



PERSÖNLICHER BERICHT

Non-EU Student Exchange Programm

2019/2020

BewerbungID: 3033

Nominierte Studienrichtung: 066/914 Studienrichtung Masterstudium Internationale Betriebswirtschaft

Angaben zum Aufenthalt:

Gastinstitution: University of Chile - (Chile)

Aufenthaltszeitraum: WS 2019/2020

Verfassen Sie bitte einen persönlichen Bericht über den Studienaufenthalt

- **Mindestumfang:** Fließtext 1 Seite DinA4
- **Inhalt:** Gastuniversität, Kurse, Prüfungen, Mitstudierende, Unterkunft, etwaige Schwierigkeiten etc.

BERICHT ÜBER DEN STUDIENAUFENTHALT

Dear Non-EU Exchange Team,

First of all thank you for allowing this incredible experience which the exchange semester represents, for helping with your constant support during the whole permanence in the host country, and for allowing me to write down these few lines, which will also help me to make a final balance and assess the final outcomes of this last semester.

It has been very interesting for sure. Quite some cultural shocks to overcome at the very beginning, adverse weather conditions when I arrived there in July, coming from European summer and finding myself in the middle of the Chilean winter, no heating system in neither Chilean houses or at the university, and the high cost of living in general, food and transportation in particular, scared me.

When I arrived there, I went to live and work in a hostel, in order to save some money. This helped me at the beginning, since I didn't know anybody when I first landed in Chile, and working there allowed me to integrate myself in the hostel's working team, and feel a bit like in a small international family, and improve fast my Spanish level. I started following the classes at the University, and I soon found myself overwhelmed by the amount of work the Chilean courses required. I had 5 courses, 2 accounting courses, each taking place three times a week, a macroeconomics class, taking place twice a week, and 2 easier sustainability courses, and all of them were taught in Chilean Spanish. The two accounting courses required all my energies, to keep pace with the huge amount of homework, weekly tests, group works, exams and so on, considering my previous basic accounting knowledge and the fact that those two courses were considered advanced at the host Uni. Macroeconomics was hard too, but I had a big luck in having a very good professor and a very small class, only 5 students attended it. The professor was very well prepared, he taught us with passion and took time to answer each of our single questions, going to class was a pleasure. The other two sustainability courses were definitely easier by the content taught, interesting topics for me, so following them was more out of pleasure than a real need for ects.

Considering the effort the university required me, I soon had to leave the work at the hostel. I found myself a room in a shared house closer to the university, saving up almost one hour and half of traveling every day. Was a good choice and a very lucky one, since the environment in the house was very enjoyable. 5 people and a dog under the same



roof, the 2 Chilean house owners, other two exchange students and me. I soon felt like at home. Furthermore, the neighbourhood was very safe and quiet, almost a luxury living there considering the chaotic city that Santiago de Chile is, the criminal rate, and how unsafe and dangerous other areas of the city can be, especially for foreigners. Living there allowed me to enjoy more the life in Santiago, or at least the life in my small neighbourhood, walking from home to university and back, to learn more about Chilean culture by living with two very patient Chileans, who were teaching us more about the reality of their country, and to concentrate all my energies to the courses at the University. One good thing about the University of Chile, was that it offered several opportunities for its students to practice sports directly at the campus, so in the free hours between a lecture and another, we could enjoy the climbing wall, the gym and the dance and yoga classes.

But quite soon, all of this got suddenly interrupted. The 18th of October the social protests started. In the first days the level of violence reached was unbelievable. Metro stations, busses, buildings have been set on fire; emergency status have been declared, military came in the streets, tanks were driving around, throwing tear gas at the people, shooting at the protestants in the face with rubber bullets. Human rights were violated every day more and more, people was losing their eyes, people go arrested, people died. Whole Chile was under curfew, no one allowed on the streets after 8 pm, then 7, then 6pm. In this situation of course the university closed. All the classes got cancelled, all the final exams suspended. Nobody knew what was going to happen, in that uncertain circumstance, with the protests going on and on. University closed for a couple of weeks at the beginning, than for other two, until it was clear that the semester wouldn't have finished in normal conditions. Exchange students started to fly back home, scared and anxious to see their family. I decided to stay, as I said I've been lucky with my Chilean flatmates, I didn't feel abandoned nor lonely. They helped me and the other exchange students I was living with, to understand the situation, the reasons behind all of this, the fact that not all the information reported at the news were true, which were trying to describe the whole protest as pure acts of vandalism, instead of describing the desperation of the population. Anyway at the end, what was happening, it felt to me necessary and I accepted it. I was a bit scared and anxious of course: scared because everything was happening close to our home, a couple of streets further than that peaceful neighbourhood, in the main square exactly between my home and my university; and anxious because nobody from the university was telling us what to do, and how were we going to write the final exams, until the last week of November, when they told us we would have had to write the exams at home, working on projects, and studying by ourselves what was left from the program. Again I felt myself overwhelmed, especially with the two accounting courses, which I was not understanding and which projects were requiring a lot of days of work. I had to delay my departure from Santiago, I was supposed to travel a bit around Chile after the ending of the semester, but had to stay a bit longer to finish what I had to do.

Today I just found out my final grades, and saw that I passed one of the two accounting courses and failed the other, passing 4 out of 5 courses, and I was very happy about it.

Looking back at this semester, I can say that it went all fine after all. At the university, all the efforts done have been rewarded, with the accommodation I couldn't have been luckier, and at the end I could even travel a bit before coming back to Europe at the end of January. If I had to do all over again, I wouldn't change anything about it, not even the protests, and I would do everything exactly in the same way, even the "unpleasant" experiences, as it has been the exploited work at the hostel, because I still learned something from it, allowing me to grow a bit more. At the end, I can consider myself satisfied and happy about the experience done.

The things are not done yet, however. With the difficult situation in Chile at the moment, with the protest and the new corona virus problem, things at the University are slowed down. I've been emailing the international office in the last months asking for my grades and transcript of records, and I still don't have any answer about it. Maybe it has already been sent directly at Uni Wien, or it still has to be written, who knows. With a bit of patience, we'll find out, hoping that there won't be any problem if the 3 months deadline after the end of the semester will be passed.

Again, thank you for allowing this unbelievable experience

Best wishes,

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