BI NORWEGIAN BUSINESS SCHOOL
Introduction:

I attended BI Norwegian Business School in Oslo, Norway for the Fall 2018 semester from August – December. If you have chosen BI as your exchange destination, I am extremely happy for you as this opportunity will be life changing. If you are deciding about what country to choose, BI is a great university and Oslo is an exciting city that has a lot to offer. I hope this exchange report helps you in the future!

Preparation for exchange:

Once I received my application letter, I was ready to catch the next flight out to Oslo. However, there is a lot of preparation that needs to happen before your exchange which can be quite tedious, but worth it. I took 4 business courses on exchange, and researched the courses depending on what I need to complete my degree at SFU. BI sends out a lot of emails regarding courses and it was all a very straight forward and easy process. I was able to get all of the classes I chose which was great. I packed 2 big luggage’s and fit almost everything I would possibly need in those suitcases. You must get a visa as you will be in Norway for more than 90 days, so I would recommend you start that process once you get accepted. The process wasn’t too long but did cost approximately $400 and you’ll have an interview with the embassy in Downtown Vancouver. Once you arrive in Oslo, BI will set up an appointment with the embassy where you will have a small interview with an officer and then get your Norwegian ID. Make sure you bring all your documents from home to Oslo, so you have them handy for this appointment. Oslo is a very credit card-based society, so I don’t recommend bringing a lot of cash. The cost of living is quite higher compared to Vancouver. This wasn’t a surprise for me as I did my research, but I had cut down the amount of times I had eaten out in Oslo in comparison to Vancouver to help save costs.

During Exchange:

Arrival – I arrived a few days before the orientation week which was good as it helped me beat the jet lag and get settled in. The orientation was very well run by the BI office and they host a Faderullan week (frosh week) which consists of concerts, BBQs, boat cruises, hang out events, etc. to help you meet new students. This was very helpful and a great way to start off the semester.
Accommodation – I lived in Bjolsen Student Housing with SIO. I highly recommend this student housing as I met my closest friends in my dorm. I had my own room and washroom and shared a kitchen with 5 other exchange students. We all got along very well and had no issues. Bjolsen is a 10-minute walk from BI (down a pretty river) or a 5-minute bus ride which was very convenient. There also is a grocery store located in the complex (Meny & Kiwi) and some other miscellaneous stores. The accommodation doesn’t provide any bedding or pillows. I heard a lot of horror stories of people sleeping with nothing the first night, so I recommend you to bring something to use the first night as going to IKEA right away might not work if you are arriving in the evening. Also, our kitchen was not fully equipped so I spent around $50 getting dishes from IKEA. Originally our entire flat was sharing the dishes but someone was not washing them properly therefore I decided to keep the dishes in my room and take them out when I cooked. This wasn’t a hassle as I had only 2 plates, 1 bowl, 2 cups, some cutlery and a pot, but it did save me a lot of time from rewashing the dishes before I used them when I was sharing. There is a bus (37) that runs all night, so it makes it easier when coming home from going out in the city. Another good option is BSN. This is the housing that BI offers and you have your own room and share the kitchen and bathroom with 1 other student. Although you are sharing with only 1 other student, the kitchen and living space is quite small. BSN is located about a 5-minute walk from BI. Most of my friends lived in Bjolsen and BSN. There are other options with SIO that are cheaper, but I recommend Bjolsen as you pay for what you get. If you want to stay in BSN, you need to apply right away when you get the email because it does get sold out fast. Many people who do not get BSN then have to choose from SIO. When I applied to SIO I put in my housing requests right away to ensure that I would stay at Bjolsen. Other housing with SIO are farther away from school and buildings are older, they are cheaper, but I preferred to pay more to live at Bjolsen.

Academic Details – Most of my courses were 100% final. ¾ courses were quite easy and required a lot less work that SFU courses. I found going to lectures helpful although the profs can get very confused and not teach things as clearly. All courses were 3 hours long and you get a 15-minute break every 45 minutes which really helps the long lecture go by fast. My friends and I planned our courses on Tuesday – Thursday which was good for travelling on the weekends. I also didn’t choose any morning classes and I got all the courses I wanted, so just do your research of what courses worked best for you. The courses I took were: Project
Management, Organization & Change, Corporate Finance and International Finance. However, I don’t recommend Corporate Finance.

**Packing** – I packed all my bedding by using vacuum seal-able bags that you can get from dollar store. This saved me a lot of time from going to IKEA and having bedding right when I arrived. In terms of clothing, some key things to bring: a winter jacket, snow / hiking boots, thermal wear, gloves, and a hat. The weather wasn’t too cold when I was there, but it’s always good to layer and have a lot of sweaters and hoodies to keep you warm. If you are going in the spring semester, I do recommend a lot of warmer clothes and good snow boots.

**Travel & Transportation** – you can get a 30-day bus pass from the 7-11 or Narvesen and you must tap once to activate it, but you don’t tap every single time you use the bus or metro. It’s important to always keep your Ruter card and Student ID with you when on the metro. They constantly have checks on the bus and you must prove you are a student by showing the student ID. If you don’t have the student ID or Ruter card, you could get fined around $150. Getting to Oslo, there is a fast train called the Flytoget which takes 20 minutes to get to the city center from the airport. Then to get to your accommodation, you can take the bus or metro depending on where you are staying. If you are staying at the SIO accommodations, you’ll have to go to Blindern (metro station) to go to University of Oslo to pick up your keys. If you are arriving late at night they can put the keys in a box for you but for my friends, picking up the keys was very difficult as instructions were not that clear. A taxi from the airport to your accommodation is $150 flat rate, I arrived late in the night and was with my mum, so we decided to take a taxi, however a lot of people chose the transit option. I recommend connecting with others on the Facebook group to see if you arrive at the same time and can travel together.

**Phone Plan** – I got a Norwegian Sim Card from Narvesen with MyCall. The sim card worked great as you could top up whatever amount of data or minutes you wanted every month. Also, the sim card worked everywhere in Europe to where I travelled too. I recommend going to the Narvesen in Storo Centre (mall) near BI and bring your passport with you. I would spend around $20-$30 each month on the phone plan. You can also go to the MyCall store in the city center to get your sim card sorted out. Although people say that there is WIFI everywhere you go, that isn’t always the case and especially when you travel, you want to have some kind of internet connection to figure out where you are going.
**Faderullan / Frosh Week** – The first week is a frosh week for exchange students and first year BBA students. They only have this during the Fall semester and it’s a great way to meet new people as there are a variety of events. The events ranged from BBQs, boat cruises, music festivals, coffee nights and a lot more. Some of the events are free but some you have to pay around $50 for them. I really enjoyed going to these events and would recommend them. However, just be careful about how much you spend because I initially didn’t have this cost included in my budget.

**Places to visit** – Oslo is a beautiful city with a lot of different areas to visit. Some of my greatest moments was exploring the city with my friends. I do emphasize how important it is to explore the city as I knew a lot of people who didn’t leave the school area. I recommend: Opera house, harbor, gronland, akkerbryge, kolsastoppen hike, and the city center. Oslo had a lot of different events going on as well so be sure to check out the website Visit Oslo & visit Norway. I was able to go to a variety of food festivals, music festival, and just random events. During my exchange I travelled a lit bit around Norway which was absolutely amazing, but very expensive. In Norway I went to: Tromso, Flam, Lardael, and Bergen. Although Norway is quite north of Europe, there is still a lot of chances to go to other European cities. I went to: Copenhagen, Stockholm, Manchester, Amsterdam, Prague, and Brussels. My goal was to see the northern part of Europe and go to the countries I have never been too, therefore I didn’t bother with France, Italy, etc. since I have already been. I travelled with my roommates who happened to be my closest friends and always travelled by plane. You can take busses or ferries to some of the Scandinavian countries, but I preferred a 1-hour plane than 9-hour bus ride.

**BI-nner** – BI hosts a monthly dinner for exchange students every month. I attended 4 / 5 events. They’ll tell you about this in the orientation but follow the chaplain account on Facebook and sign up every month. Even if you sign up a few days late, you could still get a ticket since a lot of people don’t pick up their tickets. It’s a nicely run event and a free night you don’t have to cook or clean at home. You can also help cook or decorate at the event which some of my friends did and enjoyed.

**Reflection After Exchange**

The five months spent in Norway were the best five months of my life. It is crazy how in a blink of an eye it’s all over and just a memory. I would recommend you live in the moment as the
experience goes by extremely fast. Also, sometimes you are tired and want to stay in your room, but your time is limited so take advantage of every event or hang out opportunity to go too. You are faced with a lot of challenges while you’re on exchange and living far away from your family, but overall just know that you can get through it and it is just a phase. Arriving back in Vancouver was hard as I really missed Oslo and my family there but staying in contact with all of your friends will help and make sure to document your experience there with pictures and videos, so you have memories to look back on! Overall, I loved every moment of my exchange in Oslo and I am very excited for your journey to one of the best countries in the world! Have a great experience 😊😊

Oslo Opera House
Barcode District

BI Norwegian Business School
Kolsastoppen Hike