Karen’s Exchange Experience

To Lakehead University, Thunderbay
Pre Departure

Steps:
Application for CSU International Exchange Program
Application for Lakehead University
Interview
Acceptance
Preparation Guide Form
Apply for an International Student Identity Card ‘ISIC’, it allows you to get discounts and is good for an extra ID.
Liaison with exchange advisor and subject coordinator
Packing
You may need to obtain a travel visa, I didn’t require one.
I already had a valid passport, if you require one you should organize to get it as soon as possible make sure it doesn’t expire when you are in Canada.
Travel

I flew with the plane company Air Canada, I was very happy with their services. The ticket return cost approximately $2,500. It could have been cheaper if I knew certain dates when I was required to be there and what time exams finished or my residence ran out. So I suggest that you find out those as soon as possible and book in advance.

I was restricted in size and weight of luggage, I think that the weight limit for my undercarriage was 32kg and my carry-on had to be less than 14kg and below 155cm in dimension. Note if I took a domestic flight and the baggage limits were more restricted, worth checking out.

STA travel is worth checking out, they offer cheap flights for students. My mother and I went on a tour guide across Canada with Cosmos it was relatively pricy but was all organized and I got to see and lean about much more of Canada in a relaxed and comfortable way.
Travel - Toronto
Travel - Banff
Travel - Jasper
Travel - Vancouver
Whistler
Travel – Vancouver Island
Travel – Quadra Island
Insurance

• All students attending Lakehead University must obtain Insurance for the duration of their stay. This insurance covers you within Canada and covers things such as health treatment, cover if any items of your possession get stolen and much more. The Insurance cost me $252 for one semester. It is said to be worthwhile and a lot cheaper for this insurance through the university. Especially with the outdoor recreation program if found that there were a lot of field trips and activities that could potentially cause injury and require insurance.

• Travel insurance cost me $690.00
Campus

• The Lakehead campus is located about 15-20 minutes from the airport, a $25 cab ride.

• The campus is away from most of the local malls and necessity complexes which can pose a bit of a problem if you don’t have any transport.

• The main buildings and lecture theatres are a close walk from the on-campus residents.

• There are various facilities provided such as library, post office, vending machines, uni bar ‘outpost’, cafeterias, book store, atm machines, and student services offices such as security, administration, information desks, clubs, cultural centers etc.
The courses that I chose in the fall session (FA) were four third year half year courses;

**OUTD3811 - Biophysical Dimensions of Human Use.** This course was directed at the influence of people in parks and protected areas and management. This course involved a field trip to Pukaskwa National Park. All assessments were essays and reports.

**OUTD3230 - Ecological Literacy.** Ecological Literacy was my favorite course, directed at becoming ecologically literate and understanding the many principles and theory behind the subject. It involved numerous outdoor activities and fieldtrips to local areas looking at ecosystems. It involved numerous assessments such as constant topic tests, assignments and a major project done constantly throughout the semester.

**GEOG3313 - Introduction to Soil Science.** Soil science was very interesting, it obviously covered the different types of soils, characteristics etc and involved laboratory participation and field work. Assessments involved lab sheets, mid term and final semester exams.

**GEOG3331 - Environmental Issues A Climatic Approach.** This course looked at the various issues that have been effecting the climate locally, regionally and globally. There is a lot of theory but the topic is very interesting. This class was the largest of all courses taken in this semester, about sixty people. All assessments were exams, one based on take home assignments, one mid term and one final exam.

All lecturers were very professional, welcoming and willing to help in any way possible. The dean of outdoor recreation was a great person to go to at the start of the year for advice on topics especially since the ones I chose were a year or two above my stage at university (2nd year), able to assist in decision making and directing.

My courses were almost all changed from my original selection in Australia. This posed no problems, the courses just had to be selected before a deadline approximately two weeks after the commencement of classes and approved by my course coordinator back at CSU.

Some courses required pre requisites but with consultation and permission off the lecturer I was allowed to undertake these courses.

Like any other university you are responsible for your own efforts, organization e.g. time management are the main keys.
Transport

- Busses: There are two busses that run through different areas of the city which are $2.50 for a ride or you can purchase a bus pass for approximately $70.00 which can be used indefinitely for the semester.

- Friends: Other people that you live with or my know may have their own private transportation, this was my most used mode of transportation, usually just offering some petrol money for the use of there cars.

- Pushbikes: There are a lot of people who get around on pushbikes, these can only be used in the summer. They can be purchased from the police station who sells them one weekend a semester for very cheap prices.

- If I was to study at Lakehead again I would get a slip that allows me to drive. I didn’t use the bus at all, others did, I just walked or went with my roommate in her vehicle.
Expenses (Approximate)

• Study:
  – Books $250
  – UHIP $252 (insurance at Lakehead)
  – Athletic building fund $28
  – Student Orientation $20

• Residence:
  – Residence activity fee $50.00
  – Residence caution fee $40.00
  – Townhouse room and telecom $2,604

• Other:
  – Travel: $5 weekly
  – Food: $50 a week for groceries
  – Health: $20 a month
  – Cutlery: $15
  – Utensils: $10
  – Sports: Lift Pass $25, Ski and boot hire $20
  – Night social activities: $40
  – Long distance phone calls: My total phone bill was $40 for the entire stay.

Exchange rates are fairly similar, the Canadian dollar is worth more.

If you want to save more buy food at the superstore and avoid the general stores. A few students put money on the cafeteria which has a range of food but got caught out when they hadn’t used it enough and had money left on the account when finishing their stay.
Holiday Travel

The highlights of my trip included Quadra Island, Niagra Falls, The Rocky Mountains and Vancouver Island.

Tips: Pack the night before you leave to your destination. Maybe purchase some circulation socks, it prevents you from getting blood clots in your legs on the long plane trip, especially for older people. Another tip is to wear clothes that will be comfortable on the plane trip, on the flight home I forgot that my pants had buttons on the back pockets and dealt with them the whole trip. I also packed a face wash in a plastic bag in my handbag which was refreshing especially between flights.
Social Activities

- Thunderwolves games
- Outpost: various activities
- All of the Australian exchange students got together and had dinners once a week.
- Free movie nights on Monday at the university.
- Pub Crawls
- Clubs
- Residence activities. e.g. ‘Res sport’ every Sunday
- Course field trips
- I didn’t suffer from culture shock at all, just get involved in as many things as possible.
- It is interesting and fun to learn other sayings.
Cultural Information

• There are a lot of facilities and staff provided to liaise with different cultures. There are clubs and activities that the university holds involving everyone who would like to participate. I know that one club was holding nights were they would cook different foods and socialize over dinner.

• There is alot of cultural diversity at Lakehead with students attending from all over the world.

• In terms of Cultural differences between Australia and Canada there were many similarities. I found it really easy to adjust.
Weather

Just be sensible, in winter the weather conditions are particularly bad when it is windy. Just wear plenty of layers, wear warm waterproof gloves, beanie, woolen socks, ski pants, long johns and a warm jacket.
What and what not to bring?

• Don’t bring your hair straightener and other appliances that won’t work well through an adapter, my pc worked but charging cameras and other items was slow and ineffective.

• Bring warm winter jackets for harsh weather conditions.

• Long boots, they will stop snow coming into contact with your skin when trudging through the snow.

• Bring waterproof gloves

• Ear plugs

• Don’t bring blankets and pillows, that can be borrowed from residence and returned at the end of semester.
What you may need to buy

• Adapter
• Study Permit
• Visa
• I suggest that people should buy things from the second hand stores once your in Canada it will save allot of money.
• Or to pack as little as possible because you will buy things and have no room, this will impose excess baggage fees upon departure.
Relationships

- I have met some of the nicest, loving and caring people in my life on exchange, they are my best mates and will be dear friends for the rest of my life.
- It is good to keep in contact with old friends from home whilst on exchange.
- I wasn’t home sick at all
- I did meet and have a relationship with a guy on exchange.
Photo’s taken at Lakehead
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