



University
of Victoria

University of Victoria

(2013 Spring Semester)



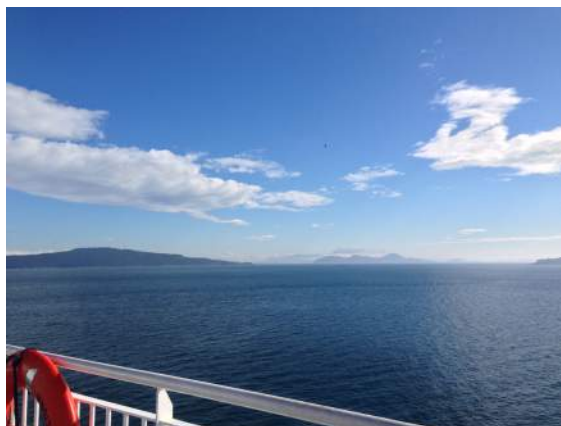
University
of Victoria

Peter B. Gustavson
School of Business



First week! Welcome to an Island life

Since University of Victoria's international program usually holds the mandatory Exchange orientation for all Business incoming exchange students a week before school starts, you are basically required to be in Victoria and have some time to prepare yourself in town anyway. However, we would suggest you to arrive a couple of days earlier before the orientation date to recover from jet lag, time-difference, or a little trip you may have had before arriving to Canada. For me, the first week is very important since you will need to meet a lot of new friends and get to talk to them before school starts. It is a great opportunity to meet a bunch of new friends who you might end up hanging out with at Tim Hortons all the time. During the first week in town, besides



exploring restaurants and shopping malls, you should spare some time to explore the university and see what rooms and building where your classes would be even though majority of the business classes are mostly be in Business or Economics building but this way you can maximize your sleeping time once school starts.

Prepare for studying

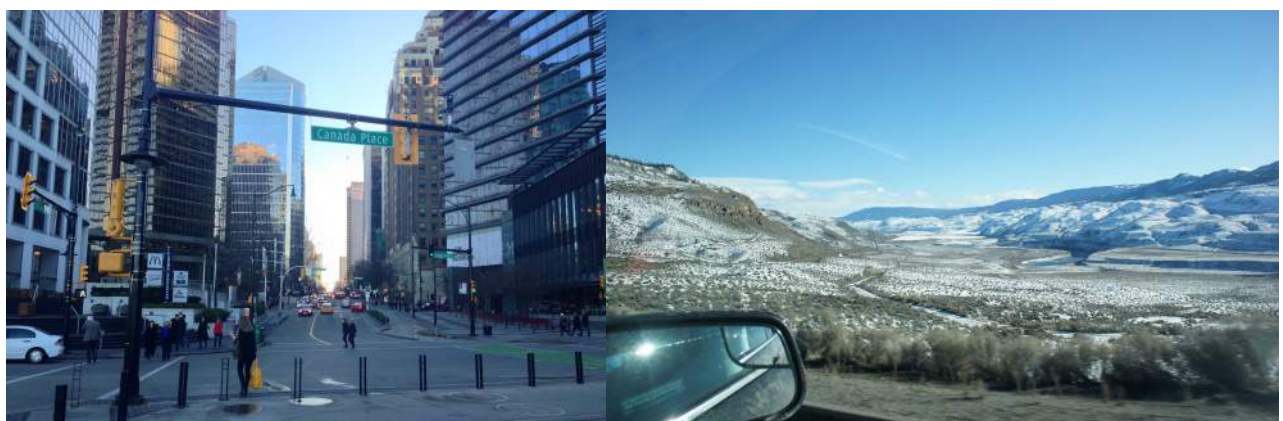
Frankly, I wouldn't worry much about studying at Uvic if you continue to put the same level of effort into class assignments and participation as you would do at home university. For the selection of classes, international affairs would send you an e-mail to

ask you what classes you wish to take about 3 months before your arrival. If your selection is certain and no changes are needed, I would see no problems or complications that you wouldn't get to take the classes you chose which are open. Even if you need to change something, Christina who is a super awesome adviser would be more than willing to help you through the process anyway.



Life style

First thing, Food especially Asian food, it could be found easily in Victoria both restaurants and supermarkets. If you cannot find something, Vancouver definitely has whatever you are looking for so I wouldn't worry much about bringing tons of food. I would suggest you to just bring I-chef, Lobo or other similar brands. Also, there are plenty of awesome restaurants that you have to try in both Victoria and Vancouver. Other than food, for the weekends, most people like to get on a ferry and go to Vancouver, which only takes you around 2 hours on the ferry and there's long list of activities that you can do in the city or you could go to Seattle by speed boat that takes you almost the same amount of time (but more expensive). During weekdays, some of the stuffs that exchange students like to do include hiking (most of the time because it's so beautiful in BC), Winter sport, having a chicken wings night on Wednesday since most of the restaurants are 50% off on wings and on Thursday girls are allow to get in the club for free. At first, we didn't actually participate in this kind of activities. But trust me, you will likely to increase the frequency of this habits when you about to leave.



Activities, Etc.

There are tons of clubs and activities that you can join when you are Uvic students. Whether you like to go for sports, social, or academic clubs, participating in something would help you to know more regular students and enjoy killing time. It would be advisory to those who have time to join and become apart of something, which will complement your experience of a Canadian lifestyle even more.



University of Victoria, Canada.

As everyone knows, Canada is considered as one of the coldest country in the world during winter. Unsurprisingly, in some regions, the temperature could drop to -40c, not considering the strong wind chills. Thus, when people think of Canada, most of them think of coldness and silence... I also used to be one of those people before I actually realized how lively and beautiful it is. I think I am quite lucky that I chose University of Victoria that located in Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia State, which is the warmest part of Canada (but still, the warmest part of Canada definitely cannot beat Bangkok's heat, its temperature during winter season could easily fall below 0c) Anyway this is just an introduction so I won't say anything further except one thing: 'I can assure, once you truly know Victoria, you will definitely fall in love with it, as I do'

Chapter 1 : Adaptation is needed to survive.

The first thing I learnt from my first step into Canada is I need to bring huge coat and one umbrella everywhere I go for at least 1 month to survive even though it truly makes me look fat. Since my chosen university is based in Victoria, the Vancouver's island. So, ferry is unavoidable in every reason except you are so rich and are willing to pay \$100 more. That's why I chose to take a ferry which take almost 5 hours from Vancouver Airport to Victoria Downtown, for more details, please search in BC ferry website. And please don't dare to think that the ferry is crappy as the one from Pattaya to some tourist islands. The ferry is super clean, convenient and 100% safe.

Arriving Victoria for the first time is surprisingly so gloomy, 3pm in the afternoon but the sun was nowhere to be seen. The next thing I learnt is the daylight last only from 9am to 3pm during winter in Victoria. The only lucky thing I founded on that arrival day is I met one Thai boy who actually studies in UVic, he guided the way to UVic with me, took me to the residence office since I chose to stay on campus (more expensive but a lot more convenient.) and leaded me to my dormitory.

I opened my room with the key I just got, then I found Canadian-liked girl in my double room, she is my roommate! She is the key for my survival here; she helped me throughout everything from the first day until the last day of my life in Victoria. She's my Canadian fairy godmother. She shared her blanket on the first night, she took me to Walmart to buy necessary stuffs, she brought me to University Centre to get student card and all stuffs needed, she took care of me like I am one of her family and we got each other's back during the hard time. Without her, my exchange life wouldn't be

this perfect. The first week there passed and I started to feel comfortable with this new environment, new people, new food and new lifestyle.



Chapter 2 : New style of studying.

I took 4 courses this semester, teachers in each course have different style of teaching but all of them based their teaching style in actual learning not study from textbook and then have an examination as I familiar with. I actually learned things from the course but I also needed to put more effort. In the first few weeks, it was tough for me since I have to adapt to this new culture such as everyone raised their hands to answer professor's questions, etc. As the time passed by, I get used to it and the play time was begun. Study hard but play harder. I accept every invitation I got, I went out with different people I was not closed to, I join the club to do some outdoor activities and I tried everything new I could. Meanwhile, I did every homework professor assigned, I read the book almost every day and I went to every group discussion at least 3 times a week to do a group project. Of course, my relaxed time is lessened but that's a life! I finally felt like my life is valuable in every single day not just on examination days.

Most teachers I had met there have an eager to teach strongly, they are also open-minded; they accept the new ideas and thoughts of students and also admit when they don't know things. Since people here are not just Canadians but mix of other countries' around the world; not including



international students that come to study abroad, thus there will be a bunch of diversity of ideas and thoughts, which we can learn from it.

Chapter 3: Lifestyle

Victoria is the city of retired people; statistically, 20% of the population is elders which is considered a large portion compared to other capital cities. Thus, the pace of living here is quite slow and calm. The city itself is peaceful and beautiful, no traffic jam and barely have criminal cases. People are super nice and friendly, when we get on/off the bus, we will always say 'Hi, how are you?' and 'Thank you, have a nice day.' It sounds ridiculous in Bangkok but not in Victoria. Furthermore, you don't need any insurance for car accidents injured at all, people here drive slow and safe, and they will always stop for people to cross the street. If this happened in Bangkok, it would be a miracle for us!

Most people here spend their leisure time in relaxing in the garden and hiking. They actually have a lot of mountains to hike from the easy level to the hard one. Canada's nature is really beautiful, they didn't cut their trees much, and most of their trees are more than 100 years old which is rare in some countries. They preserve their nature and also natural resources very well; they have very serious laws to protect the country's nature and all wild animals. All these things are molded into culture and implanted to most Canadians.



From the above paragraph, it seems like all Canadians are too mild and gentle but everything has two sides. Canadians do love something fierce, Hockey. It is the most favorite sport among Canadians, they enjoy aggressive and intense games with some fights interfering during the game. I have been to the ice hockey game once and it's magical, especially the time when players from both teams were angry and started to fight wildly. This is quite violent yet fantastic.

Victoria is famous for daytime activities but Night life is also cool! Even though it's not spectacular but it's still fine for every exchange student to hang out together. We went to the bar or

nightclub almost every week to get to know more of each other and also de-stress but we all know the limit of having fun. We don't let it ruined our grades or study.

Chapter 4: Travelling part.

As exchange student, we travelled a lot more than locals. In weekend, we don't waste our times just sit on the couch and watched TV shows that are also available in Youtube. We travelled in local and other cities as well. We went skateboarding, as It was my first time skateboarding, I'm super excited! But after did it for a short while, I almost gave up because I fall down too many times, I was exhausted. Thanks to all my exchange friends, they pushed me up, they got my back, and they have a patient to teach me. Now, I learnt to skate on a board. This definitely not going to be a skill I can learn in Thailand.

During reading breaks, we drove out or fly out from the cities to travel in other cities that might take several days to complete the trip. Since USA shares the border with Canada, so it's normal for everyone there to cross the border and travel in USA, it seems like California is the most popular one among us. All the trips we went together enhance the friendship we didn't mean to have at first but at last, we couldn't forget



The only bad thing I found in Victoria is that it is isolated island, thus it is pretty hard for everyone to go out from Victoria since there are only two ways which take a couple hour; ferry or Plane. But this isolated island has its own charming because it's not easy to go out and not easy to visit as well. Isolated yet Developed.

Conclusion

As everything came to the ending point, I learnt a lot from this exchange life. I met tons of new friends across the world that we all promise that one day we will meet each other for sure, we will talk about crazy stuffs we did together and we will keep in touch. All memories and experiences

occurred in Victoria strengthen me, I feel like I have grown up a little more. And if someone asks me the question 'what would you regret if you didn't do that thing?', I will definitely answer them 'That would be an exchange in UVic, Great Canada.'

