

Exchange report

George Brown College

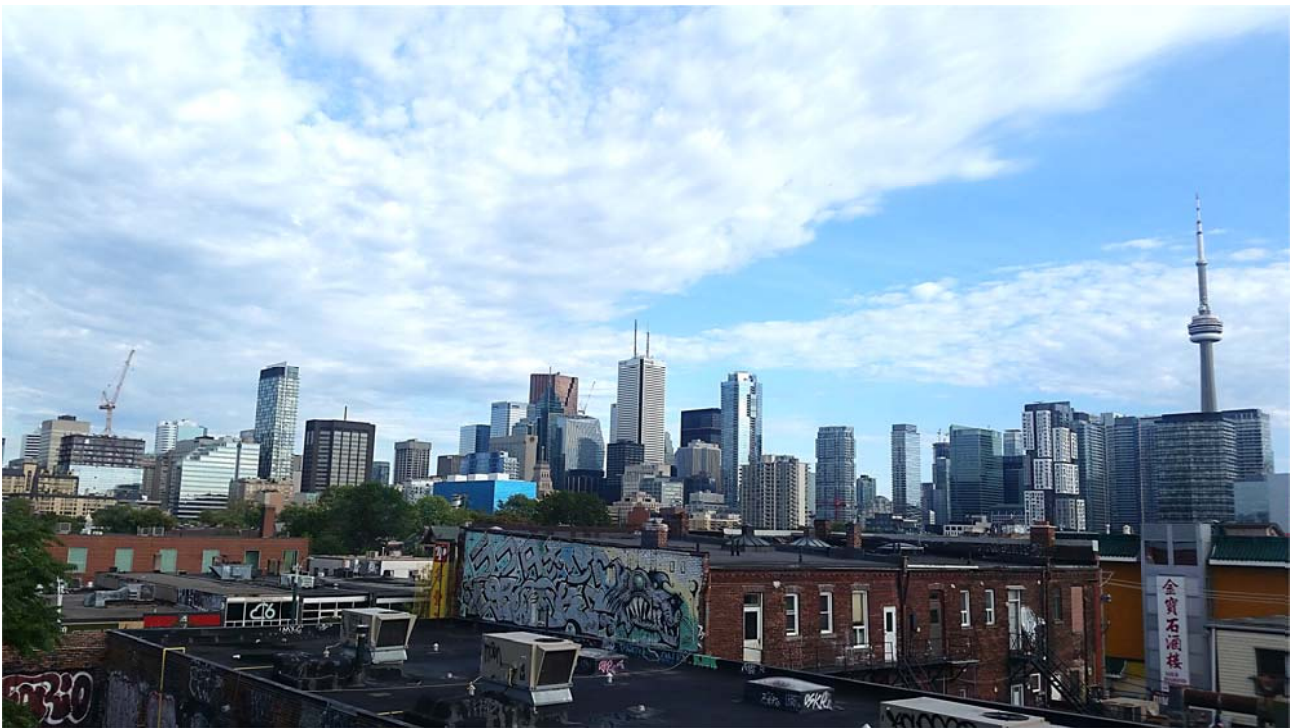
Toronto, Canada

BA Architectural Technology

From September 2016- January 2017

ruta.lorence@gmail.com

<https://loronto.wordpress.com/>



I did my exchange semester in Toronto, Canada. George Brown College.

I was attending BA in Architectural Technology. I decided to go to Toronto because I wanted to do my 5th semesters exchange outside EU. First priority was Seoul, South Korea. But I changed my mind because of the quality of education.

Yes, my main goals were to travel and use this exchange semester for cultural experiences, but trust me it is worth choosing a good school. By good school I mean (teachers can speak fluent English) since I did not work during this period I was just spending money and school was the only motivator that this trip is worth it. Just to make sure I am not wasting my time.

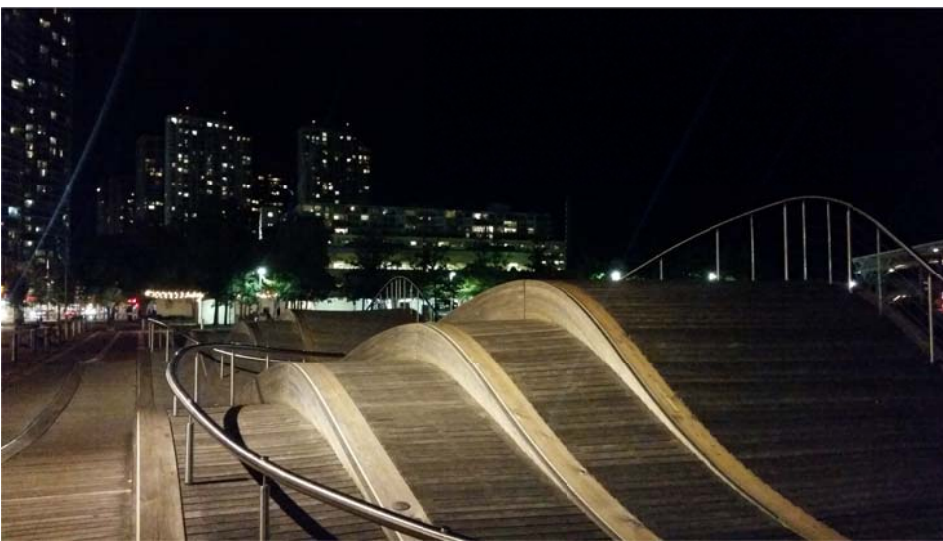
Contents.

Experiences at George Brown College.	3
Social and Cultural experiences.	4
Practical experiences.	5



Royal Ontario Museum of Art.

16.09.2016



The Simcoe WaveDeck.

11.09.2016

Experiences at George Brown College.

The program was different than in KEA. First of all there was no Construction management part, which I did not mind at all. I don't really enjoy those documents anyway.

Even though everyone said that I'll have to choose my own classes, it was not like that. There was a schedule already prepared. My schedule was different from the one that my classmates had. I had fewer classes. Less workload. But it was exactly the amount I was able to manage.

I had 7 different classes.

1. Architectural Technology and Sustainable Design- High Rise
2. Building code
3. Technical report writing
4. Structural systems- Concrete
5. Sustainable materials & Methods
6. CAD drawing (AutoCAD beginner)
7. BIM for ARCH (REVIT)

The first class was more than once a week and it was the one with the big semester project. That part was just like in KEA. We had to join groups and work on a project. This semester they were working with High Rise buildings.

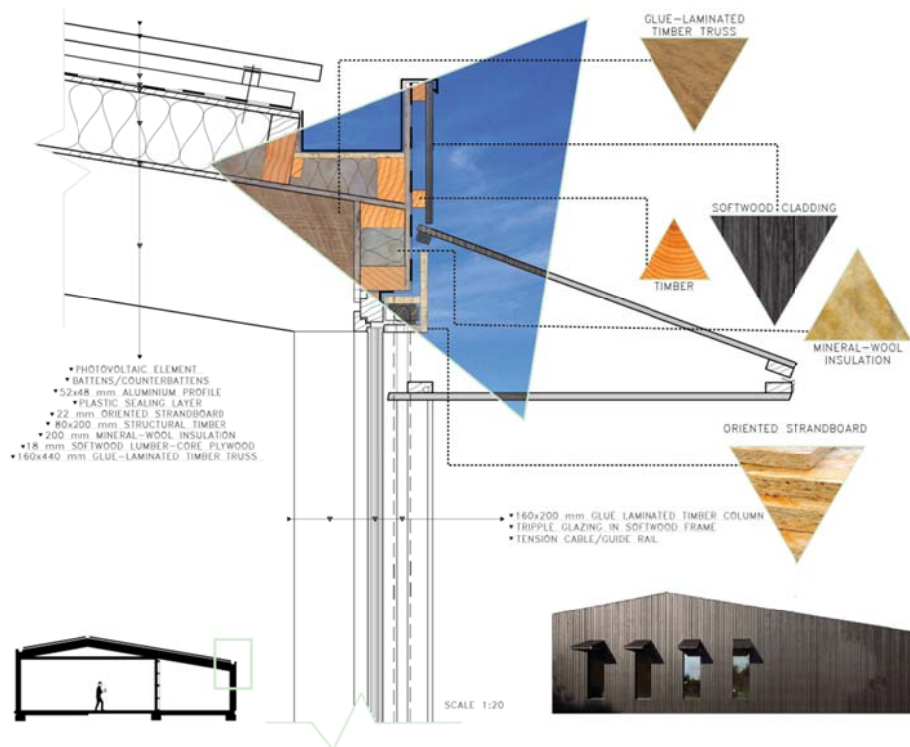
Second one was about building regulations, but I didn't have to do any tests or assignments, just had to attend the class. It made sense because I won't really use Ontario Building Code here in Denmark or Europe.

Technical report writing was a class where I had to write a report on a topic of my choice. I chose to write about access ramps. Teacher provided all the templates and explained how to write every chapter, how to reference sources etc. The only problem in this class was that the teacher didn't know anything about architecture. So she wasn't able to help with facts or any information regarding to our chosen topics. I had to pretend that I am making some kind of tests/ research. Describe it step by step and show the results. This information is not that easy to find. The teacher couldn't help me with that so I was describing something that most likely doesn't exist. What helped was that the teacher had a very good plan for every week. Writing a little part of it every week wasn't too hard. By the end of semester it was done. Nothing too complicated.

Concrete class was very interesting and useful. I like math so I enjoyed some calculating homework's after KEA "holidays". I had to learn how to design beams columns, reinforcement in them, how much load they can take etc.

Sustainable Materials & Methods was a class about materials, recycling (up & down). We were studying about layers in the wall, and what functions each membrane has. A little bit about architects and their choice of materials. Also we had an assignment for U-value calculations. Teacher gave us a buildup of

masonry wall and then we had to come up with better solutions how to build it, compare u values etc. Probably my favorite assignment was where I had to find a detail key junction from an existing project, copy it in AutoCAD or Revit. And then edit it in InDesign or Illustrator, so it would look nice. Just a practice and something I can put in my portfolio that shows my software skills. It wasn't just a nice picture. I had to explain why this detail, what are the layers, and make sure that the hatching is correct (according to NA standards)



CAD and BIM were for the software. My ultimate favorite classes. I learned a lot of new things. Teachers were very competent and helpful.

All except the first class were individual. Some of them had home works for two. I did notice that students are less independent. Like they wouldn't have their own opinion or they can't make a decision on their own. They asked every single detail to teachers. For example, how many words I need for this assignment what font should I use, is one page enough. Of course style is very important, but I think that at this point in our education/lives we should already know what a right form for assignments is and one page is enough if you have done what was asked from you. There is no point of making up extra stuff just for the sake of word count. That's something I never noticed at KEA.

Social and Cultural experiences.

Making friends took a little bit more time than it would in KEA. So I was lucky that I met exchange student from Toronto that were previously studying in Copenhagen.

There is a lot to do and see in the city. It is worth going outside the city too like I did.

I went camping to Algonquin National park. Visited Niagara Falls, Montreal, New York, and lots of places in GTA (Greater Toronto Area).

I really love beer and North America is The Queen of draft beers. So I did some beer tourism. Went to a couple of small breweries and I can proudly say that I tried at least 50 different beers all together. More about this you can read in my blog that I was writing while I was there. There will be lots of pictures and descriptions about biking, bars, school and my trips. ☺ <https://loronto.wordpress.com/>

It's not that easy to meet real Canadians there. Toronto is very multicultural city. During these 4 months I met, maybe, 4 Canadians. The rest of them are mostly Europeans or South Americans who moved there.

Practical experiences

I was flying from Copenhagen to Toronto via Reykjavik. And the rest was taken care of by a Homestay company. They have a very good offer for students.

I was living in a host family that the company found for me. There was a driver who picked me up at the airport and took me to my new home.

Breakfast and dinner was included in the rent (approximately 4000 DKK), so I had to take care of lunch myself and I was mostly eating at school.

They have quite a big variety at school café. Healthy and not so healthy choices. They have a microwave that everyone can use, so it's possible to take lunch from home.

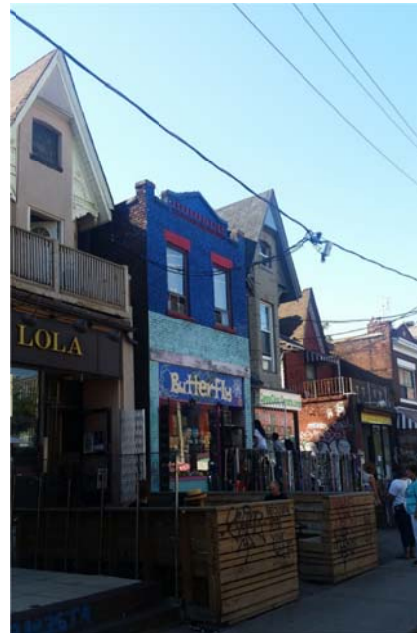
As a Latvian I didn't need visa. Study permit is not required for exchange students who stay there just for one semester. Of course these rules are very individual depending on your nationality and can change every year.

Canada is cheaper than Copenhagen, but not too much. Beer in a bar can cost from 25- 50 DKK or more. But the average was 40 DKK. I really started liking Mexican food while living there. Taco prices in a restaurant were 80- 100 DKK for 3 tacos. This is an OK price. The most popular Taco place in Toronto is called "Seven Lives" located in Kensington market, little bit similar area to Christiania just with different small cafes, restaurants etc. Seven Lives have big tacos, one for 6-7\$ which is 30- 35 DKK.

Very popular Pizza place is called "Pizza Pizza". Mostly students go there. A big pizza slice costs 4.5\$ which is 22 DKK. It is expensive compared to 1\$ Pizza in USA. :D



Pizza Pizza at GBC.
08.09.2016



Kensington market.
19.09.2016

Monthly Metro pass costs around 120\$ for students, that's the price I bought my bike for. I used it all 4 months except for 2 weeks in December when it was snowing, so I saved a lot. When I did need to use a public transport I bought tokens in a station. One costs 2,70 \$ (13 DKK) and one ticket can be used for the whole route, if You need to change the bus or tram you can use that ticket again as a transfer.

Thank You for reading!