



UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

2015 Fall Exchange Report

ABSTRACT

On the east coast of the United States, UVA's McIntire School of Commerce is a great business school which values interactive learning environments and faculty-student relationships.

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Monthly Activity Log

Late August and September

First, I arrived UVa by the shuttle bus “UVaExpress” organized by UVa affiliates. This is a recommended way to arrive at the “ground”. “Ground” is the UVa’s version of “campus”, and it is just one of the many unique words of choice students in UVa use that differentiates the school from the others. One advantage of taking this shuttle bus which only operated 2 days a year was that I did not have to worry a thing about settling down. The volunteers on the bus had already arranged everything for us, including a welcome dinner and assistance to get access to our dorms. It was a warm welcome and a great day to make friends with first year and other exchange students who were also new to the ground.



FIGURE 1- ROSS & ROBERTSON HALL (BUILDING OF MCINTIRE SCHOOL OF COMMERCE)



FIGURE 2- SCOTT STADIUM

I met my exchange buddies and other 4 exchange students during the McIntire orientation. We went on a few trips throughout the semester. In September, we had a Humpback Rock

hike. It was a famous hiking spot for UVa students. We had to wake up at 4 in order to arrive the peak before sunrise. It was tough, but definitely worth it.

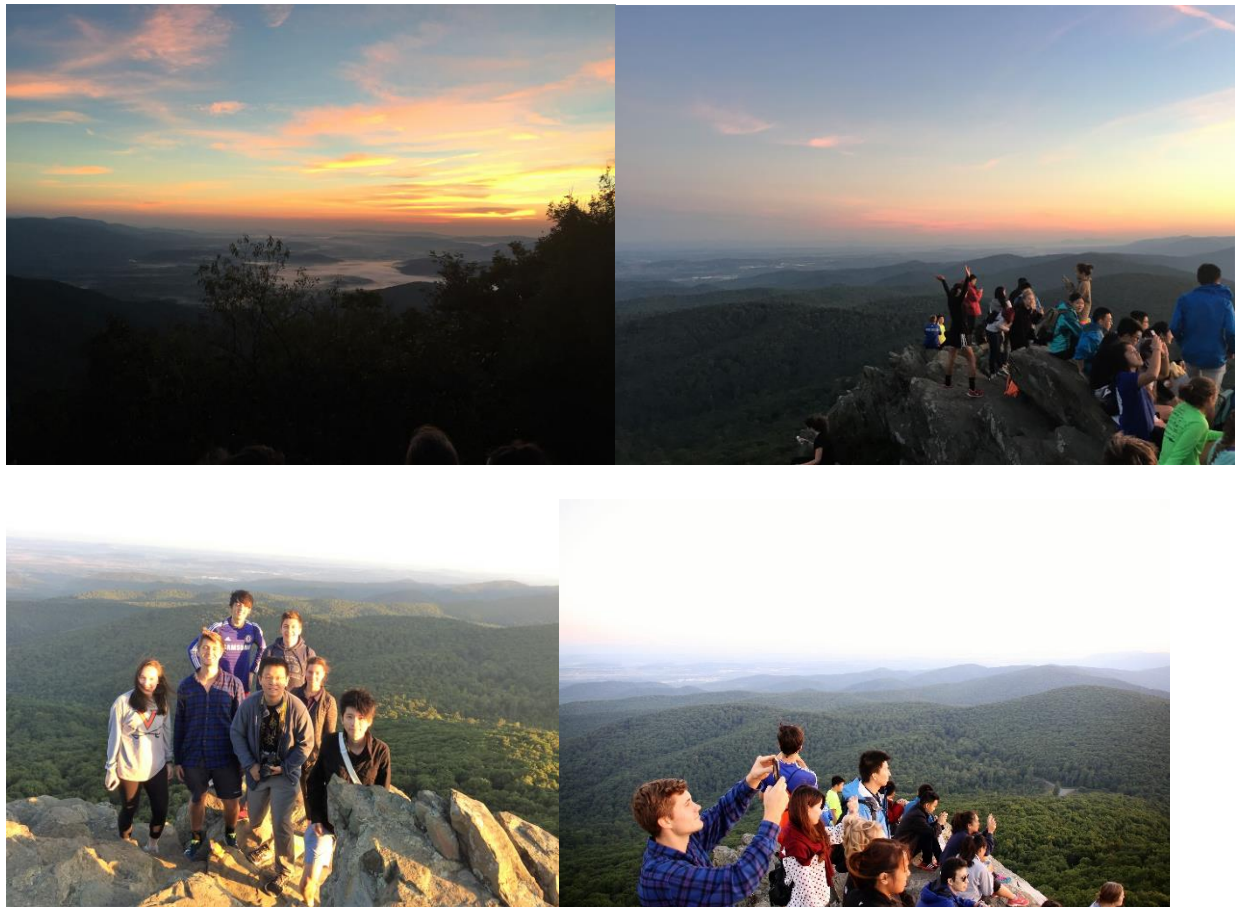


FIGURE 3- HUMPBAC ROCK HIKE

October

Although it was the month of assignments and quizzes, I managed to survive and get used to the studying environment here. Classes here were so different from those in UST. There were a lot more readings and class preparations, for the aim of enhanced class discussions and interactions. During mid-October, our exchange program coordinators brought us to Richmond for a day trip. It was fantastic, especially when we tried out the famous Segway Tour. The views were great, but carrying the camera while riding on a Segway was not a very good idea so I apologize for the lack of beautiful photos.



FIGURE 4- RICHMOND SEGWAY RIDE

November

In early November, we went to Monticello. It was built by Thomas Jefferson, the third president of United States, the principal author of the Declaration of Independence and the founder of the University of Virginia. He was also an architect and designed his dream house himself, which is now Monticello.



FIGURE 5- MONTICELLO

The second half of the November was my favorite part of the exchange program, THANKSGIVING! The head of the exchange buddy program offered to host us at his home in DC and join his family's thanksgiving dinner. It was a Lebanese American Thanksgiving dinner and everything was perfect. On the day of thanksgiving, we visited memorials and the National Mall in DC.



FIGURE 6- THANKSGIVING



FIGURE 7- NATION MALL

December

Coming back from DC, we went to the last home football game on ground before getting back to studying for the final exams. It was the Virginia–Virginia Tech football rivalry. Although UVa Cavalier lost the match, it was a very close game and we all enjoyed the performance of players from both teams.



FIGURE 8- LAST HOME FOOTBALL GAME

General Exchange Information

Visa

You will receive a DS 2019 form from UVA, which is required for the visa application. The process should take about 2 weeks.

Orientation

If you are taking the UVaExpress, some volunteers will explain all the orientation events to you. If not, you should pay attention to the schedule sent to you by some staffs from McIntire.

Accommodations

You can choose up to 3 preferences of housing options. If you are looking for proximity to the business school, pick Brown College or Bice. If you are looking for international activities, pick International Residence College. If you are looking for a quiet and clean dorm, pick JMW. About getting the key during arrival, you better arrive the school before the housing office closes if you are not taking the UVaExpress.

Course Registration

Program coordinator will ask you to make a list that prioritizes courses you want. Although exchange students have the priority to choose the courses offered by the Commerce School before local students, it will be very difficult for you to make changes once local students start enrolling in courses. Therefore, be mindful.

I had taken 4 courses.

COMM3720 Intermediate Corporate Finance by Professor Gayle R. Erwin

Professor is very nice and passionate. A few parts of the syllabus are covered by FINA 2303. The greatest challenge would be to apply the knowledge on case questions.

COMM4710 Intermediate Investment by Professor Chris Yung

I enjoyed this course a lot. It has allowed us to practice a few technical analyses with real world data. Professor always has interesting stories and comments on the excel results. Moreover, the course is quite challenging but the credits are easy to get, so I enjoyed attempting difficult questions without the fear of getting bad grades.

COMM4660 The Basics of Strategic Consulting by Professor Brendan Boler

The course is interesting. We learnt about what consulting is and why we should choose consulting as our career. Also, we learnt about the techniques to excel in case questions, and how to apply the techniques in job hunting. Professor has done a lot to help us apply

what we have learnt in the class. He even reached out to top tier consulting firms for professional cases and consultants as judges for our final assessments.

COMM4741 Global Finance by Professor Peter Maillet

This course was the best course I have ever taken. Every topic was insightful. Professor Maillet is the former COO of JP Morgan in Asia Pacific Region. His knowledge on global finance is unquestionable. Throughout the semester, we learnt about the development of the modern financial systems, the characteristics of major economies, currencies and exchange rate, financial instruments, the future of finance, and a lot more. If you are studying in the fall semester, you should definitely take this class without any hesitation.

Teaching and Assessment Methods

Assessment and teaching methods vary with courses and professors, but generally a large weighting on class participation should be expected. Professors are very nice and passionate. They love spending time with students.

Cost/Expenses

There is no mandatory meal plan, insurance plan or housing in UVa therefore it is possible to minimize the expense by searching for low cost options. However, travel cost is quite high if you want to leave the town.

Social Clubs & Networking Opportunities

There are a lot of clubs and networking opportunities. I had seen a lot of networking events at the start of the semester. The speakers were always the McIntire alumni and aimed to offer exclusive guiding to McIntire students. They are very willing to offer you job hunting tips and review your resumes.

Health & Safety

Charlottesville is a very safe town. For the health requirements, it can be very expensive if you miss a vaccination. There will be a health compliance form sent to you to make sure you are well informed of the requirements. When you arrive UVa, you can apply to waive certain requirements by filling out a form in case you miss some of them.

Food

You can join the meal plan, which offers buffets in all the dining hall on ground. They are convenient, but you may not want to eat in dining halls every day. There are a variety of western food off ground but only limited choices for Asian food.

Transportation

There are 2 free bus services, University Transit Service (UTS) and Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT). UTS is mainly on ground transport and CAT is off ground transport. Download an app called Transloc, which offers real-time tracking of buses.

Climate

It was quite hot until mid-November. I would suggest minimizing the amount of clothing to bring.

Communication

Go to AT&T to get a prepaid data plan. It is very useful when it comes to traveling off ground. Also, you can receive international phone calls without paying extra money.

Other Notes

One thing I found particularly concerning was the way to transfer money. I suggest getting those ATM cards that feature no overseas ATM withdrawal fees.

Items to Bring (for Fall Semester Exchange)

- Passport
- DS-2019 form
- 1 or 2 sets of summer clothing
- 1 or 2 sets of winter clothing
- Universal Adapter or Power Strip(Recommended)
- Laptop
- Camera
- Stationery
- Bed-wares
- Emergency Medicines