

Across the Pond: From England to Rochester | Campus Times

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Photo by Ella Bond

College can be a scary time for anyone. No matter what walk of life one leads, the day comes when everyone will wave goodbye to home, family and childhood — the day that may leave some students a little teary-eyed. The day I left home, I must have had something in my eye.

But imagine leaving home to go to a campus that is over 3,000 miles away, and in a different time zone. Yep, it's terrifying. Doing a study abroad program can be a very exciting chapter in any student's academic life, especially because of the people who are met and the experiences that are gained. And it

will, of course, look pretty damn impressive on a résumé. This, however, doesn't mean that I didn't spend days, and even months worrying about it. Even now, about two months since I've arrived, I am still petrified.

I'm from England, so coming to the UR shouldn't have been that different, right? I mean everyone in the U.S. speaks English, and I've seen episodes of "Greek" and "Glory Daze" — how hard could an American college be? Answer: very.

Everyone here is super nice and super smiley, but that didn't stop me from feeling like an outsider deep down. I came in with no knowledge of what a Wegmans is, nor had I experienced a Zonies calzone (amazing) or a Danforth portion (not so impressive). However, just like riding a bike or enjoying an American football game, I've learned that fitting in is something that takes time, patience and work.

Speaking of work, I'm not going to go on a rant about the insane load you guys have to deal with. But jeez, I swear, if anyone ever needed a break I would suggest coming to England. I really don't know what we do with all our time.

No matter how daunting it is in Rochester, this campus is just beautiful. Just like a corny Disney film, there are chipmunks, squirrels and groundhogs coming out of the woodwork.

I'm from Brighton, U.K., so we have seagulls coming out of our ears, and I hate them. Seriously, I have been known to throw stones at them. I would much rather see a cute chipmunk running around than a seagull snatching fries from my hands any day. So yeah, you guys are lucky.

Many people have asked me, and keep asking me, "Why did you pick UR? Out of all of the schools in America, why this one?" Well, first off, there really weren't as many options as I'm sure you guys have had.

I had a couple of choices, but they either didn't have the right courses or were in the middle of nowhere. Having come from a small English village, I really didn't want to return to obscurity.

UR's high ranking, good reputation and course quality are all valid reasons to be attracted to the school. But they are not my own reasons.

Being the superficial person that I am, the true reason was its location. Now I am well aware that

Rochester is closer to Canada than New York City, but telling my co-workers and friends that I was going to New York for four months sounded pretty darn impressive. For me, when it comes to study abroad, word-of-mouth is everything.

Now that I'm here, there are, of course, lots of other lovely points as to why it's a good place to study. I adore my university back home, but the most exciting things to happen on that campus were farmers' markets and the occasional movie screening (if I was lucky).

Here, you have so much going on, I've barely made it off campus. The clubs and organizations are just amazing. I have joined a few but I have probably not been as brave as I should have been.

Another British friend of mine joined the Quidditch team, but that might have just been so he could show off his Harry Potter-style English accent.

Clubs like the a cappella groups are also one of my favourite cultural differences. There are no guys in England who would have the guts to stand up and sing in front of people. Never. We, therefore, lack one of the most entertaining experiences on campus, and I really can't decide which group is my favourite.

So yeah, studying abroad is intimidating and overwhelming, but ultimately the stories I already have to tell back home make it all worthwhile. The experience will be something I will not forget, and I don't just mean the embarrassing souvenirs on Facebook.

Of course, I have only spent about two months here so far, so perhaps I am being rather premature, but I already feel a change: From an awkward English girl to an equally awkward English girl, but now with more American friends than she knows what to do with.

Wait. I've got that darn thing in my eye again.

Bond is a member of the class of 2012.