Exchange Report

Introduction

The host university where I did my exchange in spring is Nanyang Technological University (NTU). It locates in west Singapore. I am in communication major and the faculty that I studied at NTU is called Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information.

Preparation for Exchange

[Information valuable] When planning the exchange, I think it is very important to visit the homepage of the host university and do some research about your major/ faculty. Knowing how to enroll courses and planning courses ahead will save lots of time in the future. Also, paying attention to the deadline of each process during the application. Preparing in advance is always important.

Besides following the guide of application given by study abroad office, it is better to visit the immigration website of the host country to have a general idea about the destination, such as laws, language and customs. For example, it is not allowed to eat and drink on the public transportation in Singapore, and violator will be charged heavily. Other information like tourism and eating can be found on Youtube or travelling handbooks.

[What to bring] Since Singapore is always in summer, and its climate is hot and humid, bringing some sunscreen is very necessary. Commodity like toothbrush, shampoo, towel, etc. are also recommended. It is also necessary to bring pillow, sheet and quilt, otherwise it would be hard to find a place to buy those stuffs when you just arrived.

[Travel and transportation] Public transportation in Singapore is very convenient and cheap. There is MRT, which is like Skytrain in Metro Vancouver, and people can go to
get an EZ-Link Card at MRT station for the payment of public transportation fares. Fare is based on the distance. Basically, it costs about 80 cents in 3 km. Once the money in the card is used up, you can top up at the MRT station. The card can also be used in many convenience stores.

[Financial details] I brought some local currency when going there but I did not open a bank account in Singapore, since I have to pay the deposit about $40 and I would not allowed to get the money back if I leave Singapore in 6 months. However, for those students who will stay in that country for more than half year, I think it is better to open an account. I also brought one credit card just in case I did not bring enough currency.

I brought SG$5,000 in total, and I used them to pay my accommodation fee (SG$1,250) and transportation fares, to buy meals, and sometimes shopping. I also planned a travel to Thailand, which cost me about SG$400 including flight tickets and hotel (3 nights). Food in Singapore is cheaper than in Vancouver, but it still depends on what you eat. Since I had class from Monday to Thursday, I usually ate at school canteens. Eating at canteens usually cost less than eating outside. The average price for one meal is about SG$4-5, and beverage is about SG$1.5. The cost of living is also lower compared to Vancouver, but it is because I lived at campus. The cost of living off campus in Singapore is similar with in Vancouver.

During Exchange

[Arrival and orientation] I arrived in Singapore by air in the early morning at 5:30 am. So I called a taxi to drive me to school. The school is far away from the airport, and it was like crossing the whole Singapore from East to West, and it took about 40 min. Then I registered at the Hall office and got my room key. I missed the orientation, but one of my friends told me it was useful for freshman, helping you have a general idea about the whole campus, like the location of each faculty, student service center, canteens, libraries, gyms, and operation of campus bus lines.
[Accommodation and living] The accommodation was randomly arranged before I arrived, and I was arranged at Hall 9, which I think it was not bad, at least there was an air conditioner in the room. It was a twin bedroom at 3rd floor, so I got one roommate. Each of us has individual closet and desk. There are also a simple kitchen (only one oven) and one bathroom at each floor. Laundry rooms locate at 4th and 5th floors, and it costs $1 for each washing. Most halls at campus have their own canteens, so I feel living is convenient.

[Academic details] The lecture format at NTU is similar with SFU, and there are lectures and tutorials, but there is no TA, so the instructor will do both lecture and tutorial, and they each last 2 hours. At NTU, there are lots of instructors are industry professionals. For example, one of my courses is Public Relations Writing, and the teacher once worked as a PR person at Yahoo Asia. I could feel she was trying to teach us something that would happen in real situations. All four courses that I took were very practical, and they focus on workshop and application. Similar with SFU, grades are divided into several parts, like attendance, participation, projects, presentations and final exams.

[Country information] Singapore is a multicultural country, and Chinese are the majority. There are also Indian, Malay, Korean, and etc. Most people can speak both English and Mandarin. It is hot and humid in Singapore, and it usually rains in the afternoon. The rain is very heavy but it stops very quickly. Singapore is a very good place for travelling. Famous tourism spots are Santosa, Merlion Park, Clarke Quay, Marina Bay, Chinatown, Little India, Orchard Road, and etc. Singapore is also located at the center of south Asia, which makes it easier to travel to other countries, especially Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, etc.

[Activities] There is one famous activity among young people called night cycling, and it locates at East Coast Park. You rent a bicycle between 11 pm and 7am, and the price is also cheaper than at daytime. So you can cycle along the east coast, and watch the sunrise in the morning.
Reflections After Exchange

I really like this experience since I met lots of different people, made lots of friends, and knew how people in Singapore live, work and study. I feel Singaporeans are very hardworking and very competitive. I could never believe the bus at 6:30 am is full, but Singapore changed my mind. Also, all my project teammates were very responsible. All things just inspired me a lot and made me feel that my life before was too easy, and I should work harder. Probably having so many hardworking classmates also became the biggest challenges, as I faced strong competitions.

For other students especially those who plan to do exchange in Singapore, pleased be ready to work hard, but enjoy your life at the same time. You will never regret choosing Singapore.
Photos

Chinatown
Super Trees

Chinese New Year night in Chinatown

Clarke Quay
Heavy Rain