Exchange Report

Hello everyone! I am a third year student majoring in Criminology at Simon Fraser University (SFU). During the Fall 2016 term, I went on exchange at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). I am writing the exchange report as I would like to share my experiences as well as some valuable information regarding my exchange in Hong Kong. In the following report, I am going to share information about the preparation for exchange, details during exchange, and reflection after exchange. I hope the exchange report would be helpful to students who are interested in studying at CUHK.

Hong Kong is a small city with approximately 7,000,000 people living in there. As you can imagine, it is a crowded and stuffy place. However, there are many advantages living in Hong Kong. First, Hong Kong is named as the “shopping and eating paradise”. It is very convenient to buy all the things you need in any places and find delicious food in everywhere. In my opinion, except for personal belongings and clothing, it is not necessary to bring too many necessities to go on exchange in CUHK. It is because there is a big shopping mall called the New Town Plaza where is just one MTR station away from CUHK. Students are able to buy all the necessities they need there with low prices.

Second, since Hong Kong is a small city, people can reach almost every place by taking MTR or bus. Don’t forget to apply for a Student Octopus card when you arrive to Hong Kong because it offers students 50% discount each time while taking MTR!

Third, the weather is Hong Kong is stable and warm during the fall season. Also, the winter in Hong Kong is not as cold as in Canada as there is no snow during the winter in there. Therefore, students do not have to bring too many winter clothes at that time.

In addition, Hong Kong people normally make payments by cash, debit card, and credit card. The food and commodities are at reasonable prices except for off-campus housing. Since Hong Kong has serious land issues, it would be incredibly expensive to rent a room in there. However, the fee of living in CUHK dormitory would be approximately 220 CAD per month and it is triple of the off-campus housing. Therefore, I strongly recommend exchange students to live on campus.

The orientation in CUHK is one week before the semester starts. When exchange students arrive to CUHK during the orientation period, they would be given a temporary place to live on campus. During the orientation, there are many social activities organized by the host institution. Incoming exchange students are highly encouraged to participate in them. Activities in CUHK include cultural workshops, dancing parties, round-campus run, the thousand people feast, and so on. They offer exchange students valuable opportunities to learn more about the CUHK as well as to make friends with other exchange and local students.

On the academic side, the teaching style in CUHK is very similar to the one in SFU. The lectures are mostly two-hour based. Each course typically consists of a
midterm exam, a final exam, a term paper, and a group project or presentation. Furthermore, most of the professors from CUHK have strong Cantonese accents in speaking English and sometimes it was a bit difficult for me to understand what they were saying. But in general, they are intelligent, care about students, and are able to make the lectures fun and engaging.

During leisure time or after school, I loved going out with my exchange friends to explore city of Hong Kong. Some recommended attractions in Hong Kong would be the Peak, Avenue of Stars, Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade, Temple Street Night Market, Ladies’ Market, Ocean Park, Hong Kong Disneyland, and so on. These places are worth to visit! Occasionally, the CUHK would also organize some one-day excursions to explore different places in Hong Kong in order to enhance exchange students’ interest and understanding of Hong Kong’s history and its development.

I had a great time with my local and international friends during my exchange. Before the semester started, I was noticed by email that I would be living in the Ming Hua hostel at Chung Chi College in CUHK. It is a dormitory where is around 100 students living in and almost 90% of them are locals. At the beginning, I was worried about whether I could get along with my roommate and the other students in the Ming Hua hostel. Fortunately, students from the Ming Hua hostel were very helpful and friendly. They were willing to speak English with me, answer my questions, and invite me to join the hostel activities together with them. Not only making friends with locals, I also knew some other exchange students in there. We all lived together like a big family. We cooked and had dinner together, played Chinese Mahjong, and different kinds of games at night times. At times, we chatted and laughed in the dormitory until the next morning. Living in the Ming Hua hostel is one of the happiest moments in my lifetime and I am very glad to have these people in my life.

Lastly, the exchange program at the Chinese University of Hong Kong provided me with the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone while being immersed in a new culture. Going on exchange helped me to deepen my understanding of different cultures, get along with people from a variety of backgrounds, develop a greater awareness of myself, learn to be more open-minded, enrich my life, and broaden my perspective on a wide variety societal issues outside of Canada. These are things we cannot merely learn from the textbooks. In the future, I wish I could go on another exchange in a different country.
The following are some photos taken during my exchange:

This photo was taken on Christmas Day. They are CUHK students from the Ming Hua hostel at the Chung Chi College. I had a great time living with them during my exchange in Hong Kong.

This place is called the “Pavilion of Harmony” where is one of the famous landmarks in the CUHK. The two girls standing beside me are my exchange friends from Taiwan.
This is the beautiful campus of CUHK! I loved reading books and drinking coffee in this place!

This is the Victoria Harbour where is situated between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. The night view of Hong Kong is stunning!