BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

SARAH HOFFMAN

Program: University of Queensland Exchange, Spring

Sarah’s Majors: Kinesiology; Certificate in Global Health

Academic Life: The best part about my program was the diversity of the students. I took two kinesiology classes and one history course and in each class, there was a fair amount of Australian students and a good amount of international students (including Americans). I was able to learn about other cultures by making friends with other international students, so I ended up learning beyond the course content. The discussions, practicals, and lectures are pretty similar to UW classes which made the transition a lot easier.

Finding Home in Brisbane: I waited until I got to Australia to determine where I would live. I stayed in a hostel for a week, and although it was stressful to tour apartments and houses in an unfamiliar place, I could not have been happier with my decision. I ended up living in a house with four other international university students (one from Wales, two from England, and one from Canada!). I made so many great new friends and had to break out of my comfort zone to do so. My host country became like a second home primarily because of the people I met. Brisbane is such a habitable and safe city, and the memories I made would have been nothing without the people.

Advantages of Studying Abroad: I think studying abroad gives you a greater sense of who you are and where you stand in the world. It is so easy to get lost in the hustle and bustle of college life at Madison with the demands of hard school work, a social life, and maybe even a job. This isn’t to say that academics abroad aren’t just as challenging, but when you know you have so little time for such a great experience, it takes a bit of the stress off. It allowed me to take a step back and realize what is important as I get an education and prepare for my future. I think the things I learned from being in another country alone and traveling surmounts what I learned in class.

“You will be scared, you will be excited, you will miss home, you will be emotional, you will feel lonely, and you will feel on top of the world!”

Sarah taking Brisbane’s best public transport- the ferry!