
2011-12 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

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The Burwood Way of Life

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Sunset on the Burwood campus

Getting adjusted to life on the Burwood Student Village, or res, has been a new and exciting experience. All of the units are named after different trees indigenous to the state of Victoria. I am living in Banksia 1, and I am enjoying all my new unit mates. I have to admit, I thought coming part way through the semester, since Australian school starts in February, would be very difficult to get to know my unit mates since they have already bonded from the previous semester. At first, it was a little weird, but I have slowly gotten to know and enjoyed the company of my new unit mates. Normally, we all cook dinner around the same time in the evening, and then all crowd around the tv to watch one of the hottest shows in Melbourne currently: “The Block”, “Master Chef Australia”, or of course the Australian Football League, or footy.

There are many activities happening on a weekly basis on Res. Normally, there is a “unit sport” competition every Tuesday where the units of the Burwood Student Village compete against each other in various sports such as skittles (aka dodgeball) or netball (a women’s sport similar to basketball without the dribbling). Some of the girls in my unit have promised to teach me netball. Even though I lack in coordination, I am excited to learn a completely new sport.

Life on Res also incorporates various unit functions. For instance, last week the Burwood Student Village had a fancy formal dinner, where we all had a nice dinner at a golf club, followed by a trip on a double-decker bus that took us to a local bar. This week we had a unit function where my unit, along with the unit next door, dressed up for a themed party (ours was “horror”). We played games and ate copious amounts of food.

Also, each unit has 5 unit dinners. This where 2 people from a unit cook dinner for the rest of the unit every two or three weeks. My first unit dinner consisted of meatballs, mashed potatoes, and cooked mixed veggies. Since I am not the best cook, a warm home-cooked meal was so nice. Unit dinners are a great way to bond with your unit mates or even catch up and maybe recount the embarrassing stories or inside jokes from the previous weeks.

Although living on Res proves to include a very busy social schedule, I am also balancing a full class load in school. Here at Deakin classes are structured differently; I am taking 4 units, which equals around 16 credits. I am taking 2

units that deal with Australian identities, and the current situation of Australia. These classes are lecture and tutorial based. Lectures are normally large and this is where I take all of my notes and listen to the lecturer. The tutorials are much smaller class sizes, and meant for discussion and clearing up any questions from the lecture. Although attendance and weekly assignments are not as common here, I have noticed in order to be successful it's vital to be self-motivated to stay on top of my reading at all times. I am also taking a film photography class that meets once a week for 3 hours every Tuesday. The class is interesting, but I did not realize that learning a new skill, like film photography, could be a little more difficult in a different country. But, this photography class has been great because it gets me outside exploring various new parts of Melbourne to photograph. Finally, I am doing an internship, which counts as credit, through the Deakin Art Gallery. I normally meet with the Deakin Art Gallery staff once a week for the day, and work on up-and-coming exhibitions to the gallery. It's an exciting opportunity to learn what it takes to curate an art exhibition. The details of what my internship project will be are still in the making, but I will most likely curate an indigenous or Aboriginal art exhibition on campus.

So many new and unique opportunities have been presented to me in the past few weeks in Australia. I am figuring out how to balance my school and social life in a very different way than I have at Linfield. Next on the agenda is planning a trip to the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia during our "spring" September break, registering for my first 10k race, and going to a footy game!

-Laura