Exchange Report

I am an exchange student at National University of Singapore in Spring, 2016. My major is Media and Communication in SFU. The reason I choose NUS is that the reputation is the best in Asia and there are many interesting communication modules provided. Before you go on exchange, you need to make a long list to prepare for this long journey. Singapore has a tropical rainforest climate, the weather is high in humidity and hot all year, which is completely different than Vancouver’s weather. It’s not necessary to bring too many long sleeve clothes or long jeans, I will defiantly recommend you to bring 3 to 4 comfortable t-shirts, short pants, skirts, and sandal, etc. Besides, air-conditioners are everywhere inside the mall and campus that I would suggest bringing a light outwear for preparation. Singapore is a cash and credit card based society. In my personal view, cash is more prevalent to use when you go out to eat or shopping. The cost of living between Vancouver and Singapore is similar as they are both are high-consumer and high-quality cities. Therefore, many products’ prices are really similar and the exchange rate is also the same.

In order to realize the campus and resident, I would come earlier before the orientation to have more time to explore the new place. Orientation is important for exchange students to meet some new friends, realize the activities’ schedule, how to apply for the student pass and many significant matters to notice. We also will get a list form to direct us what we should do in the future months. I live in Prince Gorger Park’s Resident (PGPR), there are two canteens under the residents, a small market, gym rooms and the most important thing is close to bus stations and MRT. There’re different types of rooms in PGPR: type-A, type-B, and type-C; type-A is a suite with air-conditioners, bathroom and sink. Type-B and type-C do not have air-conditioners and all of the student have to shower in the public bathrooms. Each floor has a kitchen for student cooking and a fridge to store the food. Maybe you cannot sleep well without air-conditioner within a two week but you will gradually adapt to this new life.
The lecture and tutorial format is similar to SFU, the lecture is two hours per week and one-hour tutorial. Students can check the course syllabus on IVLE and the professor would post the readings and lecture notes here. Compared to local students, exchange students usually take 3 to 4 modules in a semester that is easier to balance the homework and outside activity. Singapore is a multi-cultural country; most of the Singaporeans basically enable to speak English and Mandarin (or Malay). NUS will organize a city tour for exchange students to explore the new places or realize the local culture in Singapore. The transportation is convenient; I can take MRT, bus and taxi to everywhere. During the exchange, I enjoy wandering alone at night; there are few places I want to recommend to the future exchangers. The first one is the one-Fullerton and the Marine Bay Sand where you can see the beautiful night view with breeze or go sightseeing around these places on the sea. Garden by the bay is my most favorite place to visit again and again, and people will have different feelings at day and night. If people want to hang out or drink with friends at night, Clarke Quay maybe the best option for you. You can many types of restaurants and pubs along with the street, people also can go to shopping in the mall or play G-max with your friends. Besides, people can go to shopping on Orchard road, get a night safari at Singapore zoo, etc. On the recess week, I traveled to Vietnam and Kuala Lumpur with my friend, it was an unforgettable experience to expand my horizon. Sometimes, you have to learn to arrange your time and make a specific schedule, therefore, it is less to make a conflict with your exam or lecture. If you want to ask some friends travel together, you can go to NUS exchange Facebook to seek ones who are interesting to be your travel mates, I think this is a good approach to get more fun in your exchange life.

After the exchange, I am appreciated that SFU can give me this opportunity to study abroad. When I first time to NUS, I feel excited to meet new student and professors meanwhile I have to learn how to fit into the new campus life. The biggest challenge is still language issue. In fact, Singapore English is called “Singlish”, the
pronunciation is a little bit different than normal English. The Singaporean’s speaking is very fast, and many vocabularies they used are dissimilar in Canada. It took me about two to three weeks to adapt it. When you cannot listen clearly, you do not need to feel embarrassed to ask or tell them to slow down the speaking speed (if English is not your mother language) they are willing to adapt your requirements. Also, NUS students are hard-working in their studies and they are serious about their presentation or project, most of projects and presentations require group work and you have to participate in your team. Because many NUS students consider that exchange students will go to travel or play with friends, it makes some bad impressions to the local students. Therefore, you have to finish your group assignment when you want to go outside and go to the group meeting to discuss with your teammates. This is my advice for the future exchange students. As we know, Singapore law is really strict so that something you need to notice. For example, people cannot eat gum in Singapore and there is no place to sell gum here. People cannot drink alcohol in the public place except the restaurant and all the shops would stop selling any alcohol drink from 10pm to 7am. When we are going to a country, we have to respect the local custom and obey the rules.