In the Fall semester of 2015, I had the pleasure of participating in an exchange term to the University of Hong Kong. It was one of, if not the best experience of my undergraduate academic career. It has changed how I approach my studies here at SFU, my engagement with fellow students, and how I observe the world around me.

Hong Kong is a modern city and an international financial hub. The city is heavily influenced by the financial industry and many international banks can be found in the city centre. The large international business influence was one of the main reasons I selected Hong Kong as my exchange destination. Hong Kong is quite friendly to tourists since many local people speak or understand English. Hong Kong was formerly a British Colony so it therefore has had significant British influence. Food menus, transit maps, and newspapers can all be found with English translations. While an understanding of the local culture before going would be beneficial, it is not an absolute necessity. It was over the four months living in the city that I developed an appreciation for the local culture. I can now imagine myself eventually travelling back to see how the city has changed.

When I was accepted to the University of Hong Kong (HKU), I was ecstatic since it was my first choice for an exchange institution. I had received the nomination from SFU but did not hear from HKU for quite some time. My official acceptance letter did not arrive until approximately two months before my exchange term Once all your applications have been processed, course enrollment is another familiar stress that appears.

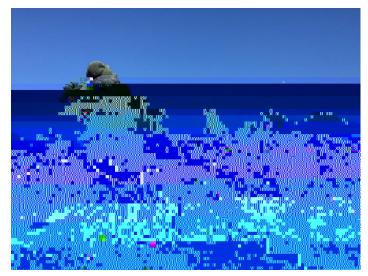
The application for the Faculty of Business and Economics at HKU required a preliminary list of courses that you will enroll in while on exchange. Shortly before your official registration time, the Faculty will help you register in certain courses. If not all your preferred courses are in your course cart, you can manually enroll by yourself once it is your registration time. Make sure to check the important academic dates for course registration and take note of any procedures or steps.

When preparing to pack for Hong Kong, note that HK is quite humid for most of the year. Outdoors during the summer and spring is extremely warm while the winter months are moderate in comparison to Canadian winters. July and August tend to be the typhoon season and extreme weather may occur. While you may be indined to pack mainly shorts and t-shirts, keep in mind that most indoor places are air-conditioned and can become quite chilly so pack appropriately.

Finally, it is time to travel to Hong Kong

International Airport. Once you arrive at HK airport, it is easy to get to the main campus of HKU. There are numerous ways to get from the airport to the university, but the three main modes of transportation are bus, taxi, or MTR. Bus might be more complicated when you first arrive so I

Aside from academics, exchange students like to travel and explore. Hong Kong has much to offer and I was pleasantly surprised to find numerous scenic beaches with picturesque, dear blue waters on quiet islands away from the city. The terrain of Hong Kong is composed of many mountains and hills so there are many hiking trails to try out. The hike to Victoria Peak is one that I highly recommend as well as one to the Big Buddha. Of course, there are many other popular hikes to attempt and more information can be found online. Do as much research as you can before the



trip in order to feel prepared because that is all part of the exchange experience!

As mentioned above, language is not a significant barrier to overcome since English is widely used. Food is relatively cheap in Hong Kong and is very tasty and good. Food in restaurants is usually very clean, but street food in some places may be questionable so experiment at your own risk. I have many friends from Hong Kong and trying out the local cuisine is something they always tell me to do and is now something I would recommend others to do.

This exchange was definitely a worthwhile experience. I met and became friends with people from various backgrounds, I had the opportunity to explore many parts of Asia and was able to be immersed in a foreign culture. Essentially, I was placed outside my comfort zone. It can be difficult going to a new place and not knowing anyone, but when you go on exchange, everyone is on the same boat. Many of the people I met were friendly, approachable, and easy-going. Asia is a large place and it can be overwhelming since places are overcrowded and communication can be problematic. While these two factors can be viewed negatively, it is part of the overall experience of learning to accept the local lifestyle.

