

Exchange Report - WINTER 2018 GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

1. Where and when did you study abroad?

I was studying in Toronto, Canada at the George Brown College during the winter 2018 semester which started on the 29th of January 2018 and ended on 27th of April 2018.

2. What KEA program did you attend at the time?

I am enrolled in an AP degree in Computer Science. During my semester exchange I was in the fourth semester at KEA and at the receiving school I was enrolled in the T127 program, Computer Data Analyst.

3. What classes did you take during the semester abroad? Please briefly explain what each class was about.

At the George Brown College I had a total of 5 subjects that I was taking. There was Linux Scripting, Advanced SQL Databases, ASP.NET, Javascript and Python.

Linux Scripting was an introductory course to the whole Linux architecture. It was a really informative course and we basically went from knowing close to nothing about linux to being able to do partitions in Linux, create scripts and search the file system efficiently.

Advanced SQL Databases was all about the Oracle Database Management System. We basically learned to write queries, do searches, create and delete databases and write complex sets of instructions so as to get relevant results from specific databases.

ASP.NET was a crash course into how to develop web applications fast and efficient. While the technology was a bit dated, it was nonetheless relevant to write small websites from scratch.

Javascript was an all purpose course because it also taught some concepts about how to program more efficiently, not only syntax about javascript. By the end of this course we were able to handle user actions through javascript and generate HTML elements with the help of it.

Python was an overview course that has introduced us to basically everything that you can do with it without using any frameworks. From simple syntax concepts to running databases and create GUI programs, this course was all about giving us a taste of what Python is and how versatile it is.

Academic Experience

1. How helpful was the receiving school in the process of choosing classes and settling in?

George Brown was really helpful in terms of choosing the right classes for me. They have not only broad descriptions of every class, but also provide some sort of teacher ranking system where you can actually see if the experience during the classes is suited for you. Also, there are a lot of orientation events and introductory events to make sure that you have a really good time there.

2. What classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?

If I am to choose which class I found the most rewarding it is most likely going to be Javascript. Maziar Masoudi is doing a really good job not only at teaching Javascript but also at teaching programming. His approach on some concepts really made me better understand programming and also the fact that he encourages writing down what you want to do first before doing it is actually really helpful. In terms of energy and commitment he is really good and he is one of the few teachers who really care about their job and whether the students understand or not what what is taught.

3. What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?

As much as I enjoyed Python as a language, in terms of classes i think those were the most boring. Not because the teacher doesn't know what he is doing, but rather his attitude. It is more of a monologue than a dialogue with the students. The questions that I had were either left unanswered or answered partially and it is really bad when a teacher becomes vindictive on his students because a formal complaint in regards to his midterm exam has been filed. I wouldn't say not to avoid this course.. But I think there are other better options.

4. What classes would you advice other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or not to choose?

Classes to choose: Javascript, ASP.NET and Linux

Classes to avoid: Python, SQL Databases and Structured Analysis and design

Cultural/Personal Experience

1. What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?

I wouldn't say that I encountered any. The only downfall was that because I was there for less than 6 months I couldn't work not open up a bank account. Other than that, everything was great.

- a. How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

As I mentioned, the receiving school proved to be really helpful with orientation events and really helpful counselors in all sorts of matters. From registration to health insurance and so

much more. Overall, I think they do a really good job at helping students integrate in the community.

2. What was the best cultural/personal experience during your studies abroad?

For me volunteering was the best thing in Toronto. There is an association which is oriented towards creating and announcing volunteer opportunities. Personally, I was in the "Toronto Black Film Festival" team which was really an eye opening event. People were really friendly and open and I have gotten so many new friends because of it.

3. What advice would you give other KEA students going to study abroad at the receiving school?

I think it is really important to plan ahead everything. From what courses you would like to take to where you are going to live and everything else. It is just as hard as in Copenhagen to find accomodation so starting early is always a good thing. Also, take advantage of what the school has to offer you but don't limit yourself to that. There are so many other things to do in Toronto.

Practical Experience

1. How was the application process?

The application process was pretty linear. Everything is organised and I didn't really have a lot of questions about it. It is best to start early with this as well and make sure that you have everything ready when you are travelling to Canada.

a. What did KEA help you with?

KEA helped me throughout the process of applying for this exchange. They were especially helpful with the questions that I had and even point me in the right direction in terms of what and who I need to contact for specific problems.

b. What help did you receive from your school abroad.

The receiving school helped me a lot with my medical insurance and other relevant documents. In my case they facilitated me a room and a supervisor for a Skype exam. I definitely recommend George Brown for KEA students. Whatever problem I had, they helped me solve quick and easy.

2. Did you have any practical difficulties settling down in at your destination?

Everything went really smooth. You literally cannot lose yourself in Toronto and everything is explained thoroughly.

a. How helpful was the receiving school in this process?

As I searched for accommodation myself they didn't really assist in any way. But I am sure that they can help if needed.

3. Where did you live?

I was living close to downtown core in an apartment. Try to find something either in downtown core or near a subway station to ease your life, though.

a. Was it difficult to find accommodation?

I think it is just as difficult as it is in Copenhagen. It is really easy if you are there to meet the landlords. But it took me one week to find accommodation.

b. Was it expensive?

When it comes to prices, I would say that Canada is maybe just a bit more expensive than Denmark. The closer you live to downtown, the more expensive it gets. I was paying about 5000 Danish crowns a month for a room in a 3 bedroom apartment.

4. What kind of expenses did you have in general?

Just as I had in Denmark. No other hidden expenses. Food, transportations and entertainment.

a. Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?

I didn't spend more than I was prepared to. It would be really good to prepare up to 10000 CAD for a 5-6 months stay in there. In those everything is included, from plane tickets to accommodation, food and other expenses. But of course it depends from person to person.