Hello, I am Lennart. A 27 year old student of Philosophy, Politics, Economics and now Commerce. I would describe myself as a curious person, not only academically but also regarding culture and sports. Hence I am spending most of my time that I am not at the university training or traveling.
1. Why did you want to study abroad? How did you decide to come to UVic?

As I want to work internationally it made sense to me to also study internationally. The choice to come to Canada and more specifically UVIC was influenced by my goal to perfect my English skills and Victoria/Vancouver Island just being a beautiful place to live.

2. What are the biggest differences you see between the university experience in Witten/Herdecke and Gustavson?

The biggest difference between the universities has to be the different amount of freedom during the study. Academically there is no set program in Witten/Herdecke and most classes graded by a paper that student independently write. UVIC is on the opposite side of that spectrum with a set program and mostly exams consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. But that clear structure also comes with a lot more assistance at UVIC. There are a lot more people in all parts of the program administration that are ready to assist any student running into some issues.

3. You did your second co-op in Canada and Germany; how was that? What challenges did you face? How did you overcome them?

As my work was exclusively with a German company my main difficulty was transferring data that I needed and working remotely. Especially to implement changes and investigate information that was not formalized yet required me to be in the office.
4. During the BCom program, what experience did you bring to be able to “bridge the gap” between cultures?

Even though it may not be exactly what is meant by cultural differences, the language has proven to be an limiting factor in some teams. As some international students are not as comfortable with the English language teams sometimes need to find way to work around that limitation. Another issue more related to the implication of cultural differences is the communication within teams and presentations in front of the whole class. I found that I naturally am more direct in my communication, especially criticizing than it would be usual in Canada or Asia for example. Presentations in front of the entire class tended to be especially difficult for Asian students in my experience. Creating the need for the team to create an environment as comfortable as possible for the struggling team members.

5. Feel free to list any other observations about life in Canada that you feel will benefit incoming Dual Degree students.

First and foremost Canadians in my experience are very welcoming to foreigners and willing to help out. That goes even more so for everybody working at the university, so incoming students should not hesitate to ask for help. Secondly Vancouver Island is beautiful. Dual Degree students should not let themselves be too consumed by the university and find time to enjoy the beauty around them.