Program: University of Sydney Exchange, Year

Kelly's Major: Kinesiology

Academic Life: I took challenging courses relevant to my major as well as electives unique to Australia. The University of Sydney is similar in size and structure to UW-Madison. Most of my courses consisted of large lectures supplemented by smaller discussions (called “tutorials”). The main difference is that at USYD, there are less “contact hours” spent in the actual classroom. It is expected that you work independently outside of the classroom to stay on top of the material. I found this to be beneficial as it gave me more time to explore Australia on my own schedule.

Benefits of Study Abroad: Studying abroad taught me how to be completely self-reliant and independent. I went to Sydney on my own, not knowing a single person on the entire continent. I became accustomed to talking to strangers and meeting new people. I learned to take the initiative and solve my own problems. Most importantly, my time abroad gave me a year to learn about myself and figure out what I love.

Personal Discoveries: I am no longer content with simply being comfortable. Being alone on the other side of the world, my comfort zone was shattered. Sometimes I was out of place and uncomfortable. Sometimes I said the wrong thing or took the wrong bus. I loved every minute of it. I became used to being off balance so I learned not to worry about the little things and just enjoy life.

Make It Happen: One day you will look back on your life and remember those magical moments in a foreign country, or regret not taking the opportunity when you had the chance. Regardless of your major, financial situation, or personal life circumstances, you can make it happen. Just do it. When you go, make the most of every single moment because they will be gone before you know it.

Kelly displaying her medal from the Sydney Half Marathon.

“At some point Australia stopped being a foreign country and it became home.”