



University of Virginia

2018 Fall Exchange report
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Monthly Activity Log

August

I arrived in Charlottesville at the end of August. Charlottesville is a small city. I just flew directly there for convenience. But it is also common to arrive at the airport in Washington DC first and then take the train to the destination. University of Virginia provides good chances for exchange students to get to know about each other there. They held different activities, and some were especially for exchange students. I met many good friends. In the first event, they told me lots of information about the university and also something important for my stay in the United States, which is quite useful. During the first month, I spent most of my time exploring the campus. Students at UVA call the campus "grounds". UVA has really good landscape and is very big. It took me some time to go around. At the beginning of the semester, the university invited some bands to grounds to celebrate the new semester.

September

The new semester just started at the beginning of September. The students of UVA work really hard during the weekdays. Usually they will not skip the classes so the classroom is always full of people. McIntire won't have classes on Friday so commerce students will have longer weekends to do what they like. Professors there are very nice and explains everything clearly. Except for the courses I enrolled in, I also unofficially audited some of other courses I am interested in. I wrote the email to the professors. They all kindly allow it. On the weekends, students usually have fun. My roommates took me to some parties. It was quite interesting yet a little crowded. Besides, it was the football season and I just went to see the football games with my friends. UVA students don't have to buy the tickets but also they don't have seats. The Scott Stadium is super big and you will see lots of people wearing things in school color. They sang songs when UVA team won and it was quite infectious.

October

Some midterms started from October. Nevertheless, the first small break is also in October – fall break. I went on travelling with my friends. We went to Niagara Falls, Pennsylvania and Washington DC. We mainly took the bus and train. The views are quite good and we had a good time. Cause my birthday is at the end of October, my friends helped celebrate my birthday in a Chinese restaurant. And the end of October is the Halloween, one of the most popular festivals on grounds. I saw different people in costumes on that day. And the lawn was full of kids and other people from the town. And there were long queues for candies in front of the doors of all the rooms along the lawn.

November

During the first several days of November, I just stayed on campus and did my schoolwork. My favorite building is the New Cabell. Study rooms there were always quiet and the seats were really comfortable. I liked finding a seat near the window. Then I could see some good views when I looked up to have a rest. Then it was Thanksgiving! It was the longest break during the semester. For the sake of my travelling plan, it was really a pity that I didn't go to my roommate's house for the Thanksgiving dinner. However, I went to New York and Philly

with my friends which is also good. It was extremely cold in New York at that time and you could feel that while walking on the street.

December

I saw the first snow in Charlottesville in December. It was so beautiful that when I walked on the street I took lots of pictures and videos. It was cold outside, but when you enter the building you will feel quite warm. And it was the final period and everyone is working really hard. To release students' stress, UVA launched the activity called "Lighting of the Lawn". Actually they just lit the lights decorated on the Rotunda and the Lawn. And after that there were a light show. But all students were passionate and they sang songs together on the Lawn. Sometimes just everything around you make things appealing.

General Exchange Information

Visa

First you have to receive the DS-2019 form from UVA, which is necessary for visa application. Then you can just go to the website and follow the instruction given. It may take one or two weeks to complete it.

Orientation activities

UVA will hold orientation activities for exchange students. And McIntire held another one for new exchange commerce students, which is very useful. I suggest going to these activities. They covered all the details you want to know including the tradition in UVA, the course registration, etc. The faculties were kind and their work efficiency is quite high. Besides, I also registered for the exchange buddy program. My buddy took me around grounds and gave me some recommendations about the restaurants.

Accommodation

You can have up to 3 choices for the housing options. If you are interested in international activities, I would suggest International Residence College. You can even be assigned to single room if lucky enough. And if you are looking for an apartment with better quality, Lambeth could be a good one. Comparing these two, IRC is much closer to the academic building. Lambeth is closer to Barracks where there are two big supermarkets and small shops. I lived in a double room in Lambeth. Each apartment has two rooms, a kitchen and a common room. It took me about 25 min to get to the academic halls.

Course registration

McIntire school will send you emails in advance to remind you of the course registration. They will help you pre-register the courses you want to enroll in. And if you want to make any changes on your own course list, you have to go to the coordinator's office in Roush-Robertson Hall and ask him to help you do it during the add and drop period.

Teaching & Assessment methods

The professors in UVA are all kind. They explain everything really clearly. For some courses, the professors may expect more participation in class which weighs a lot for the grading. They

enjoy the interactions with students. And if you have any questions or requests, don't hesitate to ask. Besides, the exams are not really difficult if you listen carefully in class and finish the assignment.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

There are gyms, sports courts and a large stadium offered to students in UVA. And you can also see many students ride bikes on grounds to exercise.

Finance & Banking

You can prepare some US dollars in advance. But I used credit card most of the time which is much more convenient. And if you want to have a debit card to put the cash in, you can go to Bank of America right in the New Cabell to open a bank account.

Social clubs & Networking opportunities

Similar to HKUST, various clubs start their promotion at the beginning of the semester on the lawn. They will hold different functions or activities. I registered for the dancing clubs and they had free dance classes once two weeks. For McIntire students, commerce school provide many chances for networking. Just make sure to check your email box.

Health & Safety

Before I went to UVA, they sent me a form of medical requirements. Some vaccinations and health check are needed. If you miss one, you have to do it in the United States and the expense is not low. Insurance is necessary and the one we use in HKUST doesn't work there. So I just bought insurance in another company that is cheaper than what UVA provided. As for safety, last semester I received emails about gun man from time to time. However, I still think Charlottesville is a relatively safe city. Everything will be fine if you don't stay out very late alone.

Food

Meal plan is not compulsory. You can go to the dining hall and try the food first to see if you like it. There are three dining halls in UVA, Newcomb, Ohill and Drunk. They all offer buffets. However, I am not really used to American food. So I like to go to Corner or Barracks to explore some Asian restaurants. Many of them are quite good. Besides, if you are a great cook, you can just cook in the apartment by yourself.

Transportation

There are 2 free bus services for UVA students. One is mainly on ground transport and the other one is off ground transport. All the routes and schedules could be checked by the app "TransLoc Rider", but it took some time to wait for the bus, for the bus is really slow. If you have a driving license, actually you can rent a car in Virginia which is much more convenient for you to go out.

Climate

It was very hot until October. Then it began to get cold. It started to snow in December and the temperature begin to go below 0 Celsius degree. I suggest bringing clothes for four seasons.

Communication

You can go to AT&T to get a SIM card or directly buy one online. People in UVA are always nice and they would like to listen to others. So if you can speak English, there won't be much trouble in communication.

Cautionary measures

Alcohol is not allowed for people under 21. If you are over 21 and go to the party with your friends, remember not to bring the beers on the streets which is banned in Virginia. Besides, if possible, you can buy round air tickets which is cheaper.

Other Notes

UVA is famous for their honor code and they have strict rules for plagiarism. Pay attention to this issue especially when you need to write papers. It will cause you lots of trouble if you violate the rules.

Items to Bring

- Passport
- DS form
- Health requirement form
- Clothing for ALL seasons
- Adaptors and power strips
- Medicine

Useful Links and Contact

- UVA course catalog: <https://msisuva.admin.virginia.edu/app/catalog/listCatalogCareers>
- UVA student ID management: <https://csg-web1.eservices.virginia.edu/login/>
- Information about dining hall: <https://virginia.campusdish.com/>
- Housing for exchange students: <https://housing.virginia.edu/incoming-transfers>