

Exchange Report – NTU Fall 2016

I cannot believe my time at NTU has come to a close it was one of the best experiences of my life and I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to study there for 4 months. Nanyang Technological University or NTU is located on the western side of Singapore, I had the chance to fulfill some of my business major requirements while I stayed there from August 2015 to December 2015. Opening a bank account is something that wasn't necessary for me as I only spent a semester there and I didn't meet anyone who had actually gone through the process of opening one in Singapore. If you decide to study there for a year it may be worth it but going the route of using an atm instead is definitely not a problem either. Packing was another thing I spent hours thinking about before I headed over to Singapore. First off, I would recommend not to splurge on the 85 L backpacker's backpack that everyone seems to get when travelling throughout Southeast Asia. The majority of travelling done in the semester consists of weekend trips that don't require such a huge bag and these usually have to be checked in, which is an additional cost. Even when I travelled for the month of December a 45 L bag was more than enough. In regards to what to pack I would say keep it simple, Singapore is a highly developed country where you buy anything you might need throughout the semester. Bring your regular tropic clothing like shirts, shorts, etc. and if you have room bed sheets were nice to have for the first couple nights instead of running around looking for them. I will say though if you have particular hair products or a specific type of product you need bring those from home as the product lines carried in stores in Singapore vary significantly from those in Canada. If you aren't too reliant on those though you can find similar replacements pretty easily! Last but not least for preparation, book your flight with a couple day layover in a place like Hong Kong if you connect through a city you haven't seen. I was hesitant of doing this at first but my dad convinced me to do it and it allowed me to see another city when I wouldn't of had a chance to otherwise.

Once I had arrived in Singapore I checked into on campus housing at my Hall office which was super easy to do, I don't remember anything too complicated about the process. They handed me a key and a mailbox key and was given my room number which I had to find. I would highly recommend on campus housing, it is a fraction of the cost of off campus housing and you meet way more people this way. Regarding orientation, the business school has their own orientation which is then followed by the general exchange student orientation. Both were very informative but the business specific one covered more in depth information regarding enrollment and teaching styles. The overall orientation covered insurance and other information while welcoming all 1000+ of us to Singapore which was really nice. There were also multiple steps needed to get a student pass which is your student visa. They will be

outlined for you with dates, these are followed by a no travel period of two weeks while they process your visa. If you want to travel in this period you can actually go to the offices of immigration and get your visa earlier I believe, I had a friend who did this. Getting it earlier would be beneficial as travelling early in the semester is something I highly recommend, school doesn't pick up that early and it allows you way more time than mid November does. Regarding enrollment, their system is similar to that of SFU. You have a set time and then you enroll, however, the waitlist is not done according to ranking or who was there first, its random. To get the class you want wait until there is a space and go directly to the business school advisor, he will put you in whatever class you need when you say it transfers over to your home university. This saved multiple friends and I who were at first handed only 1 or 2 courses that transferred back home but then changed to those we needed. Academically I found that the workload was comparable if not slightly easier than at SFU. There is a greater emphasis on group work and large group projects especially in the business school but individual work was pretty straight forward. I only had one lectured class the rest were in the form of seminars, some as long as 4 hours but the professors I had were fantastic so the time went by quickly. In addition, there were a lot of presentations but they were all pretty similar to how SFU conducts theirs. Overall, there was nothing too shockingly different about academic life at NTU, the local students are continuously busy with an unbelievable amount of extra circulars but exchange students didn't usually have those to worry about. There is a very heavy emphasis on success and attaining high grades in Singaporean culture and this becomes evident in exam season but I found that getting good grades even while travelling was not something out of reach for an exchange student. Regarding the country, Singapore is known as the "fine city" and it does have some very bizarre laws but I found this reputation to be overhyped. In daily life living there for 4 months I didn't notice anything too extreme, besides no drinking water on the MRT nothing really impacted me to that large of an extent. The climate stays the same year round, expect 100% humidity and at least 30+ degrees everyday, it usually rains everyday but this only lasts for small periods of time. Sometimes there are extreme thunder storms which seem to get worse in November/December but they were interesting to see first hand

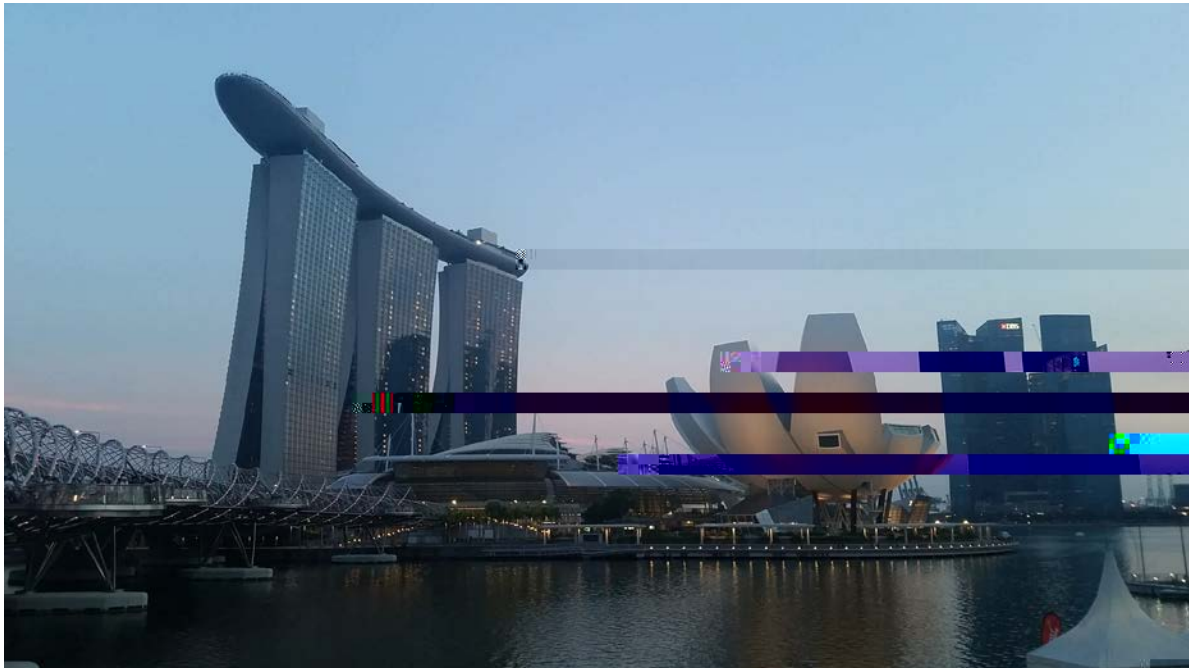
of your comfort zone whenever you can on exchange. I know it sounds cliché but I met my best friends as a result of it and had the best experiences of my life by being open to things I wasn't necessarily prepared for or comfortable with. Diving into new experiences is what exchange is all about and being open to these will allow you to make the most of your time abroad.

My hall was one of the new ones on campus, the higher the number on the hall the newer they are, which also means there is a higher likelihood of air conditioning which is super nice!

NTU's pool is one of the nicest facilities on campus it was a great spot to workout and get a tan.



Hiking a volcano in Indonesia without sleep in 24 hours wasn't part of the original plan but it was one of the best experiences of the trip.



The famous marina bay sands hotel makes up the most iconic view of Singapore.