



## My Exchange Evaluation

### Basic Information

<b>Host University</b>	Dalhousie University
<b>Semester &amp; Year of Exchange</b>	Semester 1 2024
<b>Otago degree(s)</b>	Bachelor of Science
<b>Major(s)</b>	Botany and Marine Science

### Academics/ course load

Which papers did you take whilst on exchange?

<b>Course title</b>	<b>Language of instruction</b>	<b>Otago equivalent</b>
MARI4215 Marine Plants in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	English	Unspecified BTNY 300 level credit
MARI4350 Cutting Edge in Marine Science	English	MARI322
MARI4666 Benthic Ecology	English	MARI301

Total Otago credits gained:  54 points  72 points  108 points  \_\_\_\_\_

Any comments about these papers?

I really enjoyed the papers overall however even though these were 4<sup>th</sup> year papers they were a bit of repetition of stuff I have already covered.

How did the academic experience/ workload/ style of teaching differ from Otago?

The workload was a bit more than Otago in that you had many smaller assignments to keep on top off but it wasn't too much different. The assignments were sort of similar although I did a lot more presentations than Otago and less group work. I did not have to write large reports or essays just

smaller ones. The teaching was overall similar in terms of lectures although two of my courses were two 1.5 hr lectures a week and the professors were easy to access for extra help. I had no labs or fieldtrips which I was a bit disappointed with, although this may have been because I went in winter/the courses I chose. The classes were mostly seminar style.

## Accommodation

*What accommodation did you stay in? What were the pros and cons of your accommodation?*

On campus Residence

### Pros:

Convenience

The meal halls have a good selection of food

I lived at Gerard Hall on the Sexton campus so 20 min walk away from the main campus, but I liked being downtown and being able to get to my campus

My residence was also very quiet and seemed to have more older students which I liked

I ended up getting a double room all to my self

Warm – heating goes 24/7

Furnished with wardrobe, bed and desk.

### Cons:

I think the residence application process was poorly handled. They were not very fast at letting us know about accommodation. You put preferences down, but these are not really taken into consideration as myself and other exchange students did not get any of our preferences. I also was assigned a shared room; I emailed to try and get a single room but was urged to take their offer as Halifax supposedly has a housing crisis. Which is kind of true but also many people flat and lots of exchange students did not have a hard time finding a house. I then ended up not having a roommate.

Other exchange students experience with a roommate sounds negative and uncomfortable and were put with a roommate when they asked to not have one and when asking to switch rooms as they were not able to sleep were turned away.

## Money matters

*Please detail your basic costs, e.g. accommodation, flights, visa, food, insurance*

Accommodation + meal plan = \$7166

Flights = \$4000 + travel insurance

*What means did you use to access your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, Cash passport, foreign bank account, etc.)*

Used Wise = app where you can easily convert into different currency and the fees are not too bad – I would recommend it was easy

## Visas & Insurance

*Did you have to apply for a visa? What was the process?*

No – was able to stay in Canada without an eta for 6 months with US passport

*Did your host university have a mandatory insurance?*

Yes. Had to purchase Dal's health plan unless you could prove your university had equivalent. It was good though it meant all on campus health services were free and covered you for emergencies.

## Extra-curricular/Social Activities

*What organised activities were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?*

The international centre put together a potluck, quiz nights and a welcome day which was really nice.

They also ran a Monday night free meal at the international centre which I recommend

There is an exchange society which was good too. They organised a pub night, ice skating.

I really enjoyed the outdoors society. They did hikes and provided transport. They also did an international student event out to Peggy's cove which was cool.

*What was the university/ city like?*

Halifax is like Dunedin in that it is a university city. However, Halifax is quite a bit bigger than Dunedin. The weather in winter is very different with snow shutting down places from time to time. The university had similar culture to Otago, it was very inclusive and there are lots of cool opportunities to get involved with.

*Any recommendations for things to do, places to visit, places to eat etc.?*

### **Things to do:**

Ice skating/ roller blading at the oval

Walk along the harbour front

### **Places to visit:**

Peggys cove

Point pleasant park

Museum of Natural history

Fisherman's cove

Cape Breton

Lunenburg

Prince Edward Island (you need a car, I didn't get to go but wish I could have)

Citadel hill

Bay of Fundy

The Bluff Wilderness Trail

**Places to eat:**

Dilly Dally café

The cheeky neighbourhood dinner

Tim Hortons

Willy's poutine

*Any tips for future students?*

I had a great time at Dalhousie, they get lots of exchange students from different places and so that is cool to get to make friends from all over the world. The Marine Biology department is amazing, and Dalhousie is one of the top universities for it and so I highly recommend going there. There is lots of information and support when you get there so make the most of that. If you go in the winter, make sure you have good shoes and a serious jacket otherwise you will freeze.

## Overall Experience

*Please write one paragraph (or more) about your exchange experience. Please include some photos!*

My exchange experience was amazing overall. There were definitely ups and downs throughout, I definitely got home sick, and it was difficult to navigate at the start, but I am glad I pushed myself to take this step. I proved to myself that I can figure out lots of things on my own like working out the buses with two suitcases and travelling 30 hours to get to Halifax. I learnt to not be afraid to ask for help ever as it makes everything a lot easier and less stressful. I loved the proper winter I got to experience with snow staying for weeks and a few snow days. One snow day we went sledding down Citadel Hill in plastic bags which worked! I enjoyed my course and studying with friends, and by the end I finally found my favourite study spots in the Life Science building. I met some amazing people, especially exchange students who were in the same boat as me. Despite the temperatures being well below freezing I got into nature when I could, going on hikes and even camping. I even did a polar plunge in the Atlantic. We did movie nights, pub quizzes, a St Patricks day brunch, and a formal farewell dinner. I went ice skating, watched a few hockey games and had lots of hot chocolate and poutine. I got to feed squirrels peanuts and watch lots of crows. I did a trip to Toronto in the mid semester break, which is probably the biggest city I've ever been to, and I got to cross Niagra falls off

the list. I went to a therapy farm with lots of goats, horses, and chickens, and saw the solar eclipse! Then to finish up my incredible time in Nova Scotia I did a 6-day road trip up to Cape Breton national park with many stops along the way. I went with 8 other lovely girls on exchange and had the best time eating lobster rolls and seeing waterfalls and hikes with amazing views at the end. I couldn't think of a better way to end of my exchange and my bachelor's degree, I am extremely grateful for this experience and have so many fond memories I will remember for the rest of my life.



*Peggy's Cove*



*Citadel hill*





*Cape Split Trail- frozen trail*



*The Bluff Wilderness trail in the snow/rain*



*Ataraxy Therapy farm*



*Gypsum Mine Trail – Cape Breton*



*Skyline Trail- Cape Breton*



*Franey Trail- Cape Breton*



*Franey Trail- Cape Breton*

