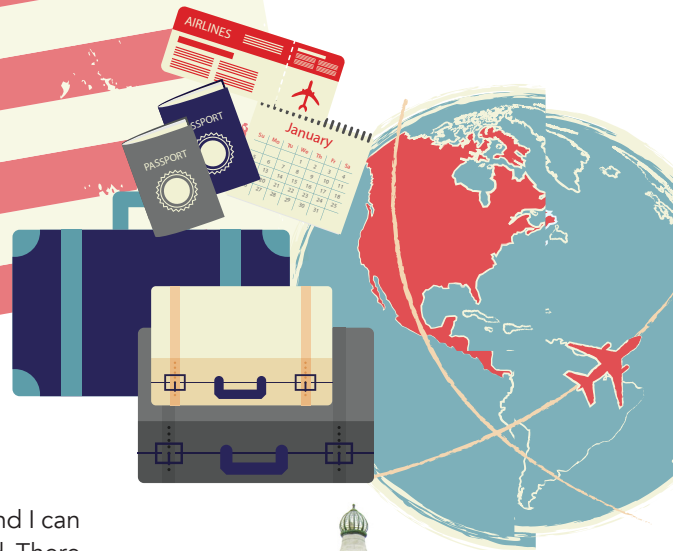


EXCHANGE PROGRAM

to the United States of America



Travelling for many is a dream, an aim, an aspiration that people work so hard towards. To ensure that one-day this vision of travelling can become their reality. Fortunately, an experience of a lifetime presented itself to turn my dreams into a reality.

Robyn Cook notified the second year Communication Design students about an exchange program to the United States of America (USA). Curious at what was offered, I applied not realising the immense process I was about to endure. Propitiously, I was a fitting candidate for the exchange program and along with two other girls; Nontoko Tshabalala and Kate Ress, we were accepted. However, the paper work didn't end there. Our guiding light, Robyn, not only spend days on end helping us fill out paper work but she also fought to ensure that we ended up in the USA for our first semester. In disbelief, I didn't think that this exchange program would become a possibility and as all hope was about to be given up, Robyn constantly assured us that irrespective what happens, we ARE going. To my anticipation, the prospect of going became genuine when my student visa arrived and my flight tickets were booked.

Kate and I were going to South Dakota State University (SDSU), situated in the small town of Brookings, South Dakota. Upon arrival, much to our shock, we hit a brick wall of cold, piercing cold weather and nothing like we've experienced before. One

of the biggest adjustments, and I can say for both of us, was the wind. There is nothing like freezing weather but when the wind drops the temperature by not a couple but by 10 even 20 degrees Celsius, dressing up like the Michelin Man was necessary. In the first weeks there we experienced a snow blizzard and what a lovely welcoming it was. However, it either snowed or the snow melted creating a massive ice rink, which tested your walking abilities. Falling on your butt was inevitable and let's just say more than a good laugh came out of it. Although, what made the cold worth it was the beauty the snow brought out in this little town. Don't get me wrong we rejoiced in the warm weather even though it was far and few days between.

Despite the temperamental weather, the people were so welcoming and warm-hearted the icy weather didn't even matter. Accepting of us, naturally they were just as inquisitive as we were. Not only did they inform us of South Dakota they shared their knowledge of the USA and in return we shared ours of South Africa. Most importantly, words cannot express my gratitude towards five special girls whom adopted us as their own. Not only did they embody us into the American lifestyle, show us around Brookings and Sioux Falls and took us to the Black Hills to see Mount Rushmore, they also showed us of what true-hearted friendship entails. Homesickness wasn't even a consideration as having Kate by my side and those five angels,



The Champronile building



Our first blizzard experience



South Dakota State University's campus

the American experience was not only intensified but also sincerely embraced. Yes I missed my family and friends but thank goodness we live in a technological era.

The interesting thing about SDSU, is the diversity, as they housed a multitude international students opening our eyes to different cultures. Although SDSU is rich in culture, the campus and the community in which surrounds it, is extremely safe. Making us feel right at home, we got to experience the freedom of a college student whilst our safety was guaranteed. We weren't able to drive, thus we embraced our freedom by being able to walk everywhere, which soon became a passion of ours.

Leaving the best for last, our curriculum. We took four subjects: Graphic Design 1 (typography related); Visual Communication 2 (similar to that of Communication Design); History of Modern Design

and Digital Photography (online subject). The online subject not only was our first but also taught us discipline and structure as we were left to our own vices to ensure that we were diligent. From the get go we were assigned assignments, projects, essays and quizzes but fortunately we couldn't be more prepared as the University of Johannesburg (UJ) instilled a good work ethic and unquestionably prepared us for the challenges we were accustomed to.

I couldn't be more grateful as I was fortunate enough to experience a travel, an exchange that is priceless and has provided myself with a lifetime of memories. For UJ had sponsored us, making this entire experience one never to forget.

I wanted to end off with a quote from Michael Palin, "once the travel bug bites there is no known antidote and I know that I shall be happily infected until the end of my life".



Mount Rushmore, with my 5 angels



Packaging design



The impact of the wind of the snow



St. Joseph Cathedral, Sioux Falls



The effects of an ice storm