



2015-2016 Student Mobility/Exchange Program Returning Undergraduate Student Report

Host University: School of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston SMFA

Host Country: USA

Faculty/Department at Host Institution: Fine Arts

Semester: Spring 2016

Date of Report:

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.

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

Most of my choices were influenced by how close they are to Toronto. I was also focused on finding an institution in a country where English is the first language.

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?

I wish that OCAD stated that we need to have 10K USD as a requirement by the US immigration for student visas. **Also, I wish that**

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

The state of Massachusetts requires all international students to purchase a health insurance from a provider based in the States, Any provider from outside the country wouldn't be effective, even if the plan covers for abroad.

3. ARRIVAL

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

I haven't arranged with anyone to meet me at the airport as it's easy to navigate around or to call an Uber to the destination.

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

The students should arrive a week before the start date, Jan 21st for orientation. However, I've arrived late, got a little bit disoriented but managed to get into the groove quickly.

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

Yes, there was, but I arrived late and I missed it.

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, Whitney Wotkyns was a great help all semester.

4. ACCOMMODATION

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

I found a place on craigslist, I was more than happy with what I found.

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

The host institution offered the school's residence however it was too expensive for my budget.

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:The school is much easier and laid back than OCAD, I'd give it a 6-7 out of 10 (10 being the hardest)

Time spent in class (# of hours per week): ~6hrs

Time spent working on projects outside of class (# of hours per week): ~5-10hrs

Studio-based work:~10

Written assignments: N/A

Interaction between students and professors: There is a lot of one on one time with profs at SMFA, since classes are small and usually don't exceed 12 students. My most populated class was 8 students in total.

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?

There were orientation events for international/exchange students at the beginning of the semester only.

What were the library and computer facilities like?

The library was a smaller size than OCAD's, however, We were able to use the libraries of several other schools on the Fenway.

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?

I've used my savings, got help from family and got a bursary.

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

In general, the cost of living was roughly the same as in Toronto, however, the currency difference was a major issue.

8. EXPENSES

Exchange rate with host country: 1CAD=0.77USD

Time spent in host country (month/year - month/year): jan/2016-may/2016

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

I'd guess that I spent the same as an average, local student

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):** \$2500
2. **School supplies:** \$500+
3. **Rent or university residence:** \$1000 /month = \$4000
4. **Rent-related expenses:**
 - A) **Electricity/Water:** \$ /month
 - B) **Telephone:** \$ /month
 - C) **Cable:** \$ /month
 - D) **Other (specify)** \$ /month
5. **Groceries or Meal Plan:** ~\$160 /month = \$640
6. **Personal expenses (toiletries/cosmetics, etc.):** \$110 /month = \$440

7. **Laundry:** \$ 0/month = \$
8. **Transportation:** \$100 /month = \$400
9. **Leisure (Sports, Entertainment, etc.):** \$800+
10. **Travel health insurance:** \$1400
11. **Medical expenses in host country:** \$
12. **Round trip plane ticket:** \$300
13. **Travel/trips during exchange:** \$
14. **Student visa:** \$450
15. **Other expenses (please specify):** \$

Estimated Total Expenses: \$11,430

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?

I wouldn't necessarily say that I experienced an extreme culture shock, it was very mild. I kept myself busy, checking out the city and what it has to offer to make the best out of it.

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?

There was really minimal interaction between local and international students.

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?

10. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Please email your report to Susan Kemp, Student Mobility/Exchange Coordinator, at skemp@ocadu.ca