

THE BASICS

Your first name: Yvette Tam

Your email address: ytam@uvic.ca

Your partner university: Orebro

Your UVic major during the exchange: Social Sciences, preadmission to BCom

UVic session(s) during which you did your exchange: Fall 08 and Spring 09

GENERAL EVALUATION

Please rate your overall exchange experience on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 5

Comments: My best year yet. Great experience, great friends, great fun.

ARRIVAL

How satisfied were you with your experience of arriving in your host country or city? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 5

Comments: They have a program where they come pick you up in a car either at the train station or the airport during the specified arrival weekend.

What assistance, if any, did you receive when you arrived at your exchange destination? The exchange program there actually sends representatives out to come pick you up!

How difficult was it for you to obtain your travel documents (visa, etc.)? Extremely easy. But if you live in Victoria, keep in mind that you will have to make a trip to Vancouver to obtain your visa.

ORIENTATION AND ASSISTANCE

How satisfied were you with the orientation and assistance available to students at your partner university? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 5

Comments: First semester orientation was better than the second. But nevertheless, it was very good. Great time to meet people and to get to know Orebro.

How easy was it to find information you needed to know right away? Very easy, there's an English website available.

What help did you receive from the international staff or office? They organized our housing situations, gave us directions to our destinations, available when needed.

What was your impression of the international staff or office? Great people, nice and friendly, and always willing to help.

What was the orientation like at your partner university, if there was one, and how well did it suit your needs? It was very good. Orientation involved tour around city, introducing yourself to fellow exchange students, bowling, sitting at a lounge, etc.

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site and were there people you could talk to about what you were experiencing? **It was not hard to adjust to the culture. The environment is similar to here, the west coast. Can always find people to talk to, not a problem.**

HOUSING

How satisfied were you with the housing available to students? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: **5**

Comments **I got assigned to a flat a little further from the university, but I loved it! I had 2 roommates who were also exchange students so I was able to become close to them.**

How early could students move in to housing at the beginning of term? **One to two weeks before orientation starts.**

What options were available for meal plans or cooking facilities? **No meal plans. You have shared kitchen. Dorms have kitchens that are shared between 8-9 people. Flats have kitchens that are shared between 3 people.**

How satisfied were you with the food?

How close are the residences to the university? **Dorms are 1-5mins away. Flats are about 10-15mins bike up or 3-5 mins bike down.**

Could students stay in the residences during major holidays? **Yes.**

Which residence would you recommend to UVic students? **I really liked the flats... but if you really want to get to know the Swedish students, then dorms are better for meeting the Swedes.**

If you lived in off-campus housing, how easy was it to find?

What should future UVic exchange students know about living off-campus?

COURSE REGISTRATION

How satisfied were you with the registration process at your partner university? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: **3.5**

Comments **A little confusing, but if you stay for 2 semesters, then by the second semester, you'll have no problem!**

Please describe the registration process at your partner university.

Everything is done in person. It's a bit confusing at first. It's overwhelming. You actually have to go register your courses in person at specified times.

What kind of help was available? **You could ask many people for help. At the orientation, they tell you how registration is done.**

How successful were you in registering for classes you wanted? **Very successful, got all the courses I wanted to take**

What advice would you offer to next year's exchange students about registration at your partner university? **Take Outdoor Education (only available for second semester) if you're allowed. It was a great course!**

ACADEMICS

How satisfied were you with the academic program at your partner university? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: **5**

Comments: **Very laid back.**

How did the style of teaching at your partner university compare with that at UVic? **Smaller classes, so it's more personal.**

How did the workload compare to what you would expect at UVic? **There was definitely less workload compared to UVIC. However, their schedule consists of taking one course for 4 weeks and then you will get the final exams after that. So it's a different way of learning**

How many courses did you take in your first term abroad? **4**

Your second term? **3**

What would you recommend as an appropriate course load for other UVic students visiting your partner university? **4 is fine**

What specific courses would you recommend to visiting UVic students? **If you are going during spring or will be staying for the spring semester, take the outdoor education course if you are able to!!!! Also do the Cross-culture communication.**

Why? **The Outdoor activity - It was a great time, you learn about the Swede's recreational activities, and the wilderness of Sweden. Cross-culture communication – Really allows you to work on your public speaking and learn about how culture play a role in communications.**

If you studied in a non-English speaking country, what was the availability of courses offered in English? **There were quite a bit to offer, and many of them were really interesting to do.**

What advice would you give UVic students about succeeding academically at your partner university? **The courses were really simple and easy. You'll have no trouble!**

What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, and internet access at your partner university? **Library was really useful, easy to use and if you have any problems, there were people who were always willing to help. There's a lot of computers to use at the library so if you don't have a laptop, you can go there to do your work or to email your family and friends back at home.**

What electronic devices would you recommend a UVic student bring (laptop, PDA, etc.)? **Definitely a laptop, and a cellphone → just remember to make sure your cell phone can be used elsewhere. For example, make sure there's not a "global" lock; some students experienced that problem. Also a converter because the outlets and plugs are different from Canada.**

COSTS

Please indicate currency: **Canadian Dollar – Rough estimate**

Books - per term: **Sorry I can't remember**

Accommodation - per month: **I think this was about 300 CAD**

Meals - per month: Well it ranges, orange juice about 1.5L were about 2.5 CAD, meat were quite expensive... and but everything else wasn't too expensive compared to Canada. However a meal offered at a restaurant is about 9-10 CAD

Local transportation - per month: Bus rides are 10kr each time (within 3 hours) with the card the university gives you. But I would recommend renting or buying bikes because it gets you everywhere. 30 mins or less to downtown!

Health insurance - per term: N/A

Personal spending - per term: Depends what you want to do. Movie tickets are 90kr. If you want to travel, there are busses to Stockholm for about 15CAD or around 25CAD for train rides. And to get to the airport who supports RyanAir (a cheap airline) then it cost about 50-60CAD for round trip.

Communications (phone, etc.) - per term: Depends, you can get phone plans... there are 15CAD ones, or 30CAD, etc.

Other university related fees - per term: Student fees – 32CAD

EXTRA-CURRICULAR/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

How satisfied were you with the out-of-class opportunities at your exchange site? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 5

Comments: There were lots to do! Will explain down below.

What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to students? There were sports teams offered but will have to pay a fee... But in the summer, there are beach volleyball courts that you can use for free. Also there's a track, can be used anytime.

What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students? Beach Volleyball!

What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays? Go travel! There's so many places to see. Either in Sweden or other places. Just contact me if you wants some ideas.

What opportunities were there for students to work on-campus? None.

Off-campus? Need to know some Swedish, so don't really count on finding a job.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students? Not a lot.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

How safe did you feel at your exchange site? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best rating):

Rating: 5

Comments Felt safe the whole time I was there.

What are the biggest safety concerns for future exchange students going to your exchange site? I can't think of any. Riding your bike could be a concern since it's not the law for helmets, so make sure you're careful when you go up or down the Brickebacken hill or while biking in the dark or on snow or ice.

What are the biggest health concerns for future exchange students going to your exchange site? Nothing to worry about

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

What was it like making friends? **Piece of cake. Everyone is shy at first due to a new environment but all of you soon find out that you're all in the same boat and you will make GREAT memories with them.**

How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students? **If you join the orientation program, you'll meet at least a few Swedish students. Some of your courses have Swedish students. And if you live in the dorm on campus, you will meet tons of local students**

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange site? **Not to hard. It was just a shock to see words you just couldn't understand, but you'll get use to it.**

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? **Swedes are very quiet and reserved. They don't randomly talk to strangers. And if you ran into them or vice versa, they don't apologize, they just keep on going.**

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate? **Once you get to know them and they're open to you, they're wonderful people who are willing to help at all times.**

How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students? **Excellent by all 3 groups.**

As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university? **Pretty easy. I don't see any obstacles for them. And plus, Orebro has a great program for people with disabilities.**

For students who are visible minorities in your host country? **They will be fine. They will welcome you.**

TAKING STOCK

What are the three most important things for students to take with them when they go to your host country or region? **Laptop, Cell phone, and Passport. But if passport doesn't count, then gloves/toques for the winter months.**

What are the three most important things you would tell a UVic student who is going to your partner university on exchange? **1. Have fun. 2. Be open and don't be shy to meet new people, you will stay friends with them for a long time! 3. Try new things that you would otherwise not be able to try at home!**

Is there any other information that you think might prove useful to UVic exchange students attending your host university?

N/A

What was the most rewarding part of your exchange experience? **Meeting so many great people who are so culturally different to you. For some people, it's been a year since I've seen them and till this day, we still keep in contact. Some people even came to visit!!!**

What was your greatest challenge on the exchange?

Getting use to the language. But like a said, you'll adapt.

How has your perspective changed as a result of the exchange?

I can say that I am more open now to different people from different countries.

What else do you want to say about your exchange experience?

Don't let the idea that you will be leaving your friends and family for a semester or two stop you from going on exchange. This is one of the best time of your life! You will have a great time wherever you go! The memories you get from your semester abroad will always put a smile on your face every time you think about it after your exchange! If you need some more convincing, feel free to email me.