

Crossing Borders

MAGAZINE



Today's Lesson:

Educate, Explore and Experience

By: Lindsay Taylor

Summer – generally a time when students can't wait to be freed from the confinement of the four walls of their school, Monday – Friday, 8 – 4. It wasn't so long ago that they were counting the hours until summer break with the appeal of spending days lounging around the house, binge-watching the latest releases on Netflix with their technology front and centre and devices never further than within arm's reach. The onset of Covid has indeed changed the perception of what a summer vacation really can offer and how to best experience it.

For many, their days throughout the recent school year became just what they looked forward to doing each day during the summer. Spending time socializing with peers and making new friends with each day in various classes was no longer the norm. And with that, the appeal of what summer may offer students is perceived differently today than in the past.

In 2021, more than ever, students are looking forward to exploring education and considering enrolling in summer programs or summer camps. Many of these options may be located in the United States and are considered a springboard to exploring and experiencing full time studies at a college or university in the USA.

It's no secret that some of the world's top-rated colleges and universities are lie within the borders of nearest neighbour and ally, just below the 49th parallel, the United States of America. Acceptance into many of these prestige schools seem realistically accessible to only the most elite, well-accomplished applicants and for many seem to be only a dream.



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But for the serious pursuant, enhancing an academic resume with extra-curricular programs such a summer program from said university or college, may help turn dreams into reality. And, for many this year, a different perspective is in play as many students now perceive spending their summer outside of, and in some instances, away from home.

Taking on a whole new meaning, joining a summer school program just might be the remedy many students seek to rejuvenate their desire to pursue an education, not only outside the home, but perhaps to study abroad. The United States offers the perfect solution for so many with a wide array of options, timelines and locations – all of which are easily accessible to Canadian high school students up to the challenge. International summer school programs and camps offer the chance to explore the country while enhancing one’s academic resume.

Charting a path to the course that fits

Falling into the international category – Canadian high school students at all levels are welcomed into the summer programs across the United States, many of which are specifically tailored for those looking to study abroad. And enrolling in an American university or college will check many of the boxes that students considering continuing studies abroad will look to achieve.

Students will first have to determine their wants and needs to apply to a college or university offering program that will provide them with the experience their best-suited for. For example, they may want to explore an introductory course that will shed light on a specific field or subject to help them decide if this is an area of interest, they’d consider pursuing down the road. Others may opt to enroll in a program offered by a specific college or university to experience that school and what a full-time enrollment may have to offer them.

Without limits

The most attractive elements of summer programs will often be the variety offered. From astronomy to environmental sciences, journalism, creative communications to political science and from photography to music and everything in-between, the experience of studying in the U.S. during the summer session is as fun and engaging as it is educational. And regardless of the motivation behind attending summer school, the programs in the US are extremely enriching and beneficial for both personal and academic development.

The experience

Unlike many full-time classes, summer programs tend to be held with smaller class sizes, allowing for a much stronger one on one interaction between students and instructors. This allows for a much more progressive, individual learning experience to which students can feel a strong sense of self, developing a confidence through enhanced presence and active participation with their classmates and peers.

For those students who are a considering a full-time enrollment, using a summer program to experience life on campus offers a realistic glimpse at what the future may hold. Not only will they become familiar and comfortable with the school and campus itself, but they will also have the chance to explore surroundings and the culture of a place they might consider their new home for the next two to four years.

Course length and flexibility

In the United States, summer programs will run between May and August, depending of course on the school and the location. Individual courses will vary in length – some will be two weeks, others up to twelve. Most, however, will offer flexible schedules that will allow students a chance to have the hands-on experience in the classroom and the free time to socialize, make new friends and explore the culture of the region for a really great, well-rounded takeaway.

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But it may be different

Not unlike everything else in the world, summer programs have also been impacted by Covid-19 and the world's effort to manage the spread. Many schools have opted to keep their summer

programs online and virtual and, in those situations, students may have to be enrolled in a full-time program to qualify for the summer program enrollment. But for those seeking the in-person experience, the opportunities are there – explore, educate and experience. **CB**

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