Exchange Report – Canada, autumn 2015 and spring 2016, Ricardo Florez

Basic Information
McGill University, Montreal, autumn 2015 and spring 2016; Bachelor’s in Molecular Biology

Facts about Montreal
Montreal is the second most populated city in Canada with approximately 2 million people. The city is located in Southern Quebec. As in the rest of Canada both French and English are the official languages. Montreal is a very multicultural city, which offers something for everyone. The Old City has preserved buildings from the 17th century, whereas the downtown offers splendid surrounding by skyscrapers. There are many places that are a must see, for instance the Plateau Mont-Royal, the Petite Italia and Mont Royal. The latter is a hill, which offers spectacular views of the entire city. It is also famous for being a perfect sport place during all the seasons. Personally, I enjoyed the downtown area most.

McGill University
McGill University is the highest ranked university in Canada, and is also high recognized internationally. The university has two campuses, the Downtown campus which is in the heart of the city and a second one on the city periphery, the McDonald Campus.

There is a high variety of faculties you can attend to. I studied at the Faculty of Science, which has most of the courses at the Downtown Campus. Worth to note, is that the workload is a bit higher than that in Sweden, for example you usually study 4-5 courses at the same time. In addition, there are midterm exams and final exams for each course. This is to see that you have really understood the concepts throughout the lectures and the entire course.

Arrival
I arrived in Toronto the 23th of August and traveled from there to Montreal by train. The first day of classes for me was the Friday 2nd of September. The introduction week was between 30th of August until the 5th of September. During this period you have the opportunity to attend to froshes, game/parties organized by the different university clubs. You also have the opportunity to meet future classmates and take a tour around the university campuses or around Montreal.
Courses

General
Most courses are of 3 credits (6 Swedish credits). You usually study 4-5 courses and have 3-4 lectures per week (each lecture is between 60-90 min). As in Sweden, you are expected to work 40h at least with university work per week.

Courses

1. BIOL 314 (Molecular Biology of Oncogenes):
Cancer is presented from the molecular to the patient level. Genetic and environmental causes are presented, and research methods are studied. Good course and good work load. The teachers are engaging and willing to help you when you have any questions.

2. PSYC 318 (Behavioural Neuroscience)
Scientific publications about behavioral experiments are presented and discussed in class. Emotions, social hevaior, addiction, sleep and other behaviors are investigated in depth from a neuroscience perspective. Very interesting and good course, which really gets you motivated to continue learning about neuroscience. The course teacher is very good and is willing to help you understand all the concepts. Really inspiring course.

3. NSCI 396 (Undergraduate Research Project)
Individual neuroscience project of 3 credits. The course gives you a really good opportunity to test your area of interest and to make contact with leader scientific groups at McGill.

4. PSYC 213 (Cognition)
A course about human cognition and consciousness based on neuroscience and psychological scientific publications. Inspiring teacher and good teaching assistants.

Accommodation
In my situation I lived off campus. Despite this, I lived very central to everything. The place of my accommodation was Evo Centre Ville, a student residence in the heart of the city. I found the residence very adequate, since there was only a distance of 7 min walk to the Downtown campus. In addition, it is very close to the university restaurants. For this reason, it is very easy to have a student meal plan when you live in Evo Centre Ville. The residence offered everything a student needs such as laundry, kitchen, gym and swimming pool. It is very easy to get accommodation here, and best of all is that contracts are flexible. That is, you decide how many months you want to stay here and
you pay when you have arrived at the place. More information can be found on Evo´s website: [http://www.evomontreal.com/](http://www.evomontreal.com/)

**NB:** A second Evo residence exists in Montreal. This is called Evo-Vieux Montreal, and is also part of the Evo student residence chain. It is a little bit further away to McGill campus and the university restaurants, but is maybe more adequate if you want to live close to the city train station.

**Spare time**
I explored Montreal whenever I could and met with friends. Besides, I like to do exercise.

**Costs**
Both the rents and the other expenses (for example food, clothes and bus/metro cards) are about the same as in Sweden.

**Other**
Bring good winter clothes, since the temperatures can drop very low. Appropriate boots and winter jacket are always recommended when you go to Montreal.