BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

Caitlin Hellenbrand

Program: University of Queensland Exchange, Spring

Caitlin’s Major: Genetics

Academic Life: I took Culture & Society, Genomics and Bioinformatics, and Australia’s Marine Environment. The only class that had a high percentage of international students was Australia’s Marine Environment and the rest of my classes were mostly domestic students. Human Bodies, Culture & Society was the only class that only had one professor teach the entire semester. The other three classes were held in modules in which one professor would teach for a few classes or a few weeks and then another professor would teach, so that each professor was teaching what they specialized in.

Advice for Someone Considering Studying Abroad: Go! They say studying abroad is a life-changing opportunity but you can’t really grasp what that feels like until you have experienced it and you get back to the U.S. after 5 months in another country. Everything at home feels foreign, but you have a new admiration for it and can see it through a different eye now that you have experienced so much. You can’t begin to explain what happened or how you felt, and when you get back you rely on the people who experienced it with you to understand, so you can relive those moments when you are feeling nostalgic. So, please, just go. Pack up and experience the world.

Learning About Yourself: It opens your eyes and forces you to see how big the world is. You begin to realize how to properly communicate with people, how to be independent, and how to be confident. And best of all, you begin to learn more about yourself. Even with all of your new friends, your old friends and family, you have a lot of time to think about yourself and think about what you want to do and where you see yourself in a few years time. In order to move forward, you must learn what you want for yourself and I think studying abroad made that possible for me.

“I realized I need to take control of my own life and stop relying on other people to make things happen.”