Going on exchange in Lund University is one of the things in life that I will never regret. Lund University located in southern Sweden, a university town that is 40 minutes away from Copenhagen airport by train. I am major in Communication in SFU, 4th year student, there are lots of processes to go through for the exchange, as you know, but they are worth it. I started my exchange term from August, 2015.

Being nominated and having attended all those pre-departure workshops were getting me excited and starting to think about new life in a new culture. I went through all this excitement and I believe everyone of you will do too. I went on the SFU exchange office website and various website to look up all those blogs and reviews from returning students. There are all those different universities in the database and I looked up most of them that interested me. When planning, I think you need to ask yourself that what do you want to get from the exchange? An exotic culture that you always want to explore, a well-known academic atmosphere with a high school ranking, or even, for me, a university with a long history, a chance to embrace cultural diversity. Personally, I consider it as an important factor to experience a university with good student life and a chance to see European culture. When considering where to go, it is important that you first get to know a bit of culture of the country that you are interested in and the potential challenges that you might be facing, such as language outside of class, the extreme climate and so on. Again, the most important thing is that you know what you want as your outcome of exchange, so that when you come back from it, you don’t regret your choice.

Okay, starting from what you prepare for departure, you also need to do some research, if you haven’t been out of your family and comfort zone. Packing whatever you need for the season, and whatever you would like to bring to make your new room feel like home, for example, a toy, a national flag and other things that you think that you need during the time of stay. For example, Lund is a small town with lots of windy days; knowing from returning students, I know that it would be important to bring some windproof and waterproof clothing and maybe a bike light. You could start your research on FB by adding to a local group, they might be glad to share some advices for your new journey. If you are a traveler, don’t forget to bring your backpack and travelling gadgets. You can also buy them locally when they are needed, no big problems. Transportation for Lund University is not a big problem, as it is very convenient to travel around by train within Sweden or simply take a quick train to one of the biggest airport, CPH, and start your European journey easily. Oh financially, in Europe, most of the places international visa or MasterCard are accepted, but exchanging some local currencies handy can be helpful and sometimes saving your life. In Scandinavia the cost for food is more expensive than Vancouver and rest of Europe.

Lund University has an arrival day where new international students are coming on a same day, when mentors will pick you up and help you with all different services and registrations for accommodations. Although you might be tired of the jetlag, what you have to do is follow what other people do, and when you have questions, just ask. There will be a student coordinator that you would get to know and contact when you have problem regarding to switching courses and other information. When I first arrived, it is just a beautiful summer in Sweden, with tons of events and activities going on. During the arrival day, the queue for upcoming events can be huge, but please join some of them, because the first week is important for you to expand your friend circle because at the time everyone is stranger now
and everyone is on the same boat and excited to start the new journey. It might take a week or longer to get more familiar with the new environment as well as your new foreign friends, but after joining lots of new student activities, you will find yourself fit in. Don’t forget to participate activities when you have lots of spare time, because the four month will be gone so quick. For myself, I luckily became the media manager in ESN Lund, and I managed to know lots of exchange students during the exchange, while getting precious volunteering experience. I had lots of trips and events held by ESN Lund and I also traveled a lot by myself, with friends. I like adventures and I feel that exchange lets my dream come true. But still, I feel that all the good moods come from your feeling of belongingness, which is based on the connections, the net, you build in the new environment. There are lots of European student there and they are curious about your culture and stories. The class load is much lighter than SFU and it has the block system that makes you have more time to spend to study by yourself. The grading schema is similar to north American’s, and discussion in class is encouraged.

After having all those memories behind, I feel proud that I did lots of things that many of my fellow friends in SFU have missed. Having travelling to almost 10 European countries, now I can tell people that I have a much better understanding of cultural differences within the continent. The challenges can be, like I said, making connections, your new friends. The first day I arrived at the train station, I tried to talk to someone but ended up with a short conversation without exchange names. But don’t give up. I met my best friend when I got off the train, just because our accommodation is next to each other. Later we cooked together and went to gym together and got to know each others’ friends.

I always wish that I stay there longer, but I already feel blessed for having the chance to go abroad for one term. Making a 0 to 1 is a big step and I tell you what, it is more that great. Get ready to embrace the new culture, attending events and talk to people. As myself, I am not Canadian and my first language is not English, but I don’t feel shy to talk to others, because I know that we are all like new born babies in the new environment, they don’t know that I am a shy Asian guy before, and it is time to start being a new “me”. There is always a chance to meet new people and don’t always stay with people from your own culture because you do exchange for a reason. Do try local things, for example, in Sweden, kottbullar, the authentic Swedish meatballs, and lots of lots more local things that you probably never hear outside of the country. Other than that, if you are interested, start learning a new language, from your friends, that allows you to better understand in each others’ culture, or at least knowing how to say hello in different languages.

Life is good, and exchange is an absolutely the smart choice you make. Make the best of it and don’t regret anything after all.

I have lots of great pictures as well as videos to keep my memory alive and I would like to share some of them with you. I hope that my quick reflection is helpful and understandable. All the best to your exchange. 

LIFE IS GREAT.
I kept my best memory alive, in my way. All the wishes from my friends, I took them home.
Halloween party by ESN LUND
The closest big city, Copenhagen, the Danish capital
Lund as one of the oldest town in Scandinavia
me, as a traveler, and my mate, the backpack
Trolltunga in Norway, conquering the fear and spending time to enjoy the nature
Lapland in Northern Finland, a shared moment