



**2016-2017 Student Mobility/Exchange Program  
Returning Undergraduate Student Report**

**Student Name:**

**Host University:** OTIS COLLEGE

**Host Country:** UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Faculty/Department at Host Institution:** ARCHITECTURE LANDSCAPE INTERIOR

**Semester:** WINTER SEMESTER 2017

**Date of Report:** 17.04.17

**1. OVERALL EVALUATION**

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

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

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

- OTIS college is well known for architecture
- Los Angeles is home to most famous architects and architectural projects
- Great feedback from previous exchange students
- Programs offered by OTIS College that help benefit my own education

**Positive:** Great students, numerous lectures off site, new content, great location, many attractions to see in the city.

**Challenge:** Adapting to new schedule (longer class hours, heavier work load)

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

**2. PREPARATION**

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

- The visa itself did not take long but I wish school had responded quicker. It has caused me a lot of stress because I was accepted right before Christmas break. I ended up missing orientation and barely made it for the first week of school. The visa itself was granted to me fairly quickly and on time.

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

-Make sure to review the insurance provided in Canada, because there is a chance you may have to buy another one once you arrive. Depending on your type of insurance and agreement you have. In my case, I have submitted a form upon my arrival and was able to use my OCAD insurance during the entire stay.

### **3. ARRIVAL**

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

-No, nobody has met me at the airport however there was school representative waiting for me at the school. I was given a tour around dorms, and café and was told about all rules and amenities. The school was very accommodating with my schedule and arrival.

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

-I would say student must arrive a week before the school starts (this is when the dorms open. ) if the student stays off campus, the student should arrive as early as possible to enjoy LA and beautiful weather.

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

-Yes, there was a proper orientation session but due to my visa application delay I have missed it. However, I was scheduled a private orientation tour after my arrival. Again, school was very accommodating.

**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?**

**VISA/REGISTRATION:** Rebekah Kim [rjkim@otis.edu](mailto:rjkim@otis.edu)

**HOUSING :** Morgan Brown [mbrown@otis.edu](mailto:mbrown@otis.edu)

**ARCHITECTURE LANDSCAPE INTERIOR:** Linda Polari [pollari@otis.edu](mailto:pollari@otis.edu)

### **4. ACCOMMODATION**

**Where did you live during your exchange? Were you happy with your accommodation?**

-OTIS College has Dorms on Campus. Very affordable and It includes housing itself, Internet, meal plan, and security. Much better choice if you are on a low budget.

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

-The host institution has sent me all information I needed right after I have accepted the offer. I knew my options and requirements before my arrival. Just make sure to pay all required fees upon your arrival to avoid any complications.

## **5. STUDIES AT HOST INSTITUTION**

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

**Level of academic difficulty and challenge:**

9/10

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

STUDIO IV : 10H/week

EC TEC II: 6H/week

EC TEC I: 5H/week

HISTORY III: 3H

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

10H /week

**Studio-based work:**

-Very intense.

- Constant progress required (at least twice a week): constant re -building, modeling and drawing.

**Written assignments:**

-Not many written assignments, but a few in theory based courses.

**Interaction between students and professors:**

-Proper studio based experience – everyone working at a desk, learning from others.

-Professors help students to achieve their best, listening to students' ideas with respect and interest.

## **6. 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?**

Several lectures and events off site. Major ones for architecture students:

Lecture with architect Tatiana Bilbao (residential projects)

Lecture on Ornament in Architecture

Interior Design Symposium

-All these events are arranged for students and are free to attend. Also, several fitness sessions, yoga, dance, music, comedy shows,etc.

**What were the library and computer facilities like?**

-Great library and labs available to students.

**7. 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?**

-My parents were sponsoring my trip. F1 students are not allowed to work in USA therefore its important to understand that you could only rely on funds you have saved prior to coming.

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

-It was cheaper for me, because the cost of dorm and meal plan was chipper than my rent and expenses in Canada. Also, everything is located close by so there is no need to spend much money on transportation. However, be prepared to spend fair amount on uber rides if you prefer to stay off campus/ or move through LA. Transportation in LA is not functional, therefore it may take up to 3 hours to get from one spot to another using bus or metro.

**8. EXPENSES**

**Exchange rate with host country:**

-I don't know.

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

-8 months

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

-Yes, Ive spent a lot more time at school studying and doing work.

**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 (paid to OCAD U):** \$ -regular tuition (\$20.000) –insurance (\$1500 regular OCADU tuition)
2. **School supplies:** \$ 200/per semester
3. **Rent or university residence:** \$ /month = \$ rent \$6000 US/per semester
4. **Rent-related expenses:**
  - A) **Electricity/Water:** \$ /month -
  - B) **Telephone:** \$ /month 40\$/month
  - C) **Cable:** \$ /month -
  - D) **Other (specify)** \$ /month -
5. **Groceries or Meal Plan:** \$ /month = \$ -

THE 6000\$ 1 TIME FEE INCLUDES WATER, ELECTECITY, CABLE/INTERNET/ MEAL PLAN.

6. **Personal expenses (toiletries/cosmetics, etc.):** \$ /month = \$  
40\$/month
  7. **Laundry:** \$ /month = \$  
20\$/month
  8. **Transportation:** \$ /month = \$  
50-100\$/ month
  9. **Leisure (Sports, Entertainment, etc.):** \$  
\$100 and up
  10. **Travel health insurance:** \$  
-
  11. **Medical expenses in host country:** \$  
-
  12. **Round trip plane ticket:** \$  
\$500
  13. **Travel/trips during exchange:** \$  
-
  14. **Student visa:** \$  
\$400
  15. **Other expenses (please specify):** \$  
-
- Estimated Total Expenses:** \$

## 9. 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?**

-It is an amazing place. Difficult realizing that some day you have to go back. You get used to kind people, great weather, make amazing friends and start a new life.

**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?**

-Yes, on daily bases interaction. Students become your best friends. You attend trips together, and make own plans outside of school.

**Did you have any unforeseen problems? Was there anything that you felt was strikingly different from what you expected?**

Stealing in Los Angeles is a big issue. So, always good to be extra careful to and stay safe.

## 10. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Please email your report to International Student Services at [international@ocadu.ca](mailto:international@ocadu.ca).