

Victoria Abroad Evaluation Form

PLEASE TYPE THIS EVALUATION FORM & EMAIL IT TO VICTORIA ABROAD AS A WORD DOCUMENT

A: Student Information

VUW degree(s)	Bachelor of Laws + Bachelor of Commerce
Major(s)	International Business and Public Policy
Exchange Institution	University of Oklahoma
VUW Tri & Year of Exchange	Tri 2, 2015 + Tri 1, 2016

B: Finances

Please detail your basic costs in New Zealand dollars. This will help future students plan their own budgets. (Enter your number rounded to the nearest dollar.)

Books	220
Accommodation	5300 (I shared a room in the second semester, otherwise it would be closer to 6000)
Return Airfare	1800
Local Transportation	170
Meals	2340
Visa	500 (including return transport + accommodation in Auckland)
Health & Insurance	1140
Personal Spending	2150
Communications (phone, etc.)	220
Other fees (specify)	Additional Travel: 3500 Car: 1500
What unexpected costs did you encounter? What items were more or less than expected?	<p>Travel was a lot more expensive than I expected. It is very cheap and easy to drive from Oklahoma, provided you have a reliable car. I went halves in a car halfway through my exchange and was able to see a lot of the country as a result. Gas is super cheap in Oklahoma and Texas – it cost us about US\$20 to fill our tank each time. It is a lot more expensive to fly, especially from OKC. If you can, it is best to get a ride down to Dallas and fly out of there. I definitely recommend buying a car with someone you trust at the start of your exchange, it will save you a lot of money! I spent a lot of money on Uber and Cabs in my first semester, because bussing to the nearest grocery store (Walmart) takes at least two hours, despite the fact it is only a 5-minute drive away. You can walk or bike, but it is difficult because the exchange student housing is located right near major highways and interstates. I would recommend looking for alternative accommodation. The exchange student housing seemed cheap at first, but when compared to similar options in the area it really wasn't. For my second semester, I shared a room at Millennium Apartments, which is a lot closer to campus and stores. The exchange student housing is in a terrible location. In general, when you consider the exchange rate, most things are more expensive in the US, but not by a lot. It tends to even out. Everything seems cheaper because the sales tax isn't included on the advertised prices, so you need to be careful. It varies state by state, but sales tax generally isn't above 15%. For restaurants and many other services, you should also tip</p>

a minimum of 15% after tax is added.

How did your financial expenses compare to what you originally expected to spend?

I spent a lot more than I originally planned to, but that is because the exchange rate was quite bad for my first semester. I also did a lot more travel than I first thought I would. It is always best to over-budget and take too much money than not enough because you won't have the opportunity to earn it back while you are over there. Although you are permitted to work on campus under your visa, OU do not allow this at their campus. If you have the opportunity, work hard and save as much as you can because it is worth it when you are over here!

By what means did you maintain your finances? What would you recommend? (Credit card, foreign bank account, traveller's checks, etc.)?

I kept my NZ bank account for the whole time because a lot of my money came in while I was on an exchange. It was the easiest option but by far the most expensive – I would recommend finding a good tertiary and/or travel package while abroad (and try to get a spare credit/debit card before you leave because having one sent here costs a lot!). Air NZ have a card that has by far the lowest fees and is great for travelling, I found out about it when I was already abroad and so couldn't apply. It isn't really worth getting a US bank account if you have a Visa or MasterCard because people pay with credit card or cash everywhere anyway – even if you pay a hefty fee for cash withdrawals, it will be less than paying for wire transfers. The other option would be to get a local bank account here and transfer money via PayPal. My personal recommendation would be to use an Air NZ card and then have a back up Visa credit card with you in case they don't accept MasterCard. I needed to ask my family for a loan while I was over here and so it was easy for them to transfer money to my NZ bank account, you can then transfer easily to an Air NZ card.

What financial advice would you give students attending the same university as you?

Work as much as possible before you leave. The University implemented a compulsory fee for incoming exchange students in my second semester, I believe this is US\$200 but is likely to go up with recent budget changes. Textbooks are very expensive but most are available at the library. I took a language class and although the standard of teaching was very high, the textbook prices were too. I chose not to purchase the US\$200 textbook (they use this for 3 years usually) and access code for online homework and just suffer the lower grade. Be careful with your spending and budget very strictly, because it can get out of hand very quickly. Things tend to come up and there is a lot of great shopping, but try to avoid buying too many material items as they will cost a fortune to get back to New Zealand at the end of your exchange! You can definitely have a great time on a budget, but most students will need to prioritise spending if you plan to travel a lot too. Drinks and meals seem cheap at first, but they add up quickly especially with tips!

What was the average cost of a can of coke or coffee in your host country?

A can of coke would be less than US\$1 and a coffee less than US\$3 for standard bottomless (unlimited refills at most places, same goes for soda aka "fountain drinks"). Starbucks coffee is US\$3-5 and is great.

C: Visas & Insurance **Please note this information is recommended by VUW students & current at the time of their exchange. For all up-to-date visa information you must check with the embassy/consulate of your host university.*

Did you have to apply for a visa? If so, was it difficult? What was the process, how long did it take and how much did it cost?

I had to apply for a J1 visa. It wasn't very difficult and when I had questions, the University liaison was very helpful. It cost me about \$500 NZ including return airfare to and from Auckland, as well as accommodation. Get onto your visa as early as possible, as there is several forms you need to fill out and the appointments fill up very quickly. You need to travel to Auckland for the meeting and bring a book for that, because it took me about 2 hours of waiting and you are not allowed to bring bags in. I applied relatively late for mine and it took less than a month to get it to me, but I believe they advise to apply at least 2 months in advance.

Do you have any advice for future students when applying for visas to your host country?

Get onto it as early as possible and try to arrange your visa appointment to coincide with a weekend trip to Auckland if you are already heading up there.

Did your host university have a mandatory insurance? Or a particular insurance they recommended? If Yes, what was it and how much did it cost?

Yes, they allow a waiver but I tried about 20 different policies and they would not waive it at all. You may have better luck just waiting and going to the office when you arrive, but I didn't want to take the risk. They do not accept travel insurance as acceptable for the waiver, so the safest option is to purchase their policy. It is very expensive at US\$400 per semester. On that, you also have to have co-pay for many things. This works kind of like an excess. I used the policy once for a GP visit and didn't have to pay anything. I doubt they will waive the policy and so unfortunately, the easiest option is just to pay it.

What insurance company did you use and would you recommend it to future students?

I used the compulsory insurance company, as mentioned above.

D: Academics at Host University

Which courses did you take while on exchange? Please rate the difficulty of each course (1-5, 1 = Very Easy & 5 = Extremely Difficult) and leave any comments you may have.

Course Title	Language of Instruction	VUW course equivalent or elective	VUW points/credits value	Rating (1-5)	Comments
VUW Trimester 1/YEAR					
B AD 3513: International Business	English	IBUS 212		5	Dr Ana Bolini was an excellent Professor and although this course reiterated a lot of material I had already covered in lower-level VUW courses, it

					expanded on all of this and had a strong focus on group work and interactive learning.
ITAL 1225: Beginning Italian II	English	ITAL 114		3	This was an online course and I found it very difficult as I switched into it halfway through the semester. I would not recommend taking language papers as online courses at OU.
MGT 4323: Cross-Cultural Issues of Management	English	IBUS 312		5	This had a lot of crossover with International Business and was also taught by Dr Ana Bolini, who was a great Professor. This was one of my favourite classes and elaborated on fundamentals I had learnt at VUW with a lot of group work and practical thinking.
PSC 2223: Making Public Policy	English	PUBL 306		5	This was a great course that had a strong focus on American Public Policy, whilst also discussing tools for analysing Public Policy in general. It was interactive and as part of the course, we worked on a specific policy issue throughout the semester, which culminated in a 25+ page comprehensive paper on that issue.
VUW Trimester 2/YEAR					
HES 1921: Basketball	English	Elective		5	Fun course, great morning fitness class and I was able to significantly

					develop my non-existent basketball skills. Students and staff were extremely welcoming and although they were a lot more advanced than me, I never felt like I wasn't an equally valued member of the team. Everyone went out of their way to make this class as fun as possible for everyone.
MKT 4523: International Marketing	English	MARK 302		2	Teaching method didn't suit my learning style at all. Grades mostly based on take-home papers, which were due before class. Not a lot of teaching done, large focus on group work, out of class learning and discussion/media in class. I found it very repetitive and a lot of rope learning from the textbook.
NAS 1013: Intro to Native American Studies	English	Elective		5	The best course I have ever taken and probably will ever take. Incredibly valuable and Dr Tsatoke is an incredible teacher. I learnt a lot in a very short period of time and this class taught essential critical thinking, analysis and debate skills. Would recommend to anyone, but particularly to Public Policy or History majors. A lot of the discussion material can be applied to MPI issues in NZ and vice versa. Dr Tsatoke really values outside

					perspectives in her class.
SPAN 1115: Beginning Spanish	English + Spanish	Elective		5	Another great class. Very advanced and Profesora Carpio-Parra is a great teacher who encourages her students to learn a range of practical skills. By the end of the class you will have strong writing and speaking skills in Spanish and will be able to have basic conversation very easily. The course is 5 credit hours at OU, so I took two 2.5 hour classes each week and didn't find myself bored for a second.

Course Registration/Enrolment

Please describe the registration process at your host university. What kind of help was available?

This is easier if you are coming in VUW Tri 1, as you get to apply at the same time as all of the other students. Students coming in VUW Tri 2 may find that there are limited spaces available for the courses they want or need, as OU students have applied far in advance, during the summer. I didn't experience any issues and found it fairly straightforward. Exchange students simply fill out a Google doc form with the course details and then the exchange student coordinator applies on your behalf. Although many of my classes were "full", I went in and spoke to the Professors in the first week and was approved to stay in that class. It is hard to do anything over email or before you get there and is much easier to just go in and speak to the relevant people in the first week if you have any issues. There are a lot of people changing classes in the first week. You can also check Professor reviews online to see which classes will be best – Professors have all of the influence on your grades and a bad Professor will almost always mean your grades will suffer.

How successful were you in registering/enrolling for classes you wanted? What advice would you offer to next year's exchange students about registration at your host university?

I got all of the classes I applied for, it isn't too difficult and if you feel like the class isn't right, speak to your Professor in the first lesson and they will steer you in the right direction. I changed many of my classes because although they looked correct on paper in NZ, they weren't the right fit to cross-credit my courses back home. In all instances, my Professors were the ones to give me advice on which classes were better suited. You should definitely do this in the first lesson, as I had to switch one of my classes halfway through the semester.

Do you have any advice for future students when choosing and applying for courses?

If you are able to, call the University or find the Professors email addresses directly so that you can contact them for course outlines (they call them syllabus/syllabi), you will need these for VUW approval to cross-credit. This is extremely time consuming, so do not procrastinate!

Academic Experience

How did your academic experience differ from your time spend at Victoria? Did the academic experience meet your expectations?

The academic experience was very different. The classes tend to be smaller and more intimate, with the Professor knowing each student personally. Your classmates tend to be the same people in most of your classes and in business courses, there is a huge focus on group work, so you get to know everybody pretty well. Attendance is compulsory for most classes and there isn't a lot of leniency on this. American students tend to leave their assignments to the last minute, which is totally possible and generally expected (even if advised against) by Professors. It is common to contest your grades if they are bad, but the Professors generally don't negotiate if they can tell you have been slacking off. They will not hesitate to fail you if you don't go to class. Generally, if they can tell you are working hard, they will reward you with good grades. I found the workload to be higher but generally about the same as VUW. The assignments tended to be easier, but it was just a lot more work. For the same grade percentage, you may be doing 2-3 times the amount of work as in New Zealand. It is all totally worth it and the Professors are all at a very high standard, I found that I retained a lot more knowledge through my courses at OU than some of my courses at VUW.

How did the style of teaching at your host university compare with that at VUW? How did the workload compare to what you would expect at VUW?

As above, it is closer and more interactive. The Professors tend to have open dialogue throughout the class time and participation is generally part of your grade. The workload was a lot higher, but not particularly difficult.

What would you recommend as an appropriate course load for other VUW students visiting your partner university? What specific courses would you recommend to visiting VUW students? Why?

Four courses are easily manageable. You could take five, but I would advise against it. With four courses, you can arrange your schedule so that you are only in class 3-4 days a week. This can leave you with Monday and Friday for travelling. I absolutely recommend Introduction to Native American Studies with Dr Tsatoke, if you have the opportunity. It is a highly rewarding class and the workload isn't too high. I enjoyed all of my classes, but this was my favourite by far. I learnt more in this class than any other class I have taken, both abroad and in New Zealand. I would also recommend taking sports classes if you have the chance, I took Basketball and it was a lot of fun. OU are renowned for their sports programs and the facilities are state of the art. There are a lot of fun courses that you can take. The language program is also excellent and focuses a lot on practical skills, so I retained a lot of the Spanish that I learnt in one semester.

What advice would you give VUW students about succeeding academically at your host university?

Go to class and do the work that is expected of you. If you do that, you will no doubt get straight As.

What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, and internet access at your host university?

Everything is modern and reliable. The University invests a lot of money in their facilities and it shows. If you are in the business school, you can hire laptops (including Macs) and even take them home – I barely used mine and knew people who only used these hire laptops and cloud-based documents.

If you went to a country where English is not the native language, how did you prepare for this? Were there any intensive language courses provided by the host university?

English was the main language, but Spanish is also commonly spoken. I took an introductory Spanish course in my second semester and it helped me a lot.

E: Accommodation

What form of accommodation did you stay in?

For the first semester, I stayed in Traditions Apartments and for the second semester, I stayed in Millennium Apartments. There are many similar apartment complexes around OU with low prices and plenty of facilities.

What were the pros and cons of this form of accommodation?

Traditions was expensive and lacked facilities when compared to other complexes. However, the lease period suited exchange students. You were placed randomly with exchange students and this could be both good and disastrous. I had many friends who had huge issues with their roommates and it was difficult and expensive to change apartments. The matching system is very poor and if you are over 21, it isn't a great option. However, it is full of exchange students so you will be surrounded by people in the same position as you. There are always social events happening and everyone tends to get along, so it's a fun environment to be in and easy to make friends.

Millennium was relatively expensive, but I shared a room so I halved the cost. You can use services like Roomster to find roommates who are similar to you. I found these complexes better because they had more American students in them and they also have social events, so it isn't too hard to make friends. You may need to be a bit more outgoing than usual, but generally people are friendly and welcoming – especially to New Zealanders. Millennium had a big party environment and many of the Footballers and Basketball players lived there. The facilities are excellent and there is a computer lab and free printing as well as free bike hire. You can find them online. Roomster is great because you can find people who are looking to get out of their leases and negotiate pricing etc. that way.

What accommodation would you recommend to future students?

If you want the exchange student experience – Traditions. If you want a more “American” experience – Millennium (or many of the other similar complexes). Avoid the dorms altogether, they are overpriced and gross from what I heard!

How early can you move into accommodation?

It depends on the lease. Generally around the start of semester.

What options were available for meal plans or cooking facilities? How satisfied were you with the food?

Meals plans are available but are overpriced and there are no healthy options. If you have dietary requirements (e.g. Vegan, GF etc.), it is easier to cook for yourself and a lot cheaper. Being Vegetarian, I

cooked for myself most of the time and took packed lunches and found this prevented me from gaining 20kgs (American food tends to be fattier, saltier and sweeter than we are used to) but eating out it wasn't too difficult to find healthy (ish), veggie options! Chipotle is probably the best value for money. Most apartments have large kitchens with everything you need to cook.

If you lived in off-campus housing, how easy was it to find? What should future VUW exchange students know about living off-campus?

I didn't know about off campus housing before arriving in Norman. It is definitely worth looking into, the main ones are: Millennium, The Ave, The Cottages, The Edge, University Greens and Aspen Heights. There are more than you can count all close to campus or with free shuttles to campus. Use Roomster to find leases to take over!

Do you have any tips of advice for future students when applying for accommodation?

Consider the lease length and any deposits you may need to make and whether these are refundable or not. It can be better to invest in a secure apartment complex with a good reputation so that you can feel safer. You can check their Facebook pages and/or Yelp for reviews from current and previous tenants.

F: Personal & Cultural Connections

What was it like making friends? How successful were you at making friends with local (i.e., not international) students?

It was difficult to make local friends living in Traditions, because you are surrounded by exchange students all the time. I found it a lot easier to make friends living in Millennium because it was mostly locals. Either way, it isn't very difficult to make friends, most people are very open and the teaching environment helps foster friendship within the classroom. There are a lot of clubs on campus and there are specific programs such as OU Cousins and the SGA Greek Exchange program, which also help you to make friends with locals. I did find there were some cultural differences in relation to friendship in the US – many people are extremely friendly and are happy to be friends with you but it can be difficult to develop more meaningful friendships with classmates etc. Plans are extremely tentative and it is common for people to cancel at the last minute, it isn't because they don't like you or don't want to hang out – it is just a different type of culture! The best friends that I made were exchange students and locals who I met through living at Millennium.

What was it like to adjust to the culture of your exchange country/university?

It was interesting to say the least. Do not underestimate the cultural differences, they are subtle but significant. As explained above, plans are often very tentative and it is common for people to pull out last minute, so you should be very flexible! If somebody makes you an offer, they generally won't follow through with it themselves – in these cases you should send a follow up text/call etc. to make it happen. People are very friendly and it is easy to make a lot of friends, but it does take a bit of effort on your part to make more meaningful friendships. Many students are reluctant to make friends with exchange students because they know that you will be leaving soon. The international studies department is good for this, as they can help you to connect with people who want to travel in the future and who have been in your shoes before. The University has a very strong sporting culture and as part of this, a lot of school spirit and pride. Many of the chants are derogatory towards other teams, in particular Texas as the main rival of OU. This isn't as mean-spirited as it may at first seem, it is just part of the loyalty and pride they hold for their teams. Other teams chant the same stuff about OU and it is just part of the culture, as shocking as it may seem to begin with! Oklahoma is traditionally quite conservative compared to New Zealand, but the

campus is quite liberal. I didn't notice any significant differences in this area, other than the fact that people tended to be more extreme on both sides with their views. Also, many students tend to follow the same voting patterns as their parents, even if it seems like it goes against what they personally believe in. I was warned not to discuss religion and/or politics at all, but I found people to be extremely accepting of alternate views. You just have to be careful in the way that you phrase things in order to avoid offending the person that you are speaking to!

What, if any, cultural differences did you find particularly challenging? How would you recommend students to prepare for these differences?

As mentioned above, tentative plans are handled best by being flexible. More extreme political ideologies are best handled by being considerate and open-minded to all viewpoints. For example, I took a policy paper where someone was extremely pro-guns, which I originally thought was ridiculous, but after listening to their reasoning you can often understand where people are coming from in most cases. There is a lot of context to American policy that we do not understand until we listen to both sides. Generally, if you feel confronted by cultural differences in the US, it is best to just dive in and adopt their way of living, unless of course this conflicts with your own personal values. For example, it is considered extremely rude not to tip at restaurants and for other services where tipping is typical. I had some friends who chose to tip lower than the customary amount or to not tip at all in some cases and this is very frowned upon. It is important to understand that many in the service sector are paid a minimum wage of \$2/hr and therefore rely on tips as their main source of income. If the service is bad, you usually just tip a bit less. The other major difference is that everyone drives, everywhere. They drive bigger cars and trucks because gas is a lot cheaper and the public transport in areas like Oklahoma is very poor. It can be hard as an exchange student, but the easiest option is to invest in a car if you are able to. Otherwise you will be relying on Ubers a lot of the time. Communication can be difficult, so try to familiarise yourself with local words. Many people never leave the state and are not exposed to New Zealand words such as rubbish bin – if you use these, they might look at you as if you are speaking a foreign language. You will need to adopt an American vocabulary if you want to be understood by most people!

What parts of the culture did you most appreciate?

The people are extremely kind, generous and friendly to strangers. Southern hospitality is real and most Americans are extremely welcoming to exchange students. I also found people to be very open-minded and understanding of different views and ideologies, even if they don't agree with you.

How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?

Everyone was very welcoming and kind.

As far as you could tell, how easy would it be for students with disabilities to study at your partner university? For students who are visible minorities in your host country? For students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered?

As far as I could tell, the campus seemed to be very open and welcoming to minorities, students with disabilities and the LGBTQI community. However, a local friend of mine told me that the University is not as welcoming as it may seem to me and that they still have a fair way to go. He mostly focused on the lack of quality counselling and advocacy services available on campus, as well as a lack of LGBTQI student groups on campus. He did mention some local students could be cruel to other local students, but this is mostly in the context of Greek life and would not be something that exchange students would experience as much. I can't really comment on this and so I would suggest doing research into the campus and their

accommodations or lack thereof before committing.

Did you face any issues regarding discrimination in your host country? What were they, and what advice would you give to future students?

I didn't face any deliberate discrimination. There were times that I felt discriminated against simply for being a foreigner, but these were minor and mostly to do with communication issues. I wouldn't be able to list specific examples. I would advise people to try to learn the American communication style and to generally follow that, or people simply can't understand your accent or vocabulary.

G: Extra-curricular/Social Activities

What organized activities (clubs, sports, etc.) were available to students? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future exchange students?

There are so many organized activities available it is unbelievable. There is a club, society, group etc. for every type of interest. I would recommend attending the activities fair during orientation in the first week (check the OU SGA, UPB, CAC pages for more info on events that you might not hear about through the international studies department).

What do you recommend other visiting students see or do on their weekends or holidays?

Oklahoma is a beautiful place to explore and I definitely recommend visiting Wichita Mountains and Turner Falls, which were my two favourite in-state getaways. Bricktown in OKC is also a great place to explore. Most people over 21 head to the Campus Corner bars in the weekends, which are a lot of fun. Most exchange students travel outside of the state on long weekends and holidays, though, as there are so many stunning national parks to be seen. I recommend purchasing a national parks pass if you plan on visiting more than 2-3, it is per vehicle rather than per person and as such, can be shared between multiple people. It is valid for popular national parks such as the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone etc. where one-off fees are quite expensive. In fall, I recommend going to the Texas State Fair where the OU vs. Texas game is held. For Thanksgiving and other holidays, speak to your OU cousin, host family or other local friends because generally people will welcome you into their home if they know you won't have family to celebrate with.

What opportunities were there for students to work on-campus? Off-campus?

You cannot work on-campus or off-campus at OU. If you try to do this without the University's permission, you could risk immediate deportation and I would strongly advise against it.

What volunteer or internship opportunities were there for students?

There are a multitude of volunteer and internship opportunities that you can access through OU's career portal and through your courses. Rotaract is a great student-led volunteer organization that I was involved with.

5 things to take to your host country or region

1	NZ Food – It is impossible to find Marmite, Tim Tams, Pineapple Lumps, Whittakers and many other kiwi favourites in the US, let alone in Oklahoma!
2	External hard-drive, which you should use regularly to back up all of your files. My laptop broke during the semester and I lost all of my notes because I didn't back up regularly! It was a nightmare to deal with, as you generally compile your notes in class and there aren't detailed lecture slides to rely on.
3	Deodorant! It is very expensive in the US and they don't have the same brands or types as NZ.
4	Jeans, because the sizing tends to be different here and it can be hard for average-tall people to find jeans that cover their ankles!
5	Spare copies of everything you can get – drivers license, credit cards etc. Keep them locked in a safe place because it can be really difficult and expensive to replace these if they are lost, damaged or stolen abroad! On that note, get an Oklahoma ID when you first arrive so you can avoid taking your NZ passport out to bars/clubs. Most on campus corner will accept your driver's license, but many won't.

5 pieces of useful advice would tell a VUW student going to your host university

1	Keep an open mind
2	Dive straight into the Oklahoma culture and way of life
3	Be outgoing and adventurous
4	Make the most of every opportunity; your time there will be over before you know it!
5	Be more forward when making friends than you would be at home

Top 5 Things to do

What are your 'Top 5 Things To Do' future VUW students at your host university or city/country?

1	Go to an OU Football game and tailgate
2	Visit some of the national and state parks e.g. Wichita Mountains, the Grand Canyon, Yosemite
3	Go to an OU Frat Party
4	Take a road trip (route 66 runs straight through Oklahoma!)
5	Join an organization or team on campus

H: Personal Experience

Please write one paragraph about your exchange experience. Plus, don't forget to submit some photos to the exchange office!!

My exchange has been the best experience of my life. I had an incredible time and made life-long friends while learning so much about myself, others and the world around us. OU is unique in the experience that it offers and I was often asked why I went there, out of all the exchange partners that VUW has. To begin with, it was a bit of luck but I grew to fall in love with Oklahoma and everything that it has to offer. Kind,

open-minded people who welcome you into their lives with ease and a sense of community, pride and school spirit like none other. It was difficult at times, but every bump in the road was worth it to learn so much about the culture of my host country and my own culture, too. I was searching for the true “American” experience at OU and I can definitely say that is what I got, I recommend anyone looking for something similar to consider OU as one of your top choices – you won’t regret it. Boomer Sooner!