

Katherine Sullivan: University of California, Irvine (Semester 1, 2010)

I am a third year civil engineering student at UQ and I have just completed a 1 semester exchange at the University of California, Irvine. Irvine is in the OC, and even though the campus itself is fairly quiet, it is only a 20 minute ride to Newport beach, where there is always something going on. A lot of my weekends were spent out of Irvine, travelling around California, which was a great way to see some of the country. I found the university work over in America easier than I did back home, but studying for exams harder having not as many friends in my classes to work and study with. I made some amazing friends on my exchange, both American and other exchange students (mainly Australian and New Zealand) which I will have for the rest of my life. I also did one quarter learning Spanish which was interesting and not something I would have done back home. Because I live with my parents back in Australia, living by myself in a different country for 6 months made me grow and become a lot more independent. Although there were times when I missed my friends and family back home, I tried to put these to the side and enjoy myself as much as possible and not let them get in my way of having the best time I could. I was not 21 when I was on exchange and although it would have been better to have been, a lot of the nightlife was made up of parties so it didn't matter too much. I would recommend joining clubs or similar when you are away, it's a great place to meet people. I joined the board club and made a lot of friends through it, just take every opportunity you get to do stuff because you will never get to do it again. I would definitely recommend doing an exchange program to anyone, it was an amazing experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life.



Photo: Cancun spring break, all exchange students from Australia, England and Japan.