EXCHANGE PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT INFORMATION

Faculty: Political Science  
Major/Minor: Political Science
Host university: Sciences Po Strasbourg  
Host Country: France
Dates of your exchange: (month/year) September 2016 to (month/year) May 2017

TRAVEL

Approximately how much did air transportation cost? $1400
Approximately how much did any required ground transportation cost? $100

Do you have a recommended routing or airline? ☐ No ☐ Yes
If yes, please describe: Air Transat - Direct flight from Vancouver to Paris

VISAS

What is your citizenship? (voluntary; may impact following information) Canadian
Did you need a student visa/permit? ☐ No ☑ Yes: What was the cost? $100
If yes, what documentation was needed? Birth certificate, passport, proof of sufficient funds

Did you need a visitor visa/permit? ☑ Yes: What was the cost? 
If yes, what documentation was needed?
Where was your immigration documentation processed? Consulate General of France in Vancouver
How long did it take to procure your visa/permit? 3 weeks

Were any other documents required (residence permit, etc)? ☐ No ☑ Yes
If yes, please comment: A french address was required - not necessarily a permit

AIRPORT RECEPTION

Were you met at the airport by representatives of the host university? ☚ No ☑ Yes
Is there easy transportation between the airport and university? ☚ No ☑ Yes
Please comment: I flew into Paris. From there, you need to take the high speed train for 2 tours which will take you right into Strasbourg.

What is the closest airport to the host university? Strasbourg Airport

ORIENTATION

Is there an organized orientation session upon arrival at the host university? ☚ No ☑ Yes
Was there a cost for the orientation session? ☚ No ☑ Yes, how much? 
If yes, do you recommend that future students participate? ☚ No ☑ Yes
Please comment: Make sure you participate in the orientation! It’s where all the students meet for the first time and it’s crucial for making friends at the beginning. It’s harder to establish yourself in a group once friendships have already been made.
LANGUAGE PROGRAMS
Is there a language program available either before or during the term?  ☐ No  ☐ Yes
There was a 2 week French course at the beginning of September
If yes, how long is it?
Is there an additional cost for language training?  ☑ No  ☐ Yes: How much?
Please comment: It was a free course offered by Sciences Po. I would highly recommend going as it was a great way to make friends who were also adjusting to life in France.

ACCOMMODATION & LIVING
Is on-campus or university dormitory accommodation available?  ☐ No  ☐ Yes
If yes, are you living in a university dormitory?  ☐ No  ☐ Yes
If yes, can you make a recommendation for a specific dormitory?  ☐ No  ☐ Yes
If yes, please describe: Cité Universitaire Paul Appell
What is the average monthly cost of accommodation?  $350-400
Is there a meal plan?  ☑ No  ☐ Yes: How much is it?
If no, do you have access to adequate cooking facilities?  ☑ No  ☐ Yes
How far is your dormitory from the main campus?  2 minutes from main campus - 15 from Sciences Po

Please comment on internet and phone access in your dormitory:
Internet was perfectly fine in my building. No need for internet cables. However, I had friends in different buildings who needed to buy cables for their internet and had no access to wi-fi on their portable phones.

Did you have to make a deposit for your accommodation prior to arrival?  ☑ No  ☐ Yes
If yes, how did you arrange this? The amount had to be sent before arrival

Is off-campus housing easily available?  ☑ No  ☐ Yes

Please comment on off-campus housing:
It can be difficult to get if you are not European as you need a guarantee residing in France to vouch for you. There are ways around this, but I chose university accommodation simply for the convenience.

Approximately how much money per month is needed for living, including accommodation and meals?  $750

Any other comments on accommodation:
If you are looking to have a very social year abroad, I would recommend staying in the university residences. There are people around 24/7 and your friends are right next door. There were times I wished I had more space, but you hardly spend time in your room so in my opinion it doesn't make sense to spend more money on accommodation when you could use that money to travel.
FINANCIAL DETAILS
Have you opened a bank account in your host country?  ☐ No  ☑ Yes

What are the challenges/benefits to opening a local bank account?

It can be very daunting as French administration can be a bit of a pain. The advantage is being able to apply for CAF, which is a French social service that helps pay for your rent every month! It takes nearly 90 euros off your rent, depending on your financial situation. I would HIGHLY recommend taking the time to apply for it!

How would you recommend students bring money (Canadian/American cash, travelers’ cheques, local currency?)

I did not use cash much as I felt safer using my credit card. I did have money wire transferred to my French bank account and used that to take out money from ATM machines. Other than that, I used my credit card and dealt with the exchange rates.

What is/are the preferred method(s) of payment at most establishments?  ☐ Cash  ☐ Debit  ☑ Credit card

Please comment:

It’s the easiest way to pay and then you don’t have to worry about having cash on you.

ACADEMIC DETAILS
Was it possible for you to get all of the courses that you wanted?  ☐ No  ☑ Yes

Please describe the course registration procedure:

It can be a little annoying when you are used to the system at SFU. You basically shop for classes in the first two weeks of school and decide which ones you want to take. From there, you will register for the final exam. The dates of the exams will not be listed until the end of the semester.

What discipline(s)/program(s) are you taking at your host university?  Political Science

What is the language of instruction in your courses?  French

If not English, are English-taught courses available?  Yes - but only a limited number

Describe the manner and quality of instruction at your host university.

It is definitely a different system than the one in Canada. The professors will speak for 2 hours non-stop while all the students take notes frantically on their laptops. It is nearly impossible to keep up if you don’t use your computer to take notes. The quality of instruction is good - but the material is very complicated and dense. This can be very daunting as the material is usually something you’ve never seen before. You do not have a lot of work during the semester, but you’ll have 8 final exams at the end of the semester worth 100% of your grade so it’s in your best interest to keep up with the notes.

What do you feel is/will be the main academic benefit of your participation in this exchange program?

I have learned things about Europe that I simply would have never learned in Canada. Strasbourg is home to the European Parliament and the courses at Sciences Po are almost all relating to Europe’s complexities. Being in the centre of it all, you become invested in your studies and learn because you genuinely want to learn and not because you have to. I have never been so challenged academically, and in return I’ve become even more passionate about my field.

Submission Instructions:
1. Please complete and return this form by E-mail to studyabroad@sfu.ca as a PDF.
2. Subject line of email: Questionnaire - [Host Country, Host University]
3. Please include your full name and student number in the body of your E-mail.

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