

## Sama Naraghi – NRGSAM001

### IAPO semester abroad programme Financial report

Period: 2017, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester (Fall quarter)

University: UC San Diego

### **Pre-departure Costs**

- **Flight ticket and UCT vendor management**

My flight from Johannesburg to Los Angeles amounted to around R15000 with Qatar airways. This was the cheapest at the time but I understand if you plan to buy the ticket during a sale it could come to as low as R11 000. I was to pay the full amount of the ticket then UCT would reimburse me half (~R7500) through the vendor management system. The vendor management system was quite simple to apply for. Just a form that needs to be filled in along with a letter from your bank proving your account ownership.

- **Visa Costs**

From what I remember there were two main costs for visa that were meant to be paid by me. The first was a SEVIS fee which had to be paid before/ during the online application. This came up to around \$180. A confirmation of the payment of this fee is required during the application. Next was the actual fee for the visa application which came up to around \$200 and is paid once you book an appointment for the visa interview.

- **Health insurance**

In order to be enrolled at UC every student is required to have health insurance. I had the choice of either transferring my existing insurance here to the US or apply for UCSHIP which is a basic health insurance offered by the university. I went with the latter option as my insurance in South Africa would only cover me for 3 months. The amount for that was around \$650 dollars which was automatically added to my student account.

- **UCT housing**

There were no fees for withdrawing from res early.

- **Ensuring that UCT tuition is paid before departure**

My sponsors handled the payment of fees at the beginning of the year so I did not have to worry about that before my departure.

- **Financial aid/ Scholarship**

I did not receive any financial aid or scholarship for the exchange other than the funds awarded to me from the IAPO office. All extra payment were either from my personal saving or paid by my parents.

## **Living costs scholarship**

- **Meals**

I was lucky enough to be accepted into a type of on campus accommodation at UC San Diego called International House. The cost for accommodation was about \$4500 for the quarter. This included \$1500 worth of *dining dollars* which were an on-campus only currency for purchasing food. I found this allowance is not meant to cover 3 meals a day for the whole quarter and additional supplementation would be required. Obviously, if one wanted to eat at an off-campus restaurant they would have to pay cash.

- **Housing**

See above Meals category. The total cost for housing and meals came up to about \$4500 and was charged to my student account and paid while I was in the US.

- **Orientation costs**

There were no additional orientation costs that I needed to pay.

- **Books**

Textbooks and notebooks came up to about \$200. I was able to sell these books at the end of my semester to make about half of that money back.

- **Travel**

I had family in the US to help with my travel from Los Angeles to San Diego. There is a train that I used from time to time that cost about \$32 from San Diego to LA. In city buses are all free for university student so there was not much cost for getting around town.

## **Costs incurred upon returning to UCT**

- **Enrolled for additional courses**

I did not have to enrol in any additional courses. However, there was a credit and exemption fee of around R100 for crediting from my courses done in the US.

- **Alerting sponsors/financial aid upon return**

I had alerted undergraduate sponsor (SKA South Africa) that I would be leaving for the semester before I had gone.

- **Ensuring housing at UCT residences**

Upon coming back I had made the decision to withdraw from residence as a whole and move into private accommodation so I did not have to do anything regarding residence when I came back.

*If you need any more information please email me at [NRGSAM001@myuct.ac.za](mailto:NRGSAM001@myuct.ac.za)*