Returning exchange report

Before I go

Before I go on and apply for my student visa, I didn’t have an idea of how to handle it since it is my first time doing so. I was told that I should return to my home country for the application; however, after I return to my home country, I was told by the embassy that I should apply for my student visa in Toronto. It was longer than I needed that I took to organize everything, but in fact, it is easy and straightforward. It is easier for those who does not require a student visa, which only need to register their address in the KVR after their arrival. For those who need a student visa, additional documents are required from the university. I recommend those who plan to apply their visa in their home country to check the list posted by the embassy and prepare it in advance. I did not have it prepared before I go, therefore I need to contact the university via email and have to mail the documents by post. It was costly and time consuming.

Packing differs between people. I recommend to bring a dawn jacket for the winter. Other commodity are low price and easy accessible, if not, it should be available on amazon with a reasonable price as well. Pack what is necessary and important.

A blocked account is mandatory for my nationality, therefore I have the minimum required for a half year stay in my bank account, which is approximately 4500 Euro. Other than that, I have 3500 Euro cash for paying fees, including registration fees and deposit for the student apartment, and for expenditures in the first few weeks before the activation of the blocked account. Other than that, I also have 3 credit cards for online purchases and emergency.

During my stay

I have applied for a LMU buddy with my application. Thankfully, she have picked me up in the airport; however we took the taxi instead of the train to the hotel due to the numbers of luggage I have. The train is in fact very convenience, it only takes 45 minus from the airport to the city center. I strongly recommend students to purchase the semester ticket after they receive their student ID, because public transportation in Munich is awesome and it can bring you to most of the places.

Before I received my student ID, I had to get a letter of prove of insurance and payid a student fee approximately 150 Euro. I got a private insurance and it was sufficient, therefore TK (a public insurance company) issued me a letter indicating that I did not need to have an insurance with them. However, I recommend students to purchase the public insurance with TK or with other company preferred. I was sick during my stay and I have to go to the doctor. I have to pay the full bill and claim the bill after I return to my country, however, I have been told that my illness is not covered by the insurance. The public insurance in Germany is cheaper than the private one, and the cost is only around 10 Euro in any cases that you have to see a doctor in a clinic.

Some of the faculties have different rules. For example, Economics does not require students to register for classes, but needs to register for the final exam. On the other hand, Political Science requires students to register for classes in advance. Orientation for exchange students is very helpful. It gives most of the information needed; including all the classes offered in English for the semester, how to attend classes from other faculties, and how to register for classes/exams etc. Different from SFU which we have midterms, projects, attendance, papers, and final exam combining to our final grades for most
of the courses. LMU mostly evaluates the final grade with a single final exam at the end of the term. For Economics department, only electives are tough in English and all of the mandatory courses are tough in German. The exam of the electives will most likely be on the last day of the class.

During my stay, I have learned that Germans love to party, at least I believe that by what I have experienced. I lived in the first floor of a student dormitory, and there was a bistro in the basement of the apartment. I could hear the music till 3 am in the morning 2 days per a week. Sometimes it was very annoying, but they would turn down the music if I went to the person in charge or to the bistro and asked politely. Our apartment often conducted parties. I was too shy to join them at the beginning. I went there once by accident, which it was super nice and I met a lots new friends that night.

Student housing should be the first choice. It is the cheapest and accessible. Grocery shopping can be expansive. For example, Edeka is more expansive than Aldi. Student should choose what best fit their need.

After exchange

I have learn how to manage my time for studying. I had 2 half semester courses. When I had the first final exam in the mid of the term, I realized that I should spent my time more averagely. At SFU, we usually have midterms and by that we are able to know how well we are doing with the course. It is not the case at LMU, which only one shot is given. I have learned how to manage my time for studying after that. It was challenging at first when I didn’t have an idea about their expectations. I got through it by making local friends and building study group for each course. At the end, we had at least 1 meeting for each course per a week to discuss problems and materials together.

Other tips for future students are never sign a contract before reading the full contract. I had a terrible experience with contracts (including telephone and fitness club) in Germany. I have told the company that I only need a telephone number for 5 months, but at the end, my friend told me that it was a 2 year contact that I have signed. And nobody had inform me about this. Although the contract was not valid if I lefted the country by law, but a formal letter of deregistration of address from the KVR was required for the cancellation. However, the earliest that I could obtain the letter is one week before I left the country, and the cancellation of contract required a minimum of 1 month notice. It is better to have a prepaid number in this case.
Left: Nymphenburg Palace in the city
Right: New Swan Stone Castle

Left: Christmas market in the city center of Munich
Right: Allianz Arena, Bayern vs Koln