



## **P&E PROGRAM EVALUATION OUTLINE:**

**University of Western Australia  
Fall Semester 2012,  
Perth, Western Australia.**

### **1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:**

If you apply for a residential college they will have the room open for you usually upon arrival, if not just pick a hostel downtown or there is one at Cottesloe Beach. Look for somewhere cheap, just a place to sleep.

My orientation was helpful, at least the first day. I did not go to the second part of it because it was just full of information you can get by reading the book.

### **2. ACADEMICS:**

I am a student from University of Washington Bothell so my classes may be different than Seattle Campus. The instruction style is your traditional lecture; you sit there and the lecturer just throws information at you for an hour or two. Then you have tutorials where TAs spend an hour or two going over the material and readings. I have encountered that these were pretty pointless but participation is mandatory and is a big part of your grade usually.

I did not experience any busy work in my schooling at UWA, usually a semester consisted of 1 midterm 1 or 2 papers and a final exam; straight forward, which was very nice. The grading was interesting. You can pass with a 50.

50-59 credit

60-69 pass

70-79 distinction

80-100 high distinction

With UWA equivalency of grades a 50 result in a 2.0 and a 4.0 is a 75 so it isn't too stressful. When a high distinction is achieved though, it is worth noting.

### **3. HOUSING:**

While studying in Perth I decided to stay at a residential college. These are basically dorms, but they are privately owned and affiliated with University of Western Australia (UWA). I feel if I had not lived in Trinity then my experience would not have been the same. There are several colleges, Trinity has about 400 students and have a very active student body. Very social, easy going people and have a quite a decent international student community from Africa and Asia. Other colleges include St. Catherine's which is an all girls college, Thomas Moore and St. George (not too sure about them, but they are definitely smaller) and Currie hall which is the cheapest and has the most students (it lacks a community though). I would recommend these if you don't really have a place off campus set up for yourself. The university does give you 100 dollars to use for taxis to search for housing, but it is often far away and expensive.

### **4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:**

Campus is beautiful, right along the Swan river, lorikeets and cockatoos singing in the trees, peacocks roaming free around the arts building and large open fields to hang out with ducks in. The surrounding environment is nice, mostly just housing and not too much food going on. Broadway is where most the stuff is. It is like the Ave, but nothing like it at the same time. It has basic shops and some food places but nothing exciting.

Great night life though, had many great nights in Perth. Mondays (The Dean), Wednesdays (Captain Sterling), Thursday (Red Sea in Subiaco or Club Bay view) -Sundays (club bay view) all have something going on. The City to me is like

Seattle. A decent size city that is fairly quiet. Not too much going on. It definitely has the chilled laid back Australian vibe with all the world class beaches and just how beautiful it is. It is also the most isolated city in the world, so you have to fly 4 or 5 hours to get the east coast. But at the same time Indonesian is a 4 hour flight away and a great place to go for you mid semester break, along with Singapore.

#### **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Perth is a joke, there is no crime. Some cases of theft but that is about it. I have never felt safer then when I was in Perth. Medical facilities are nice on campus, just like Hall Health and the school is situated close to 2-3 major hospitals.

#### **6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

The university has a group called Perth International which set ups meet and greets, parties, activities and many other fun things to do. Joining is only 5 dollars. I met most of my friends through that and my residential college. A lot of people who don't live in residential colleges relied on Perth International to meet people.

There were no cultural issues which I encountered. The only thing is that the Australian way of life is amazing and will suck you right in.

#### **7. FINANCIAL:**

I would open an account while abroad, I didn't and I semi-regret not doing it. I just used my BECU account which charged 1% interest on every transaction.

PERTH IS SOOO EXPENSIVE! Remember that, but it is worth it. Anywhere you go in Australia is going to be expensive really. I don't really know what I would recommend for a budget. Transportation is cheap around the city, it will be explained in the orientation but partying is expensive. Since I lived at a residential college I was also fed 3 meals a day so I am not aware of what grocery prices are, but they are definitely not as cheap as we have it here in the U.S..

On my whole exchange I probably spent 14K. But keep in mind I traveled a lot of places and my housing was about 7-8,000 for the semester. It is expensive but worth it once again.

I did use financial aid, and it was amazing because I was allowed to pull out future aid i.e. Winter 2013 early for unexpected costs like traveling.

#### **8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:**

IPE office's help was satisfactory and I have no complaints. Every email was answered in due time so it all went well.

#### **9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

Perth is suited for pretty much anyone. I am a laid back individual who likes to have a good time, yes party, but the lifestyle like I said earlier was just like Seattle but with much better weather. It is actually the 3<sup>rd</sup> sunniest city in the world.

#### **10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

I was not really impressed by UWA itself. The academic side was ok, but nothing exciting. If I were not for me living in Trinity than it would have been a completely different experience I feel. This exchange is more about the people you meet, the memories you share and the connections you make than an academic one. While it is easy to balance life between social life and school there, it is a lot harder there because of the weather and the people. In the end, I have traveled to over 25 countries and grew up in Europe but this exchange was the best 5 months of my life and I don't know what could top it.

Direct Exchange – University of Western Australia, Perth

Semester 1, 2011 (mid-February – late June)

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1. A) Recommended accommodations: UWA will send a shuttle to pick you up from the airport for free. I was staying at a residential college and went straight there from the airport. If you decide to look for your own apartment or house, you can arrange to stay at one of the residential colleges for the first couple of weeks during orientation.  
B) Orientation: covered getting around the city and the campus, registering for classes, meet new people, etc. Standard and helpful but hot!
2. Academics are very different in Australia. Semester system means more down time and (I felt) a slower pace, plus you have fewer graded assignments. Most of my classes had 2 quizzes or projects (20% each) and one final (60%). Teachers were less clear about what exactly you are expected to know than I'm used to, which was a bit overwhelming. Many of the lectures were recorded and posted online, so people ended up skipping classes and goofing off all semester and then cramming during study week. Quality of teachers varied a lot depending on the individual and the program (much like at home). I'm a math major and supposedly my classes will mostly transfer back as 300-level math electives.
3. Housing: You could stay in a residential college (sort of a dorm combined with a frat or sorority) or find your own housing. I'd recommend staying in one of the colleges – lots of organized activities, easy to make friends, and nice to have someone do all your cooking and cleaning so you can have fun. I stayed in Tommy More. There were 6 colleges, each with a little different style and reputation. St. George's is the nicest, but admitted very few exchange students, and has a reputation for being snobby. Currie and Tommy had most of the exchange students. The accommodations weren't as nice but they weren't bad. St. Cat's is all girls. Trinity is the biggest – they had almost twice as many residents as the rest – so I think it's not as personal and intimate. I am not religious and was in a Catholic college (all but Currie are religiously affiliated) and it was no trouble.
4. The campus is GORGEOUS, right on the river, really nice buildings (especially the business school). Perth, the people, and the facilities are awesome. You're also right next door to King's

Park, which is 1000 acres of trails and botanical gardens looking over the Swan River. Perth is very isolated and it's a smaller city, but the weather is fantastic (like southern California) and there are the most beautiful beaches in the world right there. If you want a big city experience, don't go to Perth. If you like being outdoors, do. I loved it.

5. Perth is much safer and cleaner than Seattle. I left my door unlocked all the time with all my valuables inside and was never worried about being robbed. I made extensive use of the medical center at UWA and they have good facilities!

6. Cultural aspects: It was easy to integrate, especially being part of a residential college with lots of other exchange students in the same boat. There are ample opportunities to participate in clubs and sports, and it's easy to meet people in classes. Australians are very friendly to Americans on exchange. If you want to foster really close relationships with Australians, stay for a whole year. There is a bar on campus (called the Tav) where they have social events so you can meet people from the other colleges or commuter students. There are some cultural differences but nothing particularly difficult comes to mind.

7. During orientation they have booths to set up an Australian bank account, but I just used mine and got money out of ATMs. It charged a 1% fee. Check with your bank before you leave. Spending money is really up to you, but right now the US dollar is weak against the Australian one, and everything is more expensive, especially alcohol. Room and board was very expensive too. I didn't use financial aid. I traveled around a bit before school and during one of the study breaks. It's worth it to travel around Australia or to southeast Asia while you're down there.

8. I did the direct exchange. It was nerve-racking at times because IPE could be more supportive and communicative. You have to be very proactive about deadlines and get your own information. You have to wait and wait until you hear from someone and then fill out applications and send money really quickly. That being said, it all comes together so don't stress about it too much.

9. A direct exchange is good for someone who's really independent. I was the only one from UW at UWA. It's different than doing a UW program because you have to make all new friends and don't have the program holding your hand or a ready-made group of friends but that's what I liked about the program. Now I have friends all over the country.

10. I went in with no expectations and had the time of my life.

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## International Exchange Report for the University of Western Australia

University of Western Australia, Perth, WA Australia  
Winter and spring quarters 2015

For my exchange in Perth I chose to live on campus at a student residence college called Trinity College. Though similar to the residence halls at UW, these colleges had a whole campus devoted specifically to living; with courtyards, dining hall, gym, study rooms, game areas, and several residence buildings all spread across a beautifully tended campus. I would fervently recommend this housing choice because not only is it close to campus and designed for student living, but it also gave me a comprehensive orientation where I met fellow exchange students and local Australians and could participate in a variety of social events that helped me make close friends and learn about the new city I just came too. I really felt at home there, and that was completely by their design. The Trinity staff make their intentions known immediately by greeting you with hugs and a gift box to help you settle in, with things like tissues and erasers to the much appreciated chocolate. They make you feel welcomed, which is surprisingly nice because even though as an exchange student I had prepared to thrust myself into new and probably uncomfortable situations, it was a wonderful feeling to be greeted so warmly. This housing choice is more expensive, roughly \$7000 USD for room and board for the semester (winter and spring quarter), but it provides you much more. Countless social events and tutors became available to me such that I could make friends extremely quickly, and soon I had numerous people to go to the study rooms with and keep me on track. If you show up early in Perth you can pay to house on campus for the few days before your official contract begins however it would probably be much cheaper to stay at a hostel.

Trinity may have been my favorite part of my exchange, and I have no doubt that any future exchanger would be extremely happy to live there for their stay.

Being so close to campus was also helpful because unlike many UW classes, almost every class at UWA had a lecture as well as a tutorial class, almost doubling the time you would expect to be in class. Tutorials had smaller class sized and more personalized instructor time with tutors which are our equivalent of T.A.s. Most lectures were recorded, meaning that even if something came up one week and you missed lecture you had the opportunity to catch up. However, Tutorials were mandatory, and this made sense since they are designed to be your question asking time, and interaction time with your tutor about the subject, which you can't really participate in if you don't show up. The work as a whole was not overwhelming, and the only concern I would warn future students is that you may want to skip lecture, promising yourself you'll sit alone and watch that 1hr long talk later by yourself, and I'm just saying that you probably won't, so just go.

As far as coursework was concerned, I found it fairly similar to that of UW. Classes such as biology had weekly reading quizzes as well as lab sessions and then a class I took on Biological anthropology relied more on readings and the final papers and exams, there was much variety similar to in UW courses.

Most of the classes I took related to my major either directly or tangentially. I study environmental science and I took an introductory biology course, an earth science course, a class on biological anthropology which focused on human adaptation and variation and I also took a class on astronomy.

For future students I would definitely suggest taking courses that relate to their chosen majors, but also I would suggest taking classes that sound really amazing. I highly recommend my astronomy class, SCIE1121, because I got to learn about aboriginal views of astronomy in addition to current scientific theories. Out of all my classes, I loved to go to this one. I always made it on Friday afternoons, not because I'm highly disciplined, but because I didn't want to miss a thing. I often spent sunny afternoons staring out the study room bay windows dreaming about the universe. This class was amazing. Take it.

In addition to Trinity, I also loved the UWA campus. It has huge sandstone buildings and worn brick walkways that take you meandering through gorgeous tropical plants. Palm trees and yellow, stone archways fill up my memory. It was beautiful and comfortable to me. The campus is in a suburb called Crawley that also has brick sidewalks and tropical plants, and cute residential areas with sweet little alleys full of flowers. One of my first nights there it was uncharacteristically humid and the smells from flowers were drenching the air. There were grocery stores, bottle shops and pharmacies all within walking distance and the bus to downtown shopping and nightlife was right outside the front gate of my residence hall. There was also a convenient bank across the street from my residence hall (which was across from the university) where I could easily withdraw money. I don't know what would be the best way to transfer money in Australia but I opened an Australian bank account, had my local financial aid checks sent straight there, and then simply withdrew a few large amounts from my overseas account which charged me a smallish fee. I don't know if this was most efficient, but that's what I did. In total I think I spent around \$2700 USD in Australia for spending money which included my 10 days traveling the east coast, a ten day road trip up north, a \$300 whale shark snorkel and a few weekend excursions. I was not being incredibly thrifty, and I'm sure it could be done on much less, but I did have a very good time (we also went out most nights so if you don't go out often you could probably cut that by about half).

Like I mentioned I had local (Australian) financial aid as well as financial aid from UW and through the Veterans Administration. There were times when I had to scramble a bit to get all the paperwork figured out and then make sure people actually filed it/sent it/notarized it or what have you so that I'd get it in time. I think the latest I got my aid was about two weeks late, and thankfully nothing expensive happened in those two weeks. Persistence was all it took to make things run relatively smoothly.

The IP&E did administer this exchange and for the most part I think they helped me get things organized and put together reasonably well. I had a few difficulties but I'm fairly sure those could be as easily attributed to me rather than any internal workings of the IP&E office.

On my travels I met several exchange students and it really seemed like any number of people could come to Perth and enjoy themselves. It felt cozy and easy going and nice, but was also a perfect location to drive out to the outback, or go clubbing on a daily basis and if school ever got a little too much of a bother you could just catch a 15 minute bus to the beach and remember that you were in Australia, having an amazing time.

I absolutely loved my exchange experience. I miss the friends I made and still talk to them and am making more plans to visit them all over the world. I think back about the smells and the trees and the

beautiful brick sidewalks and the sense of community I had in a place so far away and I absolutely loved it. I don't know if I'll go back (it's quite far and there are many more places I want to go) but it was probably one of the best times in my life, if not the best. And perhaps I don't want to go back because I think it would be completely different without all of the people I met and love. At the end I even came out with good grades! And though this was an academic experience I want to note that part of learning on exchange is to learn from more than a textbook, teacher, and a classroom. I did well in class, but I learned things I never imagined about Switzerland and Italy, or about the crazy rocks in Karajini national park that my friend a geology major taught me. I learned that a whale shark is the biggest fish in the sea, and then I swam with it. I think it's clear that we travel abroad to learn more than just our subjects, and from so many more people than just our teachers. The short term life and community I built in Australia taught more than I ever would have dared to hope for. I cannot stress enough that I had one of the best times of my entire life. I recommend anyone to go.