bank account. There is an ANZ branch on campus that made it very convenient.
 - Bank of America is partners with Westpack so you can withdraw money without ATM fees as often as you want. I would withdraw in large sums then deposit into my ANZ account so I wouldn't have to have cash on me all of the time.
- Spending Money
 - I would recommend at least \$600/month (USD) in spending money to cover rent, food, and transportation.
- Unexpected Expenses
 - I may be over the top, but I would almost recommend to double what you think you need for spending money.
 - I traveled often which I did not realize I would be doing before I left. When traveling you also come across great activities (bunji jumping, skiing, surfing, skydiving) which will cost a fair amount.
 - Transportation and accommodation adds up as well when traveling so make sure to budget for that.
- Financial Aid
 - I had no trouble receiving financial aid while I was gone, however, it is important to turn in the forms to arrange your credits and allotted aid before leaving the country.
 - I did receive a letter saying they were going to cut my aid for the following school year since my UW winter and spring grades were combined in one semester at UC. Due to the fact that my grades at UC did not come through at the same time UW grades normally would, the system thought I had "dropped out." The issue was resolved smoothly though just through communicating and informing the office of my situation.

Program/ Exchange Administration

- IPE Service
 - I found communicating with IPE a bit stressful before going. I was not informed of my acceptance into the program when I was told I prospectively would be. This would be okay, but it was difficult to book good deals on tickets not knowing for sure if I was even going.
 - I think email and phone communication should have been much more prompt on several occasions.

- I did, however, really appreciate the informational meeting and packet that they provided.

Program/ Student Type

- I believe this program would be suited for all different types of people. I personally found New Zealand to be very outdoorsy and suited well for an active person. Christchurch itself was a fun city and had a pretty good nightlife, but to truly experience what New Zealand has to offer I believe that people should come eager not just to travel to Christchurch, but all over New Zealand.
- If you are living in Ilam Village, being social is important as the buildings are close and the party is only fun if you are there!

Overall Experience

Academically and personally my expectations were met and were fulfilled far beyond what I could have ever dreamed of. At times I was stressed with having to put the "study" in study abroad but that was only because I was busy living it up the rest of the time I was there. I did miss friends, family, and food at home at times but I think that is only natural. All in all I had an absolutely amazing five months filled with new experiences, friendships, and amazing travels. Everyday I was in New Zealand I saw something that took my breath away and I would think to myself "this is the coolest thing I have ever seen," or "this is why I am in New Zealand." Yet everyday I was faced with new experiences and new remarkable scenery that I repeated those things to myself often.