

Exchange report

George Brown College
Toronto - Canada

August 2016 – December 2016

Computer Science Student



Introduction

I had my student exchange experience at George Brown College in Toronto, Canada. A city referred to as the financial capital of Canada and one of the most multi cultural cities around the world.

I choose to study abroad because I was very excited for the opportunity to experience another culture, to meet a lot of interesting people and to develop me further as a person. Studying abroad is a experience that I would recommend for anyone, who is hungry for a new adventure.

Academic experiences

The whole process of getting accepted, choosing courses and getting a place to live was very delayed for me and will most likely for you as well, but don't worry it will work out. The receiving school was very helpful in this process, but their respond time was very slow from time to time, so my advice is create contact early and get the help they offer.

During my stay at George Brown College I had 4 different courses.

1. *Web Development using Java*, which was about creating web pages using Java: Servlets, JavaBeans, JavaServer Pages technology and Model-view Controller architecture.
2. *Advanced Web Programming*, which was about creating interactive Web pages using PHP.
3. *Computer Security Fundamentals*, which was about how to protect yourself or your company from outside threats. Which attacks exists. How to defend against them. (Operating system security, access control, security audits, types of security attacks, basic network security, cryptography and physical security)
4. *Mobile Application Development*, which was about creating apps for mobiles using Android Studios.

Out of these four courses I liked *Computer Security Fundamentals* and *Web development using Java* the most. Mostly because these courses had great professors, but also because it is two relevant courses. *Advanced Web*

Programming is also a very decent course to take, if your interested in Web Programming. I had high hopes about *Mobile Application Development* before leaving for Canada, but this course was a big disappointment. The professor was not very competent in the area of mobile development, so the classes seemed like a big waste of time. Watch out for the professor *Ilir Dema*! Unless you want a easy course, where you don't learn much.

Cultural/Personal Experience

As Americas fourth largest city and home for so many people with different nationalities. Toronto is one of the most ethnically diverse cities around the globe. I knew this before going but it still ended up surprising me, just how diverse this city is.

This diversity is probably what describes my best experience of Toronto. You feel at home, because you are no more different than others. You get to experience how well humans can work together across races, religions and languages. It is so much fun to meet foreign people and hear stories about their backgrounds. In my closest group of friends we were one Turkish, a Brite, a Vietnamese, a Russian, one from Antigua (A island in the Caribbean), a Eskimo from the artice circle, two Canadians and two Danes.



Waterfront ice skating rink during December

Practical Experience

Right from the get go KEA helped me a lot. With contacting the school, choosing courses and the necessary paperwork. The receiving school helped me further with choosing courses, what housing options I had, practical information about school start and the semester abroad.

I had no issues settling down, since I had beforehand found a place to live at. A student residence called *Parkside*. It was a expensive place, but it included a all you can eat meal plan and a gym to use, which was very nice to have. Another good thing about living at a student residence, is that you have many other students around you to befriend. This living settlement was a big expense, but I think I ended up eating healthier and cheaper by having the meal plan. Other expenses was the metro, tourist attractions, shopping or what other fun you might have. I ended up paying more than expected for accommodation, but other than that less than expected.

Conclusion

Studying abroad was great! I had many unforgettable moments and I've gotten many new friendships. I evolved as a person and I broadened my perspective. Toronto was a good place to be, a little warmer than expected, but I guess that is a positive. The Canadians were very friendly! During my entire stay there was no one, who turned me down, when I asked for directions on the street. The Canadians are also very open minded, which can be seen in their thriving multicultural communities, but they are also very open minded when it comes to sexuality. Toronto has a very big and vibrant gay community, which ironically lays it's home on *Church Street*. Furthermore this open mindedness can be seen in their relationship to cannabis, even though it is technically still illegal, it can be smelled everywhere throughout the city. Toronto is a safe city, during my stay I did not experience any uncomfortable situations, only a few beggars with some unusual ways to ask for money. I was happy to have Toronto as my home for four months.

I hope you got even more motivated to study abroad by reading this, because it is truly a great adventure and learning experience.