

## Global exchange: interim report

### **Bishop's university**

### **Fall semester 2023 and winter semester 2024**

### **Academic program at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität: B. sc. Biologie**

### **Classes I took abroad fell under the academic programs of: Biology, musical theater**

Moving abroad for studying is very exciting but also needs to be planned precisely beforehand. I chose to stay for two semesters at Bishop's university in Quebec, Canada. Therefore I needed a CAQ and a study permit. The CAQ is a document which allows a temporary stay in the province of Quebec. I started my application process for the CAQ as soon as I received my "letter of admission" from Bishop's, which I would recommend to any incoming exchange student. The CAQ is then needed to apply for a study permit. For the application of the study permit several documents/steps are needed. Biometrics need to be submitted. The only two official institutions that are authorized to take your biometrics in Germany are in Düsseldorf and Berlin. So keep in mind that you need to travel all the way there to get your biometrics taken.

When I finally completed all the steps for the application of my study permit and submitted it online, I started looking for accommodations in Lennoxville/Sherbrooke. In general living on campus can be very comfortable but I decided against it because I found the rent to be too high and I wanted to be able to cook for myself. Even though there is "Paterson" housing which includes a kitchen in the apartment, it's not always guaranteed that you get into the residence that you want to get in. With that in mind and the costs for the meal plan at the dining hall (which I would have to have bought if I'd get into one of the residences with no kitchen; buying your own groceries is way cheaper), I decided that I would be living off-campus. I found a room off-campus in a 5-minute walking distance, which I think is totally fine.

When everything was finally organized and planned out it was time to say goodbye to my family and friends on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August. I decided to leave for Canada almost two weeks prior to the start of classes because I wanted to explore Montreal for the first couple of days and Bishop's organized mandatory orientation days for international students starting as off the 30<sup>th</sup> of August. When we first got there all the international students were welcomed warmly. You could feel that all the people working there were dedicated to make our start at Bishop's go as smoothly as possible. Also, the international orientation days were a great opportunity to meet a bunch of new international people and befriend with them. Classes started on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September. At the same time the orientation week, which is open to all newly incoming students, started. O-week is not mandatory, but I would highly recommend participating in it. It's a fun opportunity to make friends or bond with your newfound friends even more. As an exchange student you must pay 90 CAD to register. It was a fun week of activities, getting to know the campus and partying (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic versions of O-week are offered).

When classes started, I was a little confused at first because lectures are not held the way they are held back in Germany. While in Germany most of my courses were held in big lecture halls and mostly with a lot of students, at Bishop's it was more of a school-like environment. Since the classes were not too big most of my teachers knew my name, which

was kind of nice. What also really surprised me was that it is common to address your teacher with their first name. I found that to be a little strange at first, but it creates a comfortable learning environment without any feeling of hierarchy.

As for my classes I only enrolled into biology-related courses at first but when I learned that I could also try something else I decided to add a musical theater class. It was definitely something I had never done before and, in the end, it turned out to be fun.

Besides that, my classes differed from my classes back in Germany in that point that my grade was not dependent on one exam only, but on two exams, participation marks and attendance. I personally think that that was a very easy way to improve my grades.

Also, the seats in the classes are offered after “first come, first serve”. Since I only registered for bio-classes at first and not for classes that I was interested in and covered topics outside of my field of study, I couldn’t register for all the classes that I wanted to because most of the classes were already full. Still, I was fine with my selection of courses.

In terms of the city structure, Sherbrooke is very different to Freiburg. It’s a typical north American city which is made to be explored by car. Although the city offers public transportation (buses) it might take a while to get to places that are not located downtown (going downtown takes approximately 20 min). Still my friends and I went to Sherbrooke a lot by bus. It is always possible to get where you want to go but it might take a little longer.

So far coming to Bishop’s was very beneficial to me. Over the time my English improved, I got to know a different approach of teaching and I could make new friends coming from all over the Globe.