

Spencer Reagon, a study abroad student from Canada tells us about his experience at Bangor University



Photo taken in Snowdonia National Park, Wales.

I spent the 2017-2018 school year at Bangor University in Wales, United Kingdom. I participated in a study abroad program with the University of New Brunswick, which allows undergraduate students to study abroad for one or two semesters at various universities across the world. Participating in the study abroad program was one of the best decisions I ever made. This experience gave me the opportunity to be a part of another country's culture and university community. I am very fortunate to have been given this incredible opportunity and have left Bangor with many unforgettable memories. While being abroad I met so many amazing people from all over the world and gained different perspectives on various languages, cultures and ways of life. The knowledge I absorbed has made me more confident as a person and opened my eyes. Completing this experience in the United Kingdom will without a doubt increase my employability and enhance my university education. Europe is

a leader in many different fields and in my area of Forestry and Environmental Sciences, Europe plays a very significant leadership role. The United Kingdom and European Union manage forests and the environment in various ways that Canada does not. Learning these new perspectives and practices will help me in my future when problem solving or projecting future concerns for Canada's Forest Industry as well as environmental sectors. The ideas that I can bring to the table could help Canada better adapt or improve our current approaches.

There was never a dull moment in Wales. I was either studying, playing sports, hiking the mountains of Snowdonia, celebrating with friends or traveling around Europe. Outside of the classroom I was a member of the men's rowing crew, men's ultimate Frisbee team, and the International Forestry Students Association. Joining these clubs and association allowed me to meet many people and face many great experiences. If I did not decide to study abroad I would have not had these adventures or met friends from around the globe. While abroad I took advantage of every vacation I got and had the ability to travel all over the U.K., Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, and Morocco. In November of 2017 I was selected as a delegate from the UK to represent the International Forestry Students Association in Bonn, Germany at the 2017 COP23 United Nations Framework on Climate Change Conference. Attending this conference was exceptional and enhanced my knowledge and interest in the field of sustainability and climate change. Without the support and funding from my professors and the faculty of Natural Sciences at Bangor University this fortuity wouldn't have happened. These adventures made the year unbelievable even if my bank account was not doing well. Many of these trips opened my eyes and showed me things I have never seen before. After returning to Canada I realize that I am more open to various languages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and life styles. Leaving UNB for one full year was no easy decision but well worth it and highly recommend any student to take the step and go abroad. Seeing photos of my experience, and reading this it seems like everything goes smoothly while being abroad, but that is a lie. Along with all the amazing adventures there always is bumps or problems along the road. The problems I encountered when I was overseas were overcome and made me grow as a person. This past year has changed me in many ways and is a part of the person I am today. I want to thank the UNB study abroad program for giving me this incredible experience that will not be forgotten. Don't think about it too much.....just go abroad.