EXCHANGE PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete and return this form to <studyabroad@sfu.ca>

STUDENT INFORMATION

Host university: National University of Singapore
Major/Minor: Business Administration
Dates of your exchange: (month/year) 01/2011 to (month/year) 05/2011

TRAVEL

Approximately how much did air transportation cost? Approx. USD 2,640 (including taxes) - Round trip
Approximately how much did any required ground transportation cost? Changi Airport to PGP Residence, SGD60
Do you have a recommended routing or airline? □ No □ Yes
If yes, please describe: Cathay Pacific or Singapore Airlines - Through Shanghai or Hong Kong (one-stop)

VISAS

What is your citizenship? (voluntary; may impact following information) Colombia
Did you need a student visa/permit? □ No □ Yes: What was the cost?
If yes, what documentation was needed? Letter of acceptance, passport, forms given during orientation, 2 photos
Did you need a visitor visa/permit? □ No □ Yes: What was the cost?
If yes, what documentation was needed?
Where was your immigration documentation processed? The university takes care of all the processing
How long did it take to procure your visa/permit? The study permit is issued upon arrival through the university
Were any other documents required (residence permit, etc)? □ No □ Yes
If yes, please comment:

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: There is an MRT station that leaves from Changi airport (it is like a Skytrain) and the closest station to the campus is Buona Vista. It is also very easy to catch a taxi.

What is the closest airport to the host university? Changi airport

ORIENTATION

Is there an organized orientation session upon arrival at the host university? □ No □ Yes
If yes, do you recommend that future students participate? □ No □ Yes
Please comment:

For business students there are two orientations.
1) At the general orientation, the university will receive all your paperwork to start working on your study permit. You will receive your student ID and other relevant guides. You will have the opportunity to meet other fellow exchangees.
2) At the business orientation, detailed information about business faculty policies will be delivered, as well as information related to courses, exams and other. The Biz club will greet you as well as faculty members.
LANGUAGE PROGRAMS
Is there a language program available either before or during the term? □ No □ Yes

If yes, how long is it?

Is there an additional cost for language training? □ No □ Yes: How much?

Please comment:

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: The university reserves the right to grant on-campus housing. I stayed at PGH. There is a new building.

What is the average monthly cost of accommodation? — On-campus: SGD350-500 - Off-campus: SGD700-1200

Is there a meal plan? □ No □ Yes: How much is it? Residences have canteens; average price: SGD3-7

If no, do you have access to adequate cooking facilities? □ No □ Yes

How far is your dormitory from the main campus? There are internal free shuttle buses that take you around campus

Please comment on internet and phone access in your dormitory:

You will need a LAN cable to connect to the Internet. The speed is quite good.

You can connect to an Internet line to your room but it will cost extra. It is cheaper to have a cell phone and just buy a SIM Card with SingTel or any of the other local carriers.

Did you have to make a deposit for your accommodation prior to arrival? □ No □ Yes

If yes, how did you arrange this? There is an online application for housing. If accepted, you reserve the room with SGD200

Is off-campus housing easily available? □ No □ Yes

Please comment on off-campus housing:

The university has the right to assign you the housing according to availability. Not all exchangers receive housing; that’s why it is recommended that you complete all the application paperwork as early as possible. You can always appeal if you are not given on-campus housing.

There are different resources offered by the university and the NUS Facebook group is also useful for off-campus housing opportunities. Living off-campus is quite expensive so the best thing to do is to connect other exchangers in the same situation and get a place together. Most people waited until they arrived in Singapore to find a good place to live off-campus.

Approximately how much money per month is needed for living, including accommodation and meals? CAD700

Any other comments on accommodation:
FINANCIAL DETAILS

Have you opened a bank account in your host country? Yes.
What are the challenges/benefits to opening a local bank account?

You can use Visa, MasterCard and they also have cash cards called NETS which you top up with money and then use it as a debit card. I did not find the need of having a bank account. The queues at the banks are long and when you are all the cash in buying food, they only take cash. If you decide to carry cash, just make sure you store it properly in your room.

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

There are many places where to exchange CAD for SGD. There are ATMs to withdraw money if you choose not to bring cash. I took enough cash to cover the first 2 months (SGD2000 - including money for trips and other events).

What is/are the preferred method(s) of payment at most establishments? Cash

Please comment: Places like canteens and small markets prefer cash only. Malls and ‘fancier’ places receive credit cards and debit cards too. Is always good to carry some cash in the wallet.

ACADEMIC DETAILS

Was it possible for you to get all of the courses that you wanted? Yes.

Please describe the course registration procedure:

During the application, you are given the chance of choosing the classes you would like to take. Business courses are very competitive during the selection process, they get filled really fast. Make sure you choose the ones you want the most first. I only got two out of the 4 business courses I selected. I had to appeal to the business faculty and speak with Miss Jessie Toh, the person that takes care of exchange students and their course registration. It is a good contact to have.

The policies for dropping courses is a little more complex than at SFU although detailed instructions about switching, adding and dropping courses are given during the business orientation.

What discipline(s)/program(s) are you taking at your host university? Business Administration and Information Systems

What is the language of instruction in your courses? English

If not English, are English-taught courses available? English is the main language

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

The system at NUS is similar to SFU. There are 2-hour lectures plus a 1-hour tutorial/lab. They also use the bell-curve for grading and students are very competitive, especially in number-intensive courses. Professors are very well prepared (my finance teacher came from Cornell) and they are very open and friendly if you approach them with questions. Some lectures are very big (350 students) while higher level ones can be quite small (30-50 students). Final exams can count between 45-70% of the final grade and they are 2-hours long. There are class projects, individual assignments, and quizzes.

All the information regarding courses is managed through a system called IVLE. Through IVLE you can upload assignments, download class notes and communicate with the professor and classmates.

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

NUS is a very competitive and renowned school not only in Asia but around the world. It’s business school is ranked among the top 30 in the world, not only for the quality of its education, faculty and facilities but also because it attracts some of the best students in South East Asia. Making the environment in the school a very dynamic, active and challenging place to be. People are very friendly, you will make a lot of friends from all over the place. Singapore is a hot spot for exchanges (over 600 just at NUS), the nightlife is amazing, travelling is cheap, food is amazing and the weather is just perfect. This is the place to have a great taste of Asia and try the academic environment at a top university with top students. I totally recommend this as a first choice!

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