Exchange report

Introduction

I was on exchange in Nanyang Technological University which is located in Singapore for Spring 2017 term.

Preparation for Exchange

Plan before You Leave

Before my departure, there were few things I have prepared. First of all, I did a lot of research about courses. I have a study plan for my graduation so that it would be clear and convenient for me to look for equivalent courses that I wanted to take during exchange. Being patient and optimistic while you are waiting for approved courses before your departure. If you need any help, NTU staff (contact information is provided on Exchange Portal) and international advisors are always approachable. Secondly, I prepared an international medical insurance which can refund me if I see a doctor oversea. The last but not least, I prepared a backup plan in the case of emergency such as family or medical issues which would cause you abandon the original plan.

Travel and Transportation
The transit system in Singapore (MRT) is similar to the skytrain in Vancouver. It is really convenient. You need to purchase EZ-Link card and top up money before taking MRT or buses in Singapore. It takes approximately one and half hours from Changi Airport to NTU (green line). I took Uber from airport to NTU as it is cheaper than the traditional taxi and saved me a lot of time. You can purchase EZ-Link card and prepaid phone card in the airport or 7-eleven.

Financial Details
Cash and credit cards are accepted in Singapore. I used cash for the most of time when I was in Singapore. If you prefer to eat in restaurants there, both payment methods are accepted. However, if you want to eat in hawker centers, cash payment is more preferable and it is cheaper.

During Exchange
Country information
Singapore is a tropical country where the average temperature is around 30 Celsius degrees for the whole year. I could not live there without air condition because it was hard for me to adapt hot and humid weather in the beginning. Singapore also is a diverse country where consists of different ethnics, so I had many opportunities to learn from other cultures and strengthen my diversity skills when I was living there. In addition, I tried food from different countries that I never had before.
Arrival and orientation

I checked in my room when I arrived at my hall. The staff in the Hall office are really nice. They patiently told me some rules of living in the Hall, taught me how to use the air condition in the room, and showed me where the canteen is. If you have any questions, they are always willing to help you out.

Before my classes started, I walked around the campus and looked for my classrooms. There are two districts in NTU which are North Spine and South Spine. Most of my classes were in South Spine so I had to walk around 20 minutes to my classrooms from my hall everyday. One way that helped me become familiar with the campus is taking school buses which are free. I usually took blue or red line as they just move around the campus. I used a mobile app called NTU bus that shows me which stop it is and where the bus is. It is really useful when I lived on campus.

On the second day, I attended the orientation and understood lots of useful
information such as medical insurance, course registration, public safety and school activities. It was such a good opportunity to know more about NTU and Singapore. You would meet a lot of new friends during the orientation as well.

**Accommodation and living**

I lived in the hall and it cost me around 300 SG dollars per month. Accommodation fees are cheaper compared to those of living in Vancouver. I recommend to bring an Ethernet connector or Wifi router in order to connect internet if you live on campus as the school does not provide neither. You can ask an internet cable from the Hall office and you have to return it when you leave. Mosquito spray is also necessary to me as I used to get many mosquito bites when I was in Singapore.

Singaporeans are nice and open to make new friends. I got a lot of help from my local friends. When I just arrived in Singapore, I got many life tips from them. I barely knew about the campus and local students were willing to show me where my classroom is. They also gave me some recommendations about food and where to get them. If I had any
questions, my teammates were willing to help me.

**Academic details**

The academic system at NTU is similar to that of SFU. All courses are bell curved. It is intense and local student study so hard, therefore, it is sort of competitive. Students will be given course syllabus and assessments before the first week on NTULearn which is equivalent to SFU Canvas. In the first class, Professors usually introduce course contents, assessments, and exams in order to give students a general overview as well as help students have a better understanding about the course.

**Reflection After Exchange**

I learned a lot through this journey in the past four months. As I mentioned, Singapore is a country that consists of difference ethnics. Studying in Singapore helps me improve a cosmopolitan perspective to look at things in order to avoid misunderstandings between multiple cultures. Working with local students helps me improve teamwork skills for group work in a culturally diverse environment.

In addition, one of the reason why I wanted to go on exchange is that I wanted to improve my skills to deal with uncertainties out of my comfort zone. I did a lot of
research and preparations before my flight to Singapore. Hence, I always have a plan for uncertainties. I realized that being prepared cannot only help you understand something well but also improve your confidence in dealing with uncertainties in a foreign country as you would know what you should do for the next step.