

From Big City to Small Town Student Life

International student talks about her experience at Acadia

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Emily moved in to Crowell Tower this September

Emily Izaguirre learned about Acadia last year, when a recruiter visited her high school in Mexico City. Today she's the only first year student from Mexico at Acadia. She's a Biology Major and resident of Crowell Tower. She decided to come to Acadia because she was interested in the Biology program, but also because she was attracted to Acadia's small-size classes and undergraduate research opportunities discussed in the presentation.

"We really liked Acadia's presentation, the recruiter had a very strong presence. Usually international universities send videos of their schools, but Acadia sent a representative to come talk to us, show us a video and answer our questions in person."

Emily believes a lot of her high school classmates, as well as herself, found Acadia's small-size classes appealing. They also liked the idea of a small-town university and student life where they could focus on their education.

"The environment in large cities and schools is competitive and fast-paced, so competition becomes the main focus for students, rather than other truly important aspects of education," she says.

“What’s great about a smaller town and university is that you can really focus on learning.”

Even though some first-year classes are large at Acadia, they are smaller compared to other Canadian universities. This is something Izaguirre has recognized during her first term as an Acadia student. But she says even larger- size classes definitely haven’t prevented her from connecting with her professors.

“I found that not all of my classes are small, but I’ve been able to form relationships with my professors. They really are invested in my learning process and care about getting to know us as people and students,” she says.

Another attractive feature about Acadia, according to Emily, is that the university allows for a balanced student life inside and outside the classroom.

This balance is a priority at Acadia because faculty and staff take the time to nurture their students inside and outside the classroom., constantly encouraging a healthy student life and giving platforms for growth but also ensuring they adapt to life as international students away from home.

Izaguirre is a resident of Crowell Tower, and she says residence life has been an essential part of building a social life in Canada. Acadia’s residence life program encourages students to get to know each other from the first day of Orientation Week, and remain connected throughout the school year. “During Orientation Week, we definitely met so many people from different residences but more importantly, we got to know the people we were going to live with all year, like our RAs and people living on other floors.” she says.

“Now, for example on Sundays, many of us get together and watch Game of Thrones.”

This is an approach that mirrors life in the town of Wolfville where the community is “extremely welcoming.” Wolfville has played an important role in Emily’s transition to life in Canada because people are always open to helping students.

Moving forward, Emily plans to take full advantage of research opportunities at an undergraduate level, saying she’s particularly interested in the Biology co-op programs, and adding that, as an international student, she wants to experience the unique opportunities a Canadian university has to offer.

After going through the recruitment, application, and admissions process at Acadia, Emily emphasizes the importance of promoting Canadian universities to international students.

“Acadia was the only Canadian university that visited my high school,” she says. “There’s definitely still a lot international students don’t know about Canadian universities or culture in general.”

“As a high school student, you always hear about universities in the United States or larger universities in Canada, but prospective international students need to know there are more options and there are reputable universities such as Acadia, which are unique in the lifestyle and learning experience they provide. There are many opportunities to discover.”

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