

# Final Report

for the European-Canadian student exchange of

**University of Applied Sciences, Regensburg**

and

**Kwantlen University College, Surrey**

**Term: Fall 2005**

**Author: Christian  
<C.Zitzmann@gmx.de>**

**Zitzmann**

**Date: 16.01.2006**

# Table of contents

<b>Table of contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Kwantlen</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Education</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<i>Courses</i> .....	3
<i>Instructors</i> .....	4
<i>Tuition fees</i> .....	4
<i>My courses</i> .....	5
<i>Textbooks and office equipment</i> .....	5
<b>Language</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Money</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Living</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Transportation</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Arriving in Canada</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Contacts</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Links</b> .....	<b>8</b>

## **Introduction**

This document is a report of my study term in Vancouver, Canada and also a description of my own impressions related to this great time.

## **Kwantlen**

Kwantlen University College consists of four campuses. All of them are located in the Greater Vancouver Area. The one in Surrey is a small campus in the big, but rather boring suburb of Surrey. Kwantlen provides there everything you need for the courses so it is usually not necessary to travel between different locations.

## **Education**

This Campus offers the IT related programs “Computer Information Systems” and “Information Technology”, but not all courses are offered in every term. Many courses are offered in just one of the three terms per year, so it could be difficult to find enough transferable courses. Once you are used to the Kwantlen website you can find useful information about the offered courses. After you made your selection you have to write an email with your choice of courses to the Kwantlen International Education Office. They will register you for the classes, but you should send this mail before the official register date so you are save to get in the classes because they are limited to a small number of students per class.

You should register in up to four or five classes, due to the rather high work load for each class.

## **Courses**

The mark of a class not only consists of a final exam like in a German University but of several assignments, some quizzes, about two intermediate exams, usually one project, a participation mark and the final examination. This leads to a high work load even for simple courses, and it's necessary to attend most of the classes to reach a good mark.

To help you with difficulties within a course Kwantlen provides a learning center where you can book a personal tutor. The instructors are also very helpful, so you can find good and professional help if you have problems with the courses. You don't need this help very frequently because most of the tasks in the courses are on memorizing. This is often time consuming but not difficult and the understanding part of the courses is quite easy.

The classes there don't feel like the one in a German University of Applied Sciences, they rather feel like classes in school. There are just small groups and the instructor tells the students exactly what they should do for the next class and checks there if it's done. Important parts of the course are repeated very frequently.

At the end of most courses you have to apply the new skills in a group project and present it in front of the class. This project is often very time-consuming and many students are not motivated to work hard for their classes. Therefore it is even more time consuming for people who want a good mark.

### ***Instructors***

The relationship between students and instructors is not as formal as it is in Germany. Students usually call the instructors by their first name. This gives a lesson relaxed character and it is easy to ask questions or make any suggestions to the instructor. This makes the lessons a productive and pleasant time for both sides.

### ***Tuition fees***

The Tuition fees in Canada are much higher than the German ones. An international student in Canada has to pay about \$4000 per term for courses whereas a Canadian citizen only has to pay around \$1500 per term for the same courses. Therefore we as exchange students are in an enviable position because we just have to pay the German fees.

Furthermore students have to buy expensive textbooks for each course. This costs another \$400 per term on top of other fees like transportation and parking. Because of these expenses not everybody is able study in a post secondary school. In order to enable their children to go to University many parents contract insurance when their children are born. This insurance will pay for all costs of post secondary education if the student is capable of studying there. If the children are not capable of getting into post secondary education they won't get the money back.

Due to the high costs of studying I would imagine that most of the students are high motivated and very eager to complete their program, but I couldn't notice this on most students. They sometimes take courses from different programs just to find out which field they are interested in and they are doing this for several years. Many students are working in a low paid job to earn money for their private expenses and they additionally go to school to keep the foot in the door because they know that education is important.

## ***My courses***

I tried to find transferable courses for my German program, but I just found one course matching a required subject. The course INFO 3140 Advanced Data Communication Systems is transferable to Network Management. The other courses I took were able to get transferred to elective courses.

CISY 1212: System Analysis and Design

INFO 3140: Advanced Data Communication Systems

ENGP 1089: Writing Skills

COOP 1101: Job search techniques

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about courses.

The courses at Kwantlen are easier than the courses at a German University of Applied Sciences. Especially the first year courses are very easy. My impression was that students starting at Kwantlen with a high school degree are not as educated as German students starting at a University of Applied Sciences. It isn't common that many students fail a course, but they are studying with a minimum of learning time they don't get good marks. The exams are not easy and its necessary to study for a good mark, but with some effort in memorization you can get a good mark in most of courses. The part of logical understanding is very small.

## ***Textbooks and office equipment***

You will need several textbooks for most of your courses. Kwantlen offers for this reason an own bookstore where you can find them easily, but they are very expensive. There is a small amount of used and cheap books. You can save a lot of money by checking the booklist on the Kwantlen homepage and order it from Amazon or similar internet shops. You should order them as early as possible, because the Canadian post needs about 10 days to ship the book. If you take care about your textbook you are able to sell them back to the bookstore after the final exams.

## **Language**

Canada is a country where most of the people are immigrants. Therefore many people there have a lack of English skills. Especially people from Asia have a hard time to learn English because their languages are totally different. Most of these immigrants are living in Chinatown or a similar region so it's not necessary for them to speak English all day. This makes it even more difficult for them. That's why many immigrant students take ESL courses (English as a second Language) for several years. In order to be able to register in University courses they have to provide an English certificate. To gain this certificate most of them study for three terms and pay the tuition fees for this time.

Having learned English in Germany you are easily capable of understanding the instructors and participate in conversations. After having an English test for the ESL courses the instructor advised the Germans on the first day, that we shouldn't take ESL courses because we would get bored there. Instead of an ESL course I took the course ENGP 1089: "Writing Skills". Most students attending this course were born in Canada or lived there for a long time. I didn't have English experience except of my courses in School and University, but I scored good marks there. There weren't problems with participating in courses, reading the textbooks, having conversations and giving presentations, too. I would advice future students to enrol in an English course, because this is a good and easy chance to improve your English and get in contact with other students.

## **Money**

The easiest way of paying most of the expenses there is by using a credit card because they are accepted almost everywhere. For example you can pay every single drink in a night club by using your credit card. Furthermore showing the card at the entrance improves your chance of getting into some night clubs. When paying with a credit card the actual exchange rate is calculated for each transaction but you have to pay 1.75% fees for the exchange. It's very expensive to withdraw cash at an ATM Machine by using a credit card, but it's rather cheap to use a card with the MAESTRO Symbol. Many ATM Machines accept those cards and you are paying about 1% fee, but there is a maximum withdraw amount of \$500 per day. If you have a bank account at "Deutsche Bank" you can use your bank card at the Scotia bank without paying any fees. Another alternative is to buy traveller cheques in Germany and use them there. They are easy to use and accepted almost everywhere. For change you will get cash money back. Even a homestay host family can accept those cheques. The problem with these cheques is that you have to guess how much money you need. The exchange rate of the

day when you buy those cheques is calculated. When buying these cheques you have to pay 1% fee.

## **Living**

Kwantlen provides a perfect organised program called homestay program. Students within this program are living within a homestay family. For a price of \$700 per month this is a good change of getting in touch with the culture, having the chance to practise English and getting advice. Those students will also share the meals with the family or getting lunch packets if they aren't able to eat at home. Despite the homestay office is very carefully with choosing the family some people are having problems there because the family just wants to make a maximum profit with you. It's recommended to complain instantly at the homestay office if you have problems with the family. They are very eager to help you out.

## **Transportation**

Most people in Canada own a car and use it very frequently. It is easy to buy and register a car there, but you should spend at least \$1500 for a car in order to have a reliable one. There are much cheaper cars available, but because there is no technical inspection like a "TÜV" you won't find a reliable and secure car at a lower price. If the car is still working when selling it, you will get about 60% of the money back. Car insurance in Vancouver is very cheap and gas costs about 70% of the German price.

A very cheap possibility is public transportation but the system in Surrey isn't as good as in bigger German cities. If you are close to a skytrain station or a good bus line to a skytrain station its easy and comfortable to go to downtown. Surrey is a rather boring suburb of Vancouver.

I would recommend joining travel parties and making Bus trips through Canada. If you plan to make trips on your own you can easily rent a car for about \$40 per day.

## **Arriving in Canada**

You should plan to arrive at least one or two weeks prior to the start of classes, because there are orientation days for international students and the tests for the ESL courses. You are also able to get a first orientation and discover Vancouver within these days.

To get from the airport to your homestay family Kwantlen offers a pickup service for students. This service costs about \$60 and it is worth it instead of using a taxi. If two people arriving at the same time and living close to each other, a taxi could be the cheaper choice.

## **Contacts**

**Kim and Lisa** <[homestay@kwantlen.ca](mailto:homestay@kwantlen.ca)>

Kim and Lisa are responsible for the homestay program and also for the Language Buddy Program.

**Susan** <[Susan.Allan@kwantlen.ca](mailto:Susan.Allan@kwantlen.ca)>

Susan Allan is the International Education Coordinator and the main contact person for exchange students.

**Shawn** <[Shawn.Erickson@kwantlen.ca](mailto:Shawn.Erickson@kwantlen.ca)>

Shawn is the Co-operative Education Instructor. He has good contacts to many companies.

## **Links**

**<http://www.translink.bc.ca/>**

This is the Website of the local public transportation Company.

**<http://maps.google.ca/>**

Google provides a very good map with good maps and a business search.

**<http://www.buyandsell.ca>**

You can find advertisements for used goods on this site or insert an advertisement there.