Exchange Testimonial: Emma Tucker
Host University: State University of New York at Plattsburgh

I’m enrolled in the Bachelor of Journalism program, and went on my exchange in my second year at the University of Queensland. Going on exchange to Plattsburgh is without a doubt the most incredible experience of my life – I met so many remarkable people, saw so many places and gained so much independence.

I found the academic style of the US system quite different from our own. Rather than getting 3 or 4 major assignments and exams over the semester, you’ll get maybe 2 big assignments and a big variety of smaller, “homework-style” assignments. It was interesting to take on a new academic style and I definitely think it broadened my learning skills.

The best part of my year by far was the friendships I made. I had a big group of friends made up of other exchange students and Americans; the exchange students and I would often travel together. We went to Boston, DC, New York, Montréal, Toronto – and not to mention all the trips organized by the university’s international office to nearby towns like Lake Placid, Burlington, or Saranac. The US is an amazing, beautiful country and there is so much to see and do there. One of my favourite things is that the shops stay open until 9 p.m. every day! But there’s also a lot of history, and iconic sights to see like Niagara Falls, The Statue of Liberty, Empire State Building, Lake Champlain – and that’s just New York!

I will mention that where I was it was difficult to get around locally – Burlington was only an hour away, but there were no buses, trains or any kind of transport other than taxis, so you need to find someone with a car to make transport easier. For longer trips, like interstate, the Greyhound bus service is pretty reliable and affordable.

My exchange definitely changed me as a person and made me more confident and independent, and helped me to see another culture in a very personal way. I met some life-long friends, and would recommend an exchange to anyone. It does change you, and sometimes adjusting to life back home is hard, especially when you’re leaving people you care about behind. However, it is a wonderful experience and it opens up a whole range of opportunities for your future that you might not have even considered before.

5 Top Tips:
(1) Stay two semesters on your exchange! You won’t regret it.
(2) Make a local friend who has a car - this will make getting around much easier!
(3) If you’re going to upstate New York, keep in mind that it gets COLD, and stays cold for a long time if you’re there over the winter! Snow boots are a must.
(4) Travel around, get involved. Boston and Montréal were my favourite places.
(5) When travelling, staying at the Hi Hostel is a great deal. It’s a clean, safe and well-known chain of hostels that are incredibly cheap and have locations all over North America.
Me & my best friend Matthew in the first snowfall at Plattsburgh.

Even the Beach was freezing... At Lake Champlain

Niagara Falls, (Canadian side!)