Hello students interested in Uppsala University!

My name is Rebecca and I am a fourth year Health Sciences, Bachelor of Science student. During the Spring 2016 I decided to study abroad at Uppsala University, an experience I hope to share with you all as is it was amazing!

**Preparation:**

One of the things I really think is important to recognize before travelling or living, in Sweden during the Spring months is how cold it will be upon arrival. When I arrived, in mid January, it was -14 degrees outside, which is in fact warmer than the end of December and beginning of January. With that being said, it is important to pack appropriately – this means parkas, scarves, and gloves!

Secondly, a proper budget is essential before travelling anywhere in Scandinavia. Sweden is quite beautiful to live it, but that does come at a cost! For the most part groceries are most expensive than Vancouver, but that just means to be more cost efficient elsewhere.

Lastly in regards to preparation, make sure you are very prepared when it comes to arriving to Uppsala. As I’m sure you’re aware, delays are very common and a back up plan is important incase this happens. Luckily, my flight was on time and there was a shuttle bus waiting at the Arlanda airport when exchange students arrived that brought us to OG Nation where we were able to mix with other international students and buy anything essential for the first night.

**During Exchange**

Orientation: At first, due to all the snow and wind Uppsala can be difficult to navigate around. In general, swedes are very nice people and are more than happy to help any students that are confused as to where to go. However, as I mentioned above there is a shuttle bus that will pick you up from Arlanda airport which will bring you straight to the first of many orientation events, and to your housing.

Accomodation: Uppsala offers guaranteed housing and for the most part, a majority of the students are placed in Flogsta. It is 15 buildings of about 50% swedes, and 50% exchange students. Each building has 7 floors with two corridors, each corridor holding 12 people with each room having its own bathroom and shower. In my opinion, it is the best place to live! That’s where I was able to meet all of my friends, where the parties and pre drinks are all held, and where you spend a lot of your free time.

Classes: With regards to classes you have the choice to apply to both exchange student only classes and “regular” classes. I took basic Swedish, Swedish History, and Culture & Health. Seeing as I am use to long classes, with added on lengthy labs, the classes were significantly easier compared to SFU. With that being said, I was able to have enough time to travel while taking classes, which is always a bonus, and also meet other exchange students in my class.
The City: Uppsala is an absolutely beautiful city. The reason I loved it so much is because of the “European style” of the buildings, cobblestone, and the numerous fika (coffee) shops throughout the city. The other thing that really stood out to me, which you will realize if you visit some of your other friends who may be on exchange elsewhere, that everything in Uppsala is walking or biking distance – which you will grow to appreciate! Although I didn’t realize when I arrived that the weather would be around -14 degrees for a while, it was so beautiful. We were able to go sledding and walk around at night by the river which was frozen over and surrounded by Christmas lights along the trees. The great thing about doing a spring semester in Sweden is you get to see the winter and you also get to stay long enough for Uppsala to get warmer. I was able to experience both -14 and +26 degree weather, it was amazing.

Nations: To put it simply, Nations are like student clubs/pubs. There are numerous student nations at Uppsala University, and each student is able to join as many as they please. As long as you join one student nation you are granted access to the other nations. These nations host pub nights, and a few day events. For example, I joined the nations “Snirkes” whose pub night was Tuesday. This means every Tuesday the students who joined Snirkes didn’t have to pay to get in, whereas the others who joined other nations had to pay (around $10) to get in.

Reflection:

I am so grateful for my time at Uppsala University as I was able to meet life long friends from all around the world and travel to more places than I have ever imagined. I learned Scandinavia is not a place that can be experienced in a few days, you must live there to truly soak up the culture – and exchange is the best opportunity to do that.

Although I loved Uppsala, I truly think that despite where you go on exchange, I really think you will have an amazing time. I think its the people who you become good friends with that make the biggest different and end up making the exchange experience for you, or at least that’s what did it for me. The past 5 months have been amazing and I am so glad I chose Uppsala; it is a second home for me.

Rebecca