Program: Massey University Exchange, Spring

Natalia’s Major: Communication Arts - Radio, TV & Film

Academic Life: Wellington campus is a design school, and although I am not a design student, most of my classes had a creative element. You have independence to explore your interests. The “hands on” aspect means you will be creating something you’ll be proud of by the end of the semester! My favorite class was called Creativity in the Community. We teamed up with a local soup kitchen and worked all semester to help put on an event where people experiencing homelessness could share their stories. Not only did I feel like I had a lot of agency within this class, but I was experiencing a part of New Zealand I would have been blind to without enrolling in this course.

Housing: I lived in a non-university affiliated student housing unit called Taranaki 217. I lived among other Kiwis and definitely benefited from the proximity to campus and to downtown Wellington, which is essentially up the street.

New Perspectives: I became a more independent and driven student and traveler. Knowing that I wanted to make the most out of this experience allowed me to really take charge of how I wanted these five months to be! I would say that this experience has helped me with self-evaluation because I had to look at what I wanted to extract from my experience, and make it happen.

Tips for Future Students: I would suggest putting in a little legwork before choosing your classes. I spent quite a bit of time with the advisors upon arrival, and I’m very glad I did. People don’t always emphasize the academic component of studying abroad, but at the end of the day, your coursework is a substantial part of the experience and it should help you deepen your connection to the country, not be something that you dread doing. So ask around, do a little bit of research, and it will definitely pay off.

“The cultural differences might not be as apparent at first, but they are absolutely there.”

Natalia above the clouds, after summiting Mt. Taranaki.