

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE STUDENT REPORT

Name of the University: Camosun College

Names of the students: Ragnhildur Valtýsdóttir

Exchange semester: Fall 2010 and spring 2011 (2 quarters, the year has 3 quarters)

I GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1. Describe the school and its surroundings
The school has two campuses, Lansdowne and Interurban. Lansdowne is bigger and more central and has a bigger gym, cafeteria and bookstore. The tech department where I went is at Interurban campus which is more rural. It consists of about 6 buildings and it has a library, a cafeteria, a diner and a gym. The buildings are not new and most are made of concrete.
2. Number of students - graduate and undergraduate – number of exchange students
Their web site says 3800 students attend classes at Interurban campus, but I would have guessed a lot fewer. Lansdowne has about 4400 students. I'm not sure how many exchange students there are at Camosun, but if I would guess I would say about 200 new students each year. Most of these are Asians and they are taking their whole degree in Canada, often in English.
3. Study structure
I studied civil engineering technology and there was a lot of group work, most classes had midterm exams and some had quizzes every week. Some teachers did not have quizzes but often assignments every or every other week. Most classes had final exams while one had a final submission. Grades were given from 0-100 and final marks were given in letters, A+, A, A-, B+, B.....

II PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Information before you left

- When did you receive the information package from the University?
I got all papers early and had contact with a lady early on.
- Any difficulties?
No

Visa Procedure and travel experiences

- What problems, if any did you encounter?
The visa application was a little confusing to fill out and there was no one to ask. I tried to call a number on the web site and talk to the embassy but no one knew anything. I ended up paying too much for the visa (my boyfriend came with me and I thought I had to pay double) and it was sent back to me asking for a check for the exact amount. After I sent it the second time we got the visa back quickly.
- Does the visa cost anything?
Yes it costs \$125 CAD
- How did you order your ticket – any problems?
Ordered it from Icelandair, it was a direct flight to Seattle. From there I took the ferry to Victoria, BC.

Academic Calendar

- Arrival date – introductory week
Arrived September 2, orientation day was September 3.
- First day of the semester?
September 27
- Last day of classes?
March 18
- Examination period?
March 21 - 25

Reception

- How was the reception at the school?
I did not find the orientation useful. Most of the exchange students/international students are Asian and a lot of them don't speak very good English so the orientation was adapted to them. I chose to find my own way around the school (which is small) and had very little contact with the exchange coordinators.
- Was the administration and faculty well prepared for your arrival?
The lady who enrolled me in classes seemed like she had never done it before, but she was nice enough. Things were quite laid back, I had not been enrolled in any classes before my arrival and could choose whatever I wanted. I can't say they were prepared but they were not unprepared either.
- Did the school's students participate in the reception of the exchange students? No

Housing

- Did you have housing at your disposal or did you have to find your own housing?
I found my own basement suite at Craigslist.
- What support did you receive from the school in locating housing?
I got information about home stay.
- Any special issues or good ideas for prospective students?
Check what campus you would go to, I thought I would be at Lansdowne so my apartment was close to it but ended up taking the bus for 45 min to get to school.

Costs

- Describe the most important expenses such as rent, books, food, etc.
Victoria is the most expensive city in Canada so living here was not cheap. Food is about the same price as home, some things are way cheaper but some are more expensive. Schoolbooks are very expensive but I only bought a few books. Rent is also quite expensive I paid about 100.000 ISK for a suite while people renting a room in a house would pay about half that. Bus fare is \$2,5 but I got a bus pass from school. I had to pay about \$200 each semester to the school. This is mandatory and pays for bus passes, gym (which is "free"), childcare etc. My boyfriend bought a scooter for \$1000 and sold it for \$900 when we left.

The International Office

- Is there an international office?
Yes, at least at Interurban campus. I don't really know anything about the office, I did not use it except to enroll in classes.
- Who is responsible for incoming exchange students?
- How does the international office function?
- Do you receive all relevant information?

Exchange promotion

- What kind of activity did you take part in to promote exchange to Iceland at your exchange university?
I told my classmates about Iceland

Social Activities

- How is your relationship with other students?
Good
- How is the relationship among the exchange students?
I didn't get to know any exchange students from Camosun but for to know some from the University of Victoria (2 of them lived in the same building). They were really great.
- Is there a student organization, and if so, are the exchange students part of it?
There is a student organization, and it is for everyone. They probably have an exchange club but like I have mentioned, the only people who would be in it would be Asians who don't know English. I tried to take part in a club but it was very poorly organized.
- Are there any special activities and gatherings for exchange students?
I'm not sure, but I think so
- How do you like it at the school?
I liked it very much because I liked my classmates.

Culture and Language

- Do you have any language problems with the faculty or other students?
No
- How are the possibilities to experience the country and the culture?
Very good, but it is important to take the first step. I felt like I had to get to know people, they were not jumping to get to know me. I liked that there were no other exchange students in my program that meant that I could get to know Canadians.

Cultural and Social Effects from the Exchange Experience

- How do you think the exchange experience will affect you from a cultural and social point of view?
I feel like I can say I know Canadians and I really like them.
- How do you think the exchange experience influences your future career possibilities?
Yes I think people see it as very positive.

III ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The Teaching situation

- In which language are the courses taught? Any problems?
English, no problem
- How would you evaluate the level of study in relationship to the level at RU?
Easier to get good grades
- Is the teaching primarily practical or theoretical?
A mix
- Are the professors using cases, group work or lectures (or a mix)?
Group work, labs and lectures
- How is the workload compared to that at RU?
Less
- How is the relationship between faculty and students?
Depends on the teacher, some were very interested in getting to know me while others probably didn't remember my name. The classes were small.
- What is the relationship between the students in the classroom?
Very friendly, everyone is "let in"

Required Literature

- Is the literature in English?
Yes
- How do you estimate the level of the literature?
High
- Is the literature used for detailed knowledge or a broad overview?
Broad overview
- Is exam based on the literature or on the lectures?
They say its supposed to be both, but you only needed the lectures.

Exams

- What types of exams were you given?
Quizzes, mid terms and final
- What knowledge level was required to pass the exams?
60% on final exam, 50% all over.

Other

- Do students have easy access to the library and it's resources?
Yes
- How is the access to the computers?
Good
- How is IT used in the teaching or as a distributor of information?
I worked in CAD a lot, teachers had a web site to distribute information but no all used it.

Description of Courses

Please list all the courses you are taking in the form below:

Example:

<u>Course name:</u>	<u>Exam</u>	<u>Major at RU</u>	<u>Approved as</u> (Common/elective/extra)
255 Urban Services	Project+written	Byggingatæknifræði	Common
264 Soils 2	Written		Common
279 Fluid Dynamics 2	Written		Elective
280 Environmental Engineering	Written		Common
293 Structural Design 1	Written		Common
247 Highway Design Project	Project		Common
257 Urban Planning	Project		Common
268 Construction Materials	Written		Elective
283 Sewage Treatment	Written		Common
297 Structural Design 2	Written		Common

Any other experiences:

The students in my class were most about 3 years younger than me so I would not recommend this school for older students or people who don't like hanging out with younger people. There is no organized social events for the whole school so friends have to be made at school. I had a great time with the people I was with, but it would have been bad if I didn't click with them. I was lucky that there were 3 other girls living in my building, one Canadian, one German and one Italian and we all became good friends. I also knew an Icelandic family in Victoria so I got to know a lot of people.

For future exchange students that want to go to Victoria I would recommend checking out the University of Victoria which I think would be better suited for an exchange student from Iceland. It is bigger and there is a lot more going on. All the people I got to know from UVic were really happy with their school and especially the exchange students.

While I was in Canada I visited the US, went whale watching, went to Vancouver, travelled on Vancouver island, celebrated Halloween and thanksgiving, partied downtown and at friends houses, went to a couple of fairs, fed seals, went to an opera and a manhunt, spent Christmas and got to know a bunch of great people and realize that I love Canada!

Names and e-mails:

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