Ricardo's Fall 2020 virtual exchange experience

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Ricardo is a 'Business Administration – International Business' student who took part in a virtual exchange offered by the University of Applied Sciences Neu-Ulm in Germany.

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When I first learned about the virtual exchange program with Neu-Ulm Hochschule, I was really excited. This new initiative proposed the option to undertake international studies without leaving Canada. In a time when the pandemic was keeping all of us at home, this new initiative gave me the opportunity to "travel" without leaving my living room.

Neu-Ulm is located in Bavaria, Germany. Even though I did not have the chance to see the town in person, I got to learn how their education system works and had the opportunity to meet students and professors from different countries. The professors at HNU are really kind and knowledgeable. The fact that everything was conducted online meant that this opportunity was one-of-a-kind.

One thing that made this exchange program so different was that I was taking courses at Seneca, while also taking classes at HNU. Because I was still living in Toronto while being part of the program, I had to take classes really early in the morning. I remember one of my professors was really amazed by the fact I was up and ready for class at 5 am in the morning. I'll admit, it was an effort to wake up earlier than usual for class but it was also a very rewarding experience.

As an international student at Seneca, this virtual exchange provided me with the opportunity to experience the mobility programs that Seneca has to offer. Without having to leave Canada and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, this was an opportunity that I am really thankful for.

I found the classes at HNU to be similar to my courses at Seneca. The professors have a similar teaching style and the classes were delivered through Zoom. The one main difference I encountered was that in Germany there is no reading week, or midterm tests. The largest grading percentage of my courses came from my final exam. The final exam was given to us, international students, through email. We had to print it and solve it, and once we were done we had to send it back to our professors at HNU. Through this program I got to learn some interesting topics related to finance and the way in which they are carried out in Europe.

I believe that these experiences help you grow and give you transferable skills, like time management and discipline. I believe that even though the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted and changed the way we learn, technology enables us to break barriers. Through initiatives like the ones done by Seneca and HNU, we get the opportunity to keep learning from and exploring different cultures. These online experiences allow students to keep exploring new countries, people, ways of learning, and cultures. I would highly recommend this online program to anyone who enjoys traveling, learning and exploring.

You might be amazed of how much you can learn through an online program like the one between Seneca and HNU. Programs like this one, help you grow not only academically, but also at a personal development level.

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