
2019-20 Postcards

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New Classes and Waitomo Glow Worm Caves

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Spring 2020 Hamilton, New Zealand
March 16, 2020

New Classes and Waitomo Glow Worm Caves



Kia ora!

Classes are underway and I am exploring New Zealand more and more! I am really enjoying all of my classes so far. I am taking an Anthropology of the Polynesians course, an Introduction to Māori Culture course, and a Food Writing course. Here, classes are called papers, and what we might call a paper in the US is an essay assignment here. I have had to figure out when to schedule tutorials for all of my classes, because there are two lectures for each class every week, and then a one-hour long tutorial, which is where discussion happens, questions are asked, and assignments are addressed. All of my classes are much bigger than I am used to at Linfield, my Introduction to Māori Culture class has 113 students in it! In tutorial, there are only about 10-20 students, so this is where students have the chance to talk and ask questions.

There are several options for tutorials each week but they filled up fast! I had to figure out how to schedule the tutorials around my classes and other tutorials. At Linfield, I am used to classes being at the same time every day, such as a 9:00 AM-10:40 AM on Tuesday and Thursday, however, here, one of my Maori Culture lectures is from 9:00-11:00 AM on Tuesday, and the other is from 2:00-3:00 PM on Thursday, in completely different buildings! I am really thankful I am not trying to organize my classes around a work schedule here, because it feels almost impossible!

I have also been working on obtaining my Kiwi Access Card. This is an ID card that proves your birthdate and your residence in New Zealand, either as a foreigner or a New Zealand citizen. I visited one of the local shops that carried the application, brought my visa, proof of enrollment, passport, and a passport photo, filled out the application, and the shop verified my application and sent it off for me. The card is \$55.00 NZ dollars, and essentially eliminates the need for me to carry my passport to prove my identification and age.

I think this is a wonderful alternative to carrying my passport, and keeps that priceless document safe, while still allowing me to prove my identity in whatever situation asks that I do. My card should arrive within two weeks, and I would recommend that all students studying in New Zealand work on obtaining the Kiwi Access card as soon as you can!

I also visited a club fair on campus, where I had hoped to find some clubs to sign up for. I did not have much luck signing up for clubs, and I am still looking for

some groups to join, however, I was able to sign up for a group focused on being environmentally friendly, and they are running sessions with eco-friendly DIYs, and educational information each week. This week, we made beeswax wraps! It was a ton of fun, and I brought home my own beeswax wrap, as well as the knowledge to make them again.

Last weekend, I went to visit Waitomo Glow Worm Caves with the International Office, which was amazing! We toured the Waitomo Caves and learned about the processes which formed the limestone caves. Then, we took a boat through the dark, and gazed up at the millions of tiny blue glow worms. It was absolutely magical to see all of the glow worms, they looked like beautiful little stars. They were on the walls and ceilings of the cave, and it was like constellations in the night sky. We all had to remain very quiet and we could not take photos because the noise and light could disrupt the glow worms and they might stop lighting up if they are disturbed. With only the sound of the water lapping at the boat in the dark, the whole experience was unlike anything else. I had such a wonderful time there!

Then, we visited an area in the Waitomo region where we went on short hikes, and then enjoyed lunch. Afterwards, we went to Marokopa Falls, a beautiful waterfall in the Waitomo region. We hiked down to the waterfall and looked up at the spray coming down from the falls and dipped our feet in the cold water! Then, we visited a natural limestone bridge, which was very interesting and a unique natural phenomenon! I really

enjoyed the trip and I am looking forward to more adventures with the International Office!

I am doing my best to soak up as much as I possibly can while I am here in beautiful New Zealand. I have been having such a wonderful time here and I love the University of Waikato, Hamilton, and New Zealand! I am monitoring the Coronavirus situation, and really hoping that nothing escalates here so that the University stays open and continues in-person classes.

New Zealand has closed their borders, which means that both others and I have had to adjust travel plans. A festival for Pacific culture that I wanted to visit was cancelled in order to try to eliminate large gatherings, so I hope that this does not continue for the rest of the time that I am here! I will just continue to participate in as many events as I possibly can! Thank you for reading! I can't wait to share more of my adventures!

Emmaline