Exchange Report, Lund University, Sweden

Spring 2016, I had a grateful opportunity participating in SFU Study Abroad Program at Lund University, Sweden. This experience has given me strengths I needed to be a successful individual. I am able to increase initiative adaptability to use in a working world. My semester at Lund University started in January 2016 until late May 2016.

Preparation for exchange
Before deciding on which university to attend, it is highly recommended that student do researches on courses being provided by the host university. I am lucky that Lund University were offering courses in marketing and entrepreneurship that would count towards my degree. However, I would really encourage everyone to take elective courses on exchange since it’s a good way to learn about European cultures.

It is a must that students do not underestimate the coldness of Sweden. Every Canadian student came to Sweden with thought that it couldn’t be as cold as Canada. BUT in the first couple weeks of January, the weather can be very brutal. Make sure that you bring thick socks, scarves, winter coat and snow boots! Since the semester is 6 month long, it is important to pack clothes for every season: Winter to Summer. The weather can go as low as -10c and up to 25c in May.

After arriving at Copenhagen airport, students will find signs that lead to train platform. Please make sure that you get your passport and immigration documents (as needed) checked before boarding on the train. The train ride is about 30 minutes from Copenhagen to Lund Central Station. After getting off the train, there will be students and orientation leaders waiting for you at the station. Please make sure you don’t arrive before 9 am since they usually come around then.

Most stores in Lund accept credit cards, there are plenty of ATM you can withdrawn your money. However, opening a bank account in Sweden can be very tricky. They usually don’t allow exchange students to open one.

During Exchange
Lund is a student town. Yes, it is a TOWN! This town is named after the university so you can imagine how spread out the campus is. People live a slower paced life, there are not that many cars and people bike everywhere. Because Lund is very far south, most of the students live on campus. There are plenty of student accommodations and everywhere you go you will see people of your age. I would really recommend students to try getting in “Buy and Sale Lund” Facebook group. It is a page where students sale, buy and trade stuffs you need ie. Bikes, routers, kettle, etc. It is highly recommended that everyone buy a bicycle for the sake of convenience. There will be options from renting, buying a brand new one or buying off from people. I suggest that student do their research and find the best price available. For the first couple weeks, demand of the bikes will be very high thus they can be very expensive. DO NOT rent a bike if you don’t necessarily need it for the first week. Renting a bike is very expensive and you CAN’T resell it!

Students will be assigned to live in a dormitory. This is where you make friend with the Swedes and other international students. There are plenty of accommodations around the city. I know that Sparta, Delphi and Paljoung are the popular ones. Taking classes at Lund is
very flexible. It is usually a smaller lecture, around 20-30 students. The academic term is divided up into 2 quarters, each with 3 months. Students are required to take at least 2 courses per quarter, 4 in total. Most classes are lecture-based, there is no tutorial. The majority of the grades are from the final papers which can take up to 60-100% of the final grade.

For extra-curriculum, there is a student society called “Nation”. Nations are student organizations that run purely by students. If you can't imagine it, imagine, houses in Harry Potter. They do everything from serving brunches, lunches, and dinners, hosting weekly pub and club nights. International students are welcome to apply to be a member of any nation as it is a good way to socialize and getting to know the Swedes. You may even be able to work at the nations as a bartender, cashier or work in the kitchen in return for foods and candies! Lund has the best student life you can imagine. I had an opportunity to join Toastmaster Organization in Lund. It is a worldwide organization that helps people strengthen their public speaking skill and empower each other. I would suggest students check this organization out as they can connect with people who are working in Lund and go beyond student circle. The perk of studying aboard in Europe is that, people tend to travel all the time. Each week, you can plan a new weekend getaway. Travelling in Europe is very cheap, I even found some low-cost flights that were as cheap as $8 CAD. Throughout my exchange journey, I have opportunities to visit over 14 cities in 12 countries.

Reflection
Choosing to come to Lund University is the best decision I have made in my life. I have learned how to succeed beyond my comfort zone. I have proven my ability to adapt and achieve good academic result in a new circumstance. Now that I have this experience, I am more than confident that I have stepped out of my comfort level and ready to challenge myself in the next chapter of my life. The only one thing I wish I knew before exchange was the coldness of Sweden. I completely underestimate the weather there. I ended up buying a lot of new winter clothes in Lund and they are very pricey. I would like to end this exchange report with some tips for next exchange students.

- Do you research before coming to Lund, courses, weather, travels and etc.
- Do not buy bike later than the 3rd week of school.
- Join the Gardenhalle gym not Actic, it is double the price of the first one mentioned.
- Get jojo card! You will need it throughout your stay. Ps. One-way trip is around $4 VERY EXPENSIVE!
- Attend your mentor group’s events!! I got all my best friends from it otherwise you will end up with no one 😞
- The cheapest food is Kebab!
- Don’t recommend buying alcohol from Systembolaget (Liquor store) instead buy them at airport.
- Join the nation and work at least once at any nation!
- Swedes can be very reserved. Try your best to make friend with them 😊
- Be familiar with FIKA culture. (Fika is what you call coffee and coffee break). Make sure you are comfortable with fresh latte, black coffee and cinnamon buns.