



**2012-2013 Student Mobility/Exchange Program  
Returning Undergraduate Student Report**

**Host University:** Cleveland Institute of Art

**Host Country:** U.S.A

**Faculty/Department at Host Institution:** Interior Design

**Semester:** Spring 2013

**Date of Report:** Jun 24, 2013

**1. OVERALL EVALUATION**

**How would you rate your exchange experience overall?**

**Poor** **Excellent**  
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

**Please explain your rating.**

**What was the most meaningful thing you learned while studying off campus?**

Interior design at CIA (Cleveland Institute of Art) focuses on commercial design. So I could learn and understand about specific commercial interior design system in North America.

**Please share three of your most positive experiences and three of the biggest challenges you faced.**

3 positive experiences

- Learning about the commercial interior design.
- Participating in a Spring Show.
- Having an internship opportunity.

3 biggest challenges

- Severe Weather.
- Bonding with friends since peers were already strongly tied together.
- Different education system. For example, OCAD U is a regular 3hours lecture or studio but CIA is 5~8 hours studio per studio.

**Why did you choose this host institution? What key factors or issues influenced your decision?**

In fact CIA was not my top choice. As most students I also applied the most popular school like RISD. However my application was slipped away, I needed to pick another school. So I decided to send my application to a small school, like CIA. But it turned out for me the best result ever.

**Please describe your preparation for the exchange, including banking, travel documents and student visa application. In retrospect, would you have done anything differently?**

In order to study at CIA, student needs to pay some student fee (around \$1,800), which included in technician fee and Student Health Insurance Plan. Moreover, you need to prepare the student visa called F1.

**Are there any important items (e.g. art & design supplies, documents, specialty foods, health items) that a student should take to your host country?**

One of the advantage of CIA is every students would be provided their own studio, and CIA also support some design supplies. When it comes to the personal items, like foods, you would better to bring your own traditional food, if you are an international student, since there are not many convenience stores selling your country's food. And depends on the semester you choose, you want to prepare proper outfits. If you are preparing to go in winter, I suggest you to bring very warm clothes and many blankets as much as you can and personal heater too. Cleveland is very cold since it is located near Erie Lake.

## **2. ARRIVAL**

**Was anyone at the airport, train station, etc. to meet you? Did you experience any difficulties upon arrival?**

No. Since between Cleveland and Toronto takes only 5hours, I drove the car.

**When should students plan to arrive at the host university? When did you arrive? Would you have benefited from arriving earlier?**

I think a week before is perfect to get to know about Cleveland.

**Was there an orientation session offered at your host university? If yes, did you attend and what did you learn?**

No. I guess I am the only one who came to CIA as an exchange student.

**Is there a coordinating office for international students, including exchange students, at your host university? Is there a staff person you would recommend students approach with their questions?**

Yes. There was an office for international students and exchange student. The coordinator name is Nancy Neville. She was very kind and supportable.

## **3. ACCOMMODATION**

**Where did you live during your exchange? Would you recommend your accommodation to future exchange students?**

I lived near Coventry St. where many college students were living. It takes only 5mins from school by bus. I would recommend this area to future exchange students.

**Did you have any difficulties arranging accommodation yourself? Did the host institution assist you in finding accommodation?**

My host institution introduced me a housing available for 4~5months. Since one of CIA student was planning to do an exchange student to UK, I could accommodate her place during my exchange program.

**If you lived on-campus, which residences would you recommend? Are there any that should be avoided?**

No.

**If you lived off-campus, do you have any recommendations for future exchange students? For example, does rent include hydro and other utilities, or are they extra? Which location in the city is ideal for exchange students?**

The Cleveland (I guess almost USA) is meant to drive than to walk. Unless you have a car, I recommend student to live near school called Little Italy where is walking distance to school.

#### **4. STUDIES AT HOST INSTITUTION**

**To better understand the similarities and differences between academic studies at OCAD and at your host university, please comment on the following:**

**Level of Academic Difficulty & Challenge:**

Even though there were different educating system to OCAD U, there was no problem to follow their level.

**Time spent in class (# of hours per week):**

30hours per week.

**Time spent outside of class (# of hours per week):**

20hours per week.

**Oral presentations (Individual and Group):**

The entire course I took from CIA required many oral presentations. It was very good experience to describe my ideas to in front of other students and professor who had a fresh eyes about me.

**Written assignments:**

Students were asked to write thanks letter after we visited an interior design firm or architecture office as a field trip. And one of my liberal course named Environmental Science require many written assignment, like essay and research paper.

**Studio-based work:**

CIA is really studio-based work. Mentioned earlier, CIA has a unique education method, working together with student and professor for 8hours, that helps students to get fast feedback and reach a higher result.

**Interaction between students and professors:**

It was very close interaction. It is almost 1:1. Since there were not many students, each student could get a personal teaching and feedback with professor. Moreover, professor send many emails about internship opportunities to support their students.

#### **5. SERVICES**

**Were there any extracurricular activities/events scheduled for exchange/international students at your host university (cultural visits, trips, workshops, etc.)? Which ones would you recommend?**

There were no activities for exchange student. But every end of spring semester, CIA is held the Spring Show. Students including exchange students participate the show and present their works they have done so far. At the show, many visitors, like interior designer and architect come and sometime they offer an internship opportunity to student.

**What were the libraries and computer facilities like? Would you recommend that students bring their own laptop?**

CIA's facilities were good. Since interior design studio has many individual assignments, students would better to bring their own laptop. But printer is unnecessary.

## **6. COST OF LIVING**

**How did you prepare yourself financially for your exchange? Did you pay for the experience entirely out of your own savings? Did you receive student or bank loans? Did you apply for / receive any financial awards (scholarships or bursaries)? Did you have help from parents / family / friends?**

Thank to OCAD U, I could get some financial aid so I could afford to pay my living expenses and student fee at CIA.

**In general, was the cost of living in your host country higher, lower, or similar to that in Canada? Please explain.**

Living expense is a little bit lower than Toronto.

## **7. EXPENSES**

**Exchange rate with host country:**

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**Time spent in host country (month/year - month/year)**

Early Jan/2013 - Early May/2013

**Would you estimate that you spent more, less, or the same amount as an average, local student attending your host institution?**

I think I spent much less than local students since I did not pay same tuition fee as local students do. I heard that their tuition fee is about \$35,000 per year.

**Please complete the following budget to give other students an idea of what they can expect to spend in the host country.**

**Basic Expenses in Canadian Dollars:**

1. **Tuition and general fees:** \$1,800
2. **School supplies and books:** \$500
3. **Rent or university residence:** \$1,200

4. **Rent-related expenses:**
  - A) **Electricity/Water:** \$ 50/month
  - B) **Telephone:** \$ 35/month
  - C) **Cable:** \$ 30/month
  - D) **Other (specify)** \$ /month
5. **Groceries (or meal plan) and housekeeping supplies:** \$150/month
6. **Personal expenses (toiletries/cosmetics, etc.):** \$15 /month = \$
7. **Laundry and /or dry cleaning:** \$ /month = \$
8. **Transportation:**
  - A) **Public (Bus, Taxi, Subway, etc.):** \$ /month
  - B) **Private Car (gas, parking, ins.):** \$ /month
9. **Clothing:** 100\$
10. **Leisure (Sports, Entertainment, etc.):** \$
11. **Extended medical coverage:** \$
12. **Travel / trips:** \$( School provide bus&subway card )
13. **Round trip plane ticket:** \$500
14. **Student visa:** about \$1,000
15. **Medical expenses:** \$
16. **Other expenses (please specify):** \$

**Estimated Total Expenses:** \$

## **8. ADAPTING TO YOUR HOST COUNTRY**

**Did you experience any “culture shock” during your exchange? How did you deal with it? Do you have any advice for students on how to adapt to life in your host country?**

There was not that much culture shock. But different to Canada, there were not many international students. It seems white dominant society.

**Was there a lot of interaction between local students and exchange/international students? What is the best way to develop friendships with students from your host institution?**

At first time, local students seemed to be already strongly bonded each other, it was quite challenging to get along together. In order to build a relationship with them, I tried to share my idea about their work and paid a special attention to their design. Sometimes I gave them some good source of design.

**Did you have any unforeseen problems? Was there anything that you felt was strikingly different from what you expected? If so, is there a way that you could have prepared yourself?**

No

**9. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Thank you for giving me such a wonderful opportunities!

*Please email your report to Susan Kemp, Student Mobility/Exchange Coordinator, at [skemp@ocadu.ca](mailto:skemp@ocadu.ca)*