

## **Report:**

### **Spring Term 2016 at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC**

by Tanyew Singer

My experience at the Appalachian State University (ASU) last semester was superb. It was one of the best experiences of my life and I am happy to share some details about my time in North Carolina and to give an insight about how academia and life in general are different in the USA.

The initiation was a lot of paperwork and needed a lot of effort and patience. IELTS certificate, application for the exchange, nervously awaiting emails, stress. The letter of acceptance was a big gasp of relief but also carried along new responsibilities: Visa, SEVIS, flights, finances, insurance, family meetings, moving out and foremost: trying to comprehend what is about to happen. Impossible.

After setting sail and arriving at the Charlotte Douglas Airport I was picked up by some ASU students who were waiting for the arriving exchange students. This semester it would be 60 students from 21 different countries. In the first three days we were invited to many workshops and activities that would help us to find our way around campus and to feel home in the new environment.

We were introduced to different clubs such as INTAPP, iPals and the IFP that were all designed to integrate incoming students into the Boone community. These clubs would facilitate direct communication between the exchange students and the university, domestic students and domestic families who had an interest in meeting international students.

Besides the cultural opportunities, the University offers great programs when it comes to sports and outdoor activities. Campus features three gyms free of charge that will leave nothing to be desired. Weight lifting, cardio, soccer, basketball, football, volleyball, dancing, swimming, rock-climbing, kayak – just name it. In addition you can join sport clubs for intramural competitions or national challenges.

Despite the normal curriculum and leisure activities, ASU hosts many events such as talks and movie screenings, festivals and other events that will surely catch your interest and help you to find friends sharing your own interests.

The library is open 24/7 and offers plenty of beautiful space, air conditioning and numerous coffee shops. If you get tired of learning surrounded by books and computers you can simply switch to the solarium – an indoor jungle with water fountains that makes you feel like being in the tropics even if a snowstorm haunts the area. If you feel like having a break just visit Crossroads, a hip coffee shop that features live music and open-mic sessions.

When it comes to living, you will need to be prepared for little privacy. All exchange students are required to share a room with another student, mostly American. You will share a room and bath and therefore spend a lot of time together which is a great opportunity for connecting with the all-American reality which is quite different to Europe. If you should however feel uncomfortable with your roommate there is an option to switch.

Safety and security is of highest priority on campus. You will always find police and security agents patrolling around campus. To make sure you don't have to walk alone in the dark, ASU provides free 'Safe-Rides', throughout the night.

If you struggle with acquiring enough money for your stay at ASU, don't worry. Even your visa is not a working-visa you are allowed to work on campus. Jobs reach from working at the food court, maintenance work to being a night-assistant in the dormitories. You will find the possibility to squeeze one of those many jobs into your schedule to pay for most of your leisure activities at Appstate.

When it comes to academia, I enjoyed choosing from many subjects and was able to pick those that were of my biggest interest. Studying was different from back home: more interactive and dynamic. Your fellow classmates will ask questions and comment on the lessons. The biggest difference to our system was the homework which I personally enjoyed a lot. Essays, presentations, website designs, quizzes will help to acquire credits over the term which leads to less pressure in the finals and a better overall score.

During my time at ASU I have met an incredible amount of passionate and good hearted people that I am happy to call my friends. Not only students but also teachers and staff have made my stay nothing short of perfection. Thank you!

I encourage everyone to seize the opportunity to study at Appalachian State University. You will find yourselves in a home away from home where you will learn a lot that will help you grow academically and personally.

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