

Rebecca Austin: McGill University (Semesters 1 and 2, 2010)

UQ Program: Bachelors of Arts/Science

My exchange experience was unforgettable and I find it hard to summarise a year of amazing experiences. I loved the student life at McGill, the friendships I made, the outdoor activities, the bilingual nature of the city, the opportunity to travel and explore, the opportunity to learn and the buzz of festive Montreal.



Winter camping: Poking my head out of a snow shelter called a quinzee.

Despite the common myth, you can in fact complete your degree on exchange. Just be aware that it is a risky business. I had a lot of French electives up my sleeve which made it easier to get courses approved. Studying French in Quebec gave me a whole different outlook on

language and francophone culture and history. Apparently I have even picked up a bit of a Quebec accent!

Despite being primarily an English speaking university McGill has great French programs for both second language speakers (FRSL) and first language speakers (FREN). The variety of courses is excellent and the professors are knowledgeable and helpful. If you are taking higher level French literature courses, be prepared for rigorous reading and long essay writing! Be prepared as well for the courses to fill up quickly and make sure you have a backup plan.

I was lucky enough to spend a whole year in Montreal. I arrived in the below-freezing snowy winter and had snowball fights, skied and went dog-sledding. I saw the snow melt and the city come to life in spring. There was never a dull weekend in summer either with all the festivals and bars and opportunities for outdoor adventures. The colours of the leaves were magnificent in autumn and the peace and whiteness after the first snow storm was beautiful.



Thanksgiving picnic lunch in Tadoussac (Northern Quebec) with friends from the McGill Outdoors Club.

After a year I felt like I really was a true McGill University student. It was easy to forget I was on exchange. I cemented friendships with people I had met in first semester, worked in an astrobiology laboratory over summer and got really involved in the McGill Outdoors Club. To all exchange students: get involved in the student clubs at McGill! There is something for everyone and it will enable you to explore Quebec as well as meet other students.

I would recommend McGill to anyone wanting to go on exchange.