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GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE
TORONTO

FROM
SEPTEMBER 2019
TO
DECEMBER 2019

5TH SEMESTER

Introduction

I chose to study at George Brown College to discover another way of working and I knew that it was my last chance as I went to study abroad for my 5th semester. I was expecting to have some fun, meet new people and learn a different way of doing architecture as we don't have the same methods in Europe and in North America. So I've made the decision in January 2019 to go to Canada for the next semester from September 2019 until December 2019.

Experiences at the host university

So as a fifth semester student I had as courses **ARCHITECTURE TECHNOLOGY AND STUDIO** which is the class that is the most similar to KEA because it is about working with the plans create the drawings and detailing, but the good part is that you create your own project and you are most likely assigned to a group.

Then I had **MATERIALS METHODS AND COMPONENT** which was for me the most interesting and where I've learned the most. As it says in the title it's about everything you should know about materials why we use them, when we use them and how we use them, the teacher was really great!

Then there were **BIM DESIGN TECH FOR ARCHITECTURE** which was most likely a software class using especially Revit, and you should know that at George Brown College they are a little bit behind with Revit, but also are a little bit ahead with others software. This class was really easy if you were already comfortable with Revit at KEA.

Then we had **PRINCIPLE OF BUILDING INFO MODELING** which is a class talking about BIM in every way possible and really in depth, the teacher is really smart but the classes are a little bit dry because it is just following a PowerPoint but you can learn a lot of stuff if you really try to follow and ask questions.

Then the **TECHNICAL REPORT WRITING** class that was basically just a class where you learn how to write a report. If you go there at 5th semester you going to see that is exactly what you did for the 4th semester at KEA. Which anyway is nice because you can go with a subject completely different and learn a lot from it.

Then **STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS** which was from far the hardest class to follow because it was only about calculating loads and doing calculation in general so the class was a bit dry but you still get to learn a lot of calculations that we didn't had at KEA.

And finally the last course was part of the electives but you start the electives at George Brown college in September and finish at the same time as all the other class. I choose **CONCENTRATION IN ARCHITECTURE** which was a lot about thinking more than producing and it was really interesting in the way that we never been trained to do this either at KEA or in Toronto and it really makes you push yourself to develop your imagination and create something original.

Social and cultural experiences

Toronto is a really big city and it's difficult to be bored!

I'm not sure I'm the best example in terms of social experience as I went in Canada with my boyfriend and we were most likely sticking together most of the time so I didn't get to make a lot of friends even at school because the people in the same class as me were not with me every day of the week because it change every day with who you attend the class so it's a little bit difficult to create a bond.

I also started school a bit later so I didn't had the opportunity to have the gathering before school starts which didn't help.

Otherwise there is a lot of a free museum depending of the day which is super interesting and really good opportunity to see!

There is also a lot of nature around if you get the chance to get out of the city that is really beautiful if you find the right places there is good bars and good restaurants and really good parks as well but you can also try to attend to some events created by the school or via Airbnb.

Practical experiences

So if you want to leave To Canada for your exchange you need to organize yourself a lot. It depends of your situation but for example I decided to take a student VISA to be able to work while in exchange. But if you don't want to work you don't need a VISA because you study in Canada less than 6 months so you just need your ETA that takes just 2 minutes to do.

About asking for a VISA it is going to be a little bit more complicated because they will ask you to do the biometrics, the only problem about that is that there is no center in Denmark that is doing it, then you have to go either in Berlin or in Stockholm. The process was a bit annoying, but it worked good for me and I also got lucky to find a job because I think it's a little bit difficult in Toronto.

In terms of finding a place to stay it is also complicated I would say that is as difficult as in Copenhagen but as I went to Toronto with my boyfriend it was a little bit easier for us and we also got lucky because we rented out an Airbnb for a month and the landlord made a deal with us to keep the studio until the end of our stay in December (but not through Airbnb) which made the price cheaper for us.

So I don't have the perfect advice about where to stay but I know that the school also has some rooms to rent and will send you links of places that you can use when you'll be accepted for the exchange.

Also you must know that the life in Toronto is a little bit more expensive than in Denmark so try to make some money before leaving obviously and keep in mind that you're always going to spend more money than you expected.

For the food at school you can easily eat on the campus, there is a lot of choices, but it's not all super healthy. Otherwise you can make your food at home (which is cheaper) and warm it up at school. Get also ready to be addicted to Tim Hortons if you like coffee!

The school as a lot of facilities on campus, with a huge library and gym where you have free access! There also some gym/cardio/yoga class for free and it's really great.

For the food out of school, the cheapest supermarket would be No Frills.

Conclusion

In the end this exchange was both a bit disappointing and really amazing because I traveled a lot and saw many new amazing places, met some good people but also disappointed because I didn't meet as many people as I thought I would. I've also learned less than I thought I would but it was for the best because then I didn't have too much pressure coming from the school and I could enjoy more being in Toronto. I've got really good advice professionally from my teachers, that is a big plus! I don't regret at all this exchange and I would do it all over again. (I also got to make my English accent better and that is nice)