



Exchange Report

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Part I – Monthly Activity Log

JANUARY

- Arrived at Lafayette Hall and found it much better than I expected. I was assigned to a low-cost triple room there but it was around three times larger than the one at HKUST.
- Attended an orientation organized by IBEX (International Business Exchange Program) and met 10 other exchange students at Stern. Four of them were from Asia as well, including two from Peking University and two from HKU. Everything important was well explained in the orientation, such as class enrollment, travelling documents and upcoming events.
- Visited
 - Wall Street: although most of the financial institutions that we know are not located there, it is still a place where I believe every business student would like to visit.
 - United Nations Headquarter: official tours (in Chinese or English) can be booked online. I visited several conference halls and learnt the history and structure of the United Nations. After the tour, I sent postcards with UN stamps to my friends and families.
 - Time Square: one of the most popular spots in NYC.
 - Trump Tower: Since Trump became the president, the security level of the tower was high but tourists could still enter the building after a quick security check.
 - Central Park: the park is very large with several lakes where you can see groups of beautiful swans. It's a bit dangerous at night.
 - Grand Central Terminal: the terminal was grand and gorgeous and lots of famous movies were filmed here.
- Watched the Broadway musical – Cats. The ticket was bought and paid on the website of NYU Ticket Center before I came to New York and picked up at their office. It was cheaper but the seat was at the very back.
- Celebrated Chinese New Year with friends. It happened to be a Saturday so we could gather together and went to Chinatown to celebrate.
- Met my exchange buddy at NYU who came to HKUST for exchange last semester. It was great to see him again in his home university.



FEBRUARY

- Experienced snow in NYC for the first time!
- Visited
 - Columbia University: a friend of mine in science school went there for exchange, so I got the chance to visit this prestigious university and had lunch at their dining hall. Unlike NYU which does not have a campus but located all around NYC, Columbia University has a campus which is quite beautiful and quiet.
 - The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA): NYU students can get free tickets by showing your student cards. The museum is considered as one of the best collections of modern masterpieces in the world. As someone who does not know much about modern art, I could still identify some of the artworks as they are too famous and important, such as The Starry Night by Vincent Van Gogh and Water Lilies by Claude Monet.
 - The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met): it is the largest art museum in the US, so I came there for three times and spent more than 10 hours in total. It is definitely somewhere you should not miss.



MARCH

- Enjoyed a fantastic 10 day trip! I travelled to four cities in Florida and Puerto Rico in the spring break with three other exchange students from HKU and PKU. It was definitely the most memorable experience in my exchange period.
 - Miami: There is a long public beach in Miami which attracts lots of tourists. As we did not bring swimsuits with us, we spent a whole afternoon lying on the beach and walking in the water.



- Key West: We rent a car in Miami and drove to Key West along Route 1. Route 1 is one of the most famous routes in the US as it is a scenic coastal overseas highway connecting several small islands. Key West is a small but amorous island, located at the end of the route. The beach, the sunset, the light on the streets, the pianist around the corner – everything there made the island full of romantic atmosphere. It is also the southernmost point in the contiguous states of America.
- Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory of the United States, located in the northeast Caribbean Sea. We took the airplane from Miami and no additional visa was required. Due to four centuries of Spanish colony, everything here was in Spanish style which was very impressive.
- Orlando: Orlando is called the theme park capital of the world. We spent three days there having great fun in Walt Disney World and Universal Orlando.
- Visited World Trade Center (9/11 Memorial), Trinity Church, New York City Hall and Chelsea Market in New York.
- Watched an NBA game: New York Knicks vs. Detroit Pistons

APRIL

- Visited Boston for lobsters and universities (Harvard, MIT etc.). The weather is perfect in April and Boston is a perfect destination for weekends.
- Went to Smorgasburg 2017 in Brooklyn – an outdoor food market that showcased more than 100 food vendors.



MAY

- Spent a weekend in Philadelphia to know more about the history of America; had a quick tour in the University of Pennsylvania.
- Visited
 - New York Public Library
 - Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum: experienced the aircraft carrier for the first time
 - Brooklyn Bridge: took a taxi to Brooklyn then walked back to Manhattan along the bridge
 - Statue of Liberty: took a Hudson River cruise to Statue of Liberty.
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- Top of the Rock: it has the best views of NYC from Central Park to Manhattan's Downtown. I visited there on the day when the Empire State Building turned violet for NYU's commencement, and Top of the Rock was definitely the best place to watch it lighting up. It was extremely exciting to join the celebration as a part of NYU. This also marked the end of my trip at NYU.



Part II – General Exchange Information

ACCOMMODATIONS

Similar to HKUST, NYU allows us to indicate preferences on campus halls but does not guarantee that you can live in one of them. Apart from choosing halls, you can also indicate whether you would accept low-cost rooms, which are cheaper but usually smaller. As mentioned earlier, I was assigned to a low-cost triple room in Lafayette Hall although I didn't choose that. As far as I know, this semester all of the exchange students who have applied for on campus accommodation were assigned to this hall. The hall was near to Chinatown which I personally believed was a great plus, as you won't realize how your stomach would be homesick until you live abroad for months. Something that has not been mentioned in previous exchange reports is the Bed-for-Bed Room Exchange Forum which could really help. It is an official online platform for NYU students who wish to swap rooms with others. If you do not like the room assigned to you, you can go to the website and try to find someone else to swap your rooms.

COURSES REGISTRATION

I enrolled in four courses which had 13 credits in total. Fortunately they were all on Tuesday or Thursday, which meant I could have a four-day break per week. Exchange students get priority in course registration, but only before the semester starts. In another word, if you want to swap to another course in the add/drop period, then you have to join the waitlist as well. The four courses that I took were:

- FINC-UB 8 Advanced Corp Finance

The professor was super humorous but I have to say it was one of the most difficult courses I have taken. As business students at HKUST, we learnt some basic knowledge about corporate finance in FINA2303. However, it was too basic compared to what Stern students learnt in their fundamental course. This advanced course is basically all about case study which assumes you have acquired relevant knowledge. As a result, it was hard for me to catch up especially at the very beginning. However, in the end, it did become the course from which I learnt the most.

- FINC-US 49 Principles of Securities Trading

This course is pretty fun as there are several trading games throughout the semester. We played different roles in the trading games, such as market makers, hedgers or arbitragers. Rather than just learning theories about trading, you get the chance to practice and see how different markets work. I would say this was my favorite course at Stern!

- STAT-UB 18: Forecast Time Series Data

This course is for both PG and UG students. We used R to analyze time series data. It doesn't matter if you haven't learnt R as the professor would list all the functions needed for each assignment. Speaking of which, we got weekly assignment which was not very difficult and most students got more than 90 points. There is no midterm or final exam.

- PSYCH-UA 1 Introduction to Psychology

This was the only course that I took outside of Stern. It taught us basic knowledge in Psychology which might need you to memorize. There are three midterms, one final, one essay and participation in seven psychological experiments required.

FINANCE & BANKING

I opened a bank account at Chase with other exchange students. It was quite convenient as you would never encounter difficulty in finding Chase's branches. We also downloaded the Chase App which was equipped with a function called Chase Pay. When we had dinner together, we could easily use that to split the bill.

HEALTH & SAFETY

I personally think NYC is much more dangerous than Hong Kong and it always scared me when I came across groups of homeless people on the street at night. My advice is trying to go back home earlier and taking shuttles rather than walking alone.

FOOD

Food is absolutely not a concern as there are always so many options, and enrolling in the meal plan is not necessary in my opinion. I usually had Lunch Specials in Chinatown which are delicious and less expensive. There are several food trucks outside Stern building as well.

TRANSPORTATION

There are shuttle buses connecting student halls and academic buildings which I usually took. Apart from that, walking is also a good option when the weather is not bad. Manhattan is much smaller than you might imagine and most of the places that I usually visited were in walking distance. For public transportation, subway is the most common one. It costs 2.75 dollars per trip no matter where you are going.

COMMUNICATION

I subscribed to CTEExcel with 2.5GB 4G data, unlimited messages and unlimited calls (both local and international) per month. It only cost me \$1 for the first month and around \$35 (including tax) for the following months.

Part III – Items to Bring

- Important documentation, including but not limited to I-94 form and DS2019 form.
- Winter clothes. It can be extremely cold when it's snowy and windy so prepare scarf and boots that can keep you warm. It was still less than 20 Celsius degree on the day that I came back so no need to bring too much summer clothes.
- I cannot think of anything else that is essential. Since students can all get a free trial to Amazon Prime which offers you free delivery for most of items, it is always convenient to shop online.

Part IV – Useful Links & Contacts

- NYU Course Syllabi: <http://www.stern.nyu.edu/portal-partners/current-students/undergraduate/academics/course-syllabi/a?tm=sp17>
- NYU Albert: <https://admin.portal.nyu.edu>
- Rate My Professors: <http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/campusRatings.jsp?sid=675>