

Sarah Collier – Exchange to Lakehead University, Canada in 2010

What I did whilst abroad – Applied Science (Parks, Recreation and Heritage)

In between skiing the slopes and snow shoeing through knee deep snow I did do some assignments... My experience at the Thunder Bay University that I did my exchange was a mixture fun, study and a completely different climate. It was all a part of the experience given to me through CSU's exchange program.

My stay in Canada began at the end of December and lasted until late April after all my exams were finished. My course was not as exciting as others but there were still some interesting field trips to industrial sites including a saw mill which is a joint management venture with a First Nation group. I had little trouble settling in as my roomies were individualistic and introverted however I ventured out and found other friends on the floor. I was also able to connect with a club which connected me to people that had cars.... mmm a necessity in the -40°C weather.

I ventured out to see the land and spent several days in a dairy ah home sweet home the farm life. I even got to go for a ride on a skidoo and horse riding in the snow. Study was important too but so was having fun. I connected up with a group called LUCF which stood for Lakehead University Christian Fellowship. Much fun was had with this wonderful group including weekends away in the remote white wilderness and many fun/dangerous activities including sliding which is like tobogganing but using less stabilised sleds running down a stepper hill and it being a little icy making it faster and that much funner. I even went to a concert by the TBSO which stands for Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, only because I heard them play at the university otherwise I don't think I would have even thought of going. It was an awesome experience of a life time and I loved it.

I went to many a sporting events including three Thunderwolves ice hockey games and a few of the basketball games too. I joined an events committee which is a part of LUSU which is Lakehead's Student Union. This enabled me to know when special events were happening and lend a helping hand.).

It wasn't all uni orientated I also ventured out and saw many of the spectacular local sights taking in the sleeping giant and the amazing beauty of Lake Superior. On the Campus they have their own pub and get this their uni night is Thursday but the pub is also open every night and on Mondays they have Wings night. Canadians love their beer and chicken wings.

I taught myself to ski after some of my overseas exchangers had to bail on giving me a skiing lesson. It was crazy but after some help from someone on the ski slope I got the hang of it and started having a ball. Tubing was the other snow sport I took up whilst there and it is slightly less prissy to the tubing here in Australia just tire inner tubes used in Canada.

This experience has shaped me in a way that can't really be explained. My self esteem has been lifted and I am able to speak up for myself more often than not. It has also allowed me to broaden my horizons. I enjoyed my time overseas but am glad to be home.