

PEOPLE

North Ireland to North Carolina

Paul Eastwood
Exchange Student



Dia Duit (Jee-ah ghwich) TRANSLATION: Hello. In Irish.

By way of a brief introduction, I'm

Paul Eastwood and I have been lucky enough to come to St. Andrews University on a business scholarship as a year out from my own University degree in Ireland where I study at Queen's University Belfast.

I was able to come to America as part of a program, called Study USA, set up by the government in Northern Ireland and American Bishops during the Troubles of Northern Ireland in the early 1990s. The principle aim of the program is to allow greater integration between Protestants and Catholics in third level education, whilst offering the opportunity to gather a global perspective on business. I was only able to make my preference on what college I would apply to based on each website, but I am sure I made the right choice in coming to St. Andrews.

I am the third student in as many years to come to Laurinburg from Ireland and have found many things to be very different here than at home. Not least the weather. This difference was in no way easy to adjust to whenever I came from an Irish "heat wave" of sweltering days in the sixties, to the first few weeks here which were in the hundreds. I've seen the temperature that high once in Ireland before, but quickly decided the thermometer was broken.

The food here is also much different than at home. I hate to pander to a

stereotype, but the Irish do in fact love potatoes and unfortunately there can be no replacement found here. America has provided me with some great foods and I am probably in great risk of becoming highly addicted to Buffalo sauce, Boston Creme Pie and Cheerwine. Not mixed together of course.

I have also been very lucky in being able to play golf for St. Andrews in my year. Sports are a much bigger part of college life than in Ireland. Compared to all of our equipment orders, match organisation, team selection and fundraising being done by me, the professionalism of the experience here is staggering. It goes without saying that Coach Lisa Becka (Men's and Women's Golf Coach) is an invaluable asset to our team and St. Andrews, and if we could get someone of that calibre to run the team at home there is no doubt our University team standard would improve, but unfortunately the profile of University sport is much lower in Ireland than here so this is unlikely.

The major difference I have noticed is in the education style. Queen's University Belfast has 17,000 students, whereas St. Andrews has fewer than 900. Queen's University Belfast has over 250 buildings for academics, compared to St. Andrews' 4. Queen's University Belfast has over 3,000 staff. St. Andrews has fewer than 70. I think it is within the difference in size that St. Andrews demonstrates its real charm. I study Law at home and have more than 250 other students in my lectures, but only 18 other students in my largest class here and find this smaller class size much easier to work in. Very few of my lecturers at home know my name, or if I'm in class or not, or how I'm doing

academically, but it is obviously very different here, and this difference is undoubtedly beneficial to all. Given the size of classes at home, assignments come very rarely but their size is disproportionate to their occurrence. Coping with the regularity of assignments here has been a struggle at times, but I figure this need to constantly work and keep on top of everything will greatly benefit me on my return to Queen's as I will hopefully have outgrown the desire to leave everything to the last minute. That could be wishful thinking though...

I want to practice Commercial Law in the future, so gaining an insight into business is invaluable. I am particularly enjoying my Accounting and Microeconomic classes because of their appeal to my logical nature, but the new skills I am gaining in Management Communication, Conflict Resolution and Marketing are so widely applicable, I am confident my resume will be well boosted by these classes. The dependence of grades on class participation is an excellent tool to exercise communication skills and an opportunity with which American collegiate students have the upper hand over their international counterparts.

It may seem premature to speculate for all the way in May, but I know already that going back to Ireland, as sweet as it will be, will also be difficult beyond measure to leave St. Andrews and its students. The ten months of this academic year have begun to count down far too quickly and unfortunately I cannot see that time will slow down, despite how much I will it to.

So until then, all I have to say is Go raibh maith agat agus slán (go rah may ag at: Thank you and Goodbye).

"Think Globally, Act Locally"