Exchange Report

For my exchange, I went to Université de Tours in France during the Fall 2019 semester. My major is French with the Concentration for Prospective Teachers and my minor is Social Justice in Education which are both part of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Before arriving in your host country, planning is very important to make effective decisions and to feel more prepared and at ease since you organized your exchange. With that, you have to figure out and organize what you need to bring for your exchange. During my exchange, I realized I brought too many clothes with me! I did not even wear a lot of my clothes. Since, you buy clothes, souvenirs and more in France, your luggage will get fuller, so you can imagine that my suitcases were so full. In addition, I brought sheets, a pillow and towels with me and did not have to walk an hour to IKEA to get everything. Regarding travel and transportation, just hope there is not a strike happening while you are there. Although it is highly impossible not to have strikes in France, you can at least hope. In case of strikes, I would bring extra money just in case. Sometimes SNCF will not give you your money back or they will give fifty percent at least. Besides the inconveniences, trains are a pretty efficient and quicker way of travelling around France. I also think Flixbus is pretty good. Even though it takes longer, it does not cost as much as a train and you do not have to get off to make stops like trains. Plus, in case of a strike, buses will be the best option to go places. Transportation around Tours is pretty good. There is the Tram and the buses you can take around the city and a ticket costs 1.60 euros for each ride.

Living in France is not as expensive as Vancouver. There are some things that are a bit expensive such as food. An example of this would be a small restaurant called Bagelstein. Their bagels are amazing and I recommend everyone to try it. There are so many options including options for vegetarians and vegans. However, the cheapest bagel is 5.60 euros which converts to
about 7-8$ Canadian. Yes! That is a lot for a bagel but it is worth it. I would say that is one of the things I miss most about Tours, besides the pastries, baguettes, cheese, baguettes and my new friends.
When you arrive in Tours, make sure you open a bank account as soon as possible. It takes a while for banks to give students the actual debit card, so make sure you open one once you get there. There are many banks in Tours such as Société Générale, Crédit Agricole and BNP. I chose Crédit Agricole because it was the most practical bank in my opinion. Société Générale lets you open an account, but it has to be for a minimum of a year, so if you are only there for four months, the bank will still charge you until you complete the year. My friend opened an account at BNP and she got her card a month later. Moreover, you can also get a credit card in France if you want and it is accessible to take money out since there are banks all over.

Before coming to Tours, I had to book an appointment to get my studio at Tanneurs and another appointment to finish enrolling at the Université de Tours. Before leaving for France, Crous which is the company of the residences asks for a couple of documents. Make sure you send them ten days before you leave and to bring physical copies with you just in case. Bringing physical copies are important because your email to Crous might not go through for some reason. If they do not receive your email, then the people that work at your residence will not give you your keys to your apartment. Furthermore, if most of your classes are at the Tanneurs campus, then the Tanneurs residence is perfect because it is a two minute walk to the campus. Moreover, I stayed at the Tanneurs residence; in a studio. The studio costs 385 euros per month and it has a stove top, a sink, a decent sized fridge. A room with no kitchen is around 270 euros. Even though the studio is a bit more money, I think it is worth it because you do not have to go out of your room whenever you want to eat something. Trust me you will not want to leave at times.

Moreover, school was pretty similar to SFU regarding the lecture formats and schedules. However, what surprised me is that many teachers do not give syllabus for their classes. Some
teachers tell their students in class or some might not even tell their students when their assignments or exams are due until a month later. Nevertheless, there are no booklets given with course’s schedule throughout the semester. On the other hand, I understood what I was learning and I thought most teachers explained concepts pretty well.

Tours is a beautiful city! It is smaller than Paris but there are many things to see. The culture is different than Canada, but you get used to it and people are pretty nice to you too. Everything is at a much slower pace than Canada, they like to spend time with their families and take their time with everything which can be annoying at times if you need official documents as soon as possible. All in all, Tours has many beautiful sceneries and the food is amazing.
During my semester abroad, I learned a lot about myself and I grew as a person. It is one of the best experiences someone can have and I totally recommend going abroad. I learned how different two cultures can be and I was left amazed by the beauty of Tours. Furthermore, there is nothing I wish I knew before I left. My friends who went in 2017 gave me a lot of advice, I felt prepared when I go to Tours. All in all, there are so many memories I have now and I will be forever thankful for having the experience of going to France.