

EXCHANGE REPORT

University of Michigan, USA

Ross School of Business



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GBUS Year 3
Spring 2017

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PART I. Monthly Active Log

January 2017

When I first arrived in University of Michigan, which is located in Ann Arbor, MI. It was covered by a decent amount of snow upon my arrival, but the school welcomed us with a campus that's beyond gorgeous. Ann Arbor is a college town, so everything builds around the main campus, including the house I subleased here. It is a cool experience to share a little frat house with 7 local students, they were very closed to each other but also very welcoming towards newcomers like me. On the other hand, the courses took off really quickly here in UofM; I remembered having more than 10 assignments due in my first week of study, and the tide never went low thereafter, therefore, the month here goes by very quickly and fruitfully.



February 2017

Entering a new month, I started to feel more adjusted to the pace, temperature, culture and education here at UofM. The pace of living was very slow here in contrast with Hong Kong, but the progress of education was faster than expected. Students here were very engaged in learning; they participated in the courses actively, and were not afraid to raise questions to clarify. I suppose this has something to do with the environment we were in, it was an enclosed college town with chilly temperature, so all we could do was study, but that doesn't mean the students are nerdy here. Instead, this is a work-hard-play-harder school. I remembered there was this weekend where the temperature shot up to 60F, and every house on the street was partying and having fun. And I think the students are enjoying their lives here at UofM as much as I do.



March 2017

It was great to have a new month starting in a vacation. At University of Michigan, the spring break starts faster than most of the schools around the states since they have a very early start. It was still snowing by the time when we started our spring break, luckily that most of the UofM students will have their midterms taken prior to the break, making it a care-free break for all of us. Besides tailgating at the house, or finishing up projects in the library, there are other interesting things to do for UofM students to go in the spring vacation. For example, many of my housemates went to Cancun Mexico together to stay away from the cold weather. I myself went down to Texas for the second time to meet with my sister. Texas, unlike many of us would picture, is a highly metropolitized place now; in Austin, there are lots of millennials working on startups and financial institutions. In Dallas, you may find so many new buildings in construction/having been constructed. According to a statistic found on LinkedIn, Dallas is the hottest host city for domestic migration right now. Coming back from Texas, Ann Arbor was still a little bit chilly, but the school had kicked off many 200 year anniversary event (see the cake below). We were very lucky to join some great events such as fashion shows, movie nights etc. From March, the city really got more and more exciting.



April 2017

Speeding through March, many great events and new classes being kicked off. Off I went on the last month in Ann Arbor. The snow has melted, though the temperature was still around 10 degrees Celsius, we saw many frat houses hosting parties every day, many restaurants setting up their outdoor dining area. Now I finally saw the liveliest part of the city. This is the month where I finally knew what's work hard, play harder; as many of the finals were taking place on the third week of April, but at the same time most of the exciting events such as football annual kick off were happening, and that was also the month when many of the students were graduating, faring well their friends and this beautiful city. So all the students were cherishing their time as if this is the last day in Ann Arbor. At first I wasn't able to relate myself to such feeling, but all of the sudden in April, what I felt was no less than a soon-to-graduate from Ross/UofM, there was a great deal of bittersweetness. So I made some changes on my daily routine, I no longer go home right after finishing dinner/classes, I started to take a walk either alone or with friends, to see the city at night, and to immerse myself once again in this beautiful city before it's thousand miles away from me again. Saying goodbye to the people here and the city is very hard, but they also

gave not just me, but the students leaving UofM, some very valuable traits: confidence and courage to embark on the journeys ahead.



May 2017

Some of the best memories during the exchange for me were not entirely from Ann Arbor; a part of this exchange (and a big part of learnings) was from the cities I travelled to. I have travelled to 10 cities in the US when I was on exchange, and the highlight of the latter part of the exchange would be this May when I travelled to four cities in a row till Mother's Day eve. I went to Dallas, D.C., Philly and New York. This trip gave me a lot of learnings regarding the American history (Dallas – JFK and American politics; D.C. & Philly- American Independence; NYC – contemporary metropolitan entertainment and Broadway art performance). It is very hard to recap the whole encounter in the US, and I really appreciate this opportunity to go to the States as a student and really experience different sorts of life there. After four months of being away from Asia, I felt as if I have grown four years older mentally, I now care more about my life and other people's life; about history of a place and the makings of a great civilization. My horizon has been massively expanded, and I think that's the meaning of a journey.



PART II. General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

The school has a dedicated team to help international students settle their Visa. And they will send a proof of admission letter through UPS directly to HKUST. And we would be just filling forms and submitting to the US Rep Office in Central. The whole procedures was smooth and intuitive.

Orientation Activities

Upon arrive school, they will arrange a one day event for all the check-in procedures and most of the admin stuff will be taken care of.

International Services & Activities

There are academic advisors for international students, and the sign up procedure is very intuitive, The international center also takes care with your student health insurance and other issues such as MCard. The global initiative team also organizes many events that allow exchange students to know more about the school or the city.

Accommodations

There are school dorms, school partnered apartments and houses available for sublease. School dorms are easy as everything will be taken care of with better security, but the rent is relatively high and the space is smaller. For apartments, it is also very safe as all the residents are UM people, but the rent is high too and the space is small. For houses, it requires more upfront research, but the rent could go very low and the distance wouldn't be too far away from school. It also comes with big space, but the utilities are to be paid on your own.

Course Registration

UofM has wide variety of courses to choose with a very long add-drop period (longer than a month) and there is a course bidding system before the course registration. It allows students to indicate their preferences for courses. With higher bid given, there will be higher chance for you to get in to that class. However, many classes come with pre-reqs, and it requires us exchanges to write emails to the professor to make sure they are okay to have us in the course. Many of them would not reply to emails, so some other ways would to resort to course registrar office, making them send an email on your behalf, professor are more likely to reply through that channel.

Teaching and Assessment Methods

The workload at UofM is not light, as we could easily get more than 20 assignments per week. Some of them might be smaller but they also come with great assessment importance. Apart from homework, many courses require attendance, especially courses with small class size. The teaching is very interactive, as they encourage maximum amount of student participation, debate and thinking. The assessment is more of a spread-out assessment style. Many of the finals are not taking up more than 20%, but other small assignments might take up more than 50% for a class, which is counterintuitive for an HKUST, but it is also a good way of learning too.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

CCRB and NCRB are the two main sports buildings at Michigan. The city is also safe for a night run, There are other small sports facilities around the campus.

Finance and Banking

Bank accounts are very easy to set up, but bear in mind that having some cash at the beginning is pretty important. We would have to search for the banks downtown and do it ourselves; there are BoA and TCF for exchange students to choose. BoA is a better choice as they have really good mobile banking services and it's widely available across the nation. TCF is less convenient but it is a good choice to apply for another your debit card.

Including rent, it is easy to spend around 1,800 USD per month.

Social Clubs and Networking Opportunities

There are many events organized on school/department/office/student level events. There would be a website for UofM students to look for, there are activities basically every day.

Health and Safety

The insurance is 125.25 USD per month, which is mandatory. Upon first non-campus doctor visit, you will have to pay additional 100USD annual deductible, yet from then on, you would normally only need to pay 20USD as co-pay should there be any non-campus visits to the doctor.

Food

Ann Arbor has one of the highest restaurant per capita number. For students, there are many dining halls on campus where you could either swipe your Bluebucks (top up online and allows

cheaper meal price in dining halls) or your debit/credit card. There are also great restaurants such as Italian, Spanish and Korean (according to a Chicago native, Ann Arbor has better Korean food than Chicago)

Transportation

School bus and city bus is available for free with student card, but with limited shifts. If traveling to the airport, Michiganflyer would be great choice as they have pretty late shift that caters to student's cheaper flight plans. Uber is also highly recommended moving from place to place, it wouldn't take more than 20 USD to go to places in Ann Arbor.

Climate

As the monthly active log said, it will be very chilly in the first 2 and a half month, but the weather gets a lot better when it's end of March or April.

Communication

AT&T provides a \$45 a month for unlimited data usage and unlimited calls (40 if you use autopay). It will be cheaper if you join family plans which will be around \$30 a month but with limited data.

Cautionary Measures

Ann Arbor is a very safe city (second safest in the states according to a survey in 2016), but at times there will be crime alerts. So please keep alerted at night especially outside of downtown.

PART III. Items to Bring

- F1 Visa
- Passport
- Insurance documents
- Cell phone
- Personal medicine
- Winter and summer clothes
- Laptop
- Adapter
- Cash

P.S. I strongly advise buying things such as pillow and quilt upon arrival, there is a Target where basically everything can be found. Travel easy is more important.

PART IV. Useful Links

- Wolverine Access: the Umich version of myPortal at UST
<https://wolverineaccess.umich.edu/f/u2411s13/normal/render.uP>
- Syllabus for Ross students
<https://www.lib.umich.edu/kresge/syllabi/ksaSearch.php>
- Course Descriptions for courses at Ross
<http://www.bus.umich.edu/Courses/default.aspx>
- Syllabus for LSA (Literature, Science and the Arts) courses
<https://www.lsa.umich.edu/cg/>

PART V. Best Practices

Being in UofM, I really recommend HKUST students to go out and experience the student life there. It is such a big school with wide variety of courses to choose. I recommend not to think about the credit transferability, but just to make the most of different resources to grow yourself.

On the other hand, if you have time, please go out and network. The people in UofM is extremely inclusive, and many of great ideas can be spurred when you talk to different people. Also, make good use of group projects, many students have very different mindset on careers, lifestyles and education, make sure to listen to the new perspectives.

And to keep track of studies, I recommend following homework streams that are given. Canvas is a great website to keep you on track, and some assignments' usefulness can go above and beyond your academic excellence, so don't take shortcuts or skip readings, you might miss something that could change your life.

Be sure to have fun. This is a very great school in terms of rankings, but it is also famous for knowing how to have fun. Work hard, play hard. UofM is the first place I really see somebody doing such thing. So cherish every minute and GO BLUE!