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Degree Program at TAU: Management Sciences - Technology and Information Systems Specialization in Data Science and Business

Host University: University of Pennsylvania, Wharton business school

Exchange term: Fall 2018 Q1

Exchange Experience

Overview

Philly is a great city! It has many nice restaurants and bars, malls, shops and parks. These are the main points of interest:

Rittenhouse Square Heart of Philly – city center where most students live. Has many bars and restaurants.

Fairmount Park 30 minutes walk/ 10 minutes driving from Rittenhouse Square there is a really nice park, with a beautiful walk where you get to see a beautiful river along many old bridges.

Wissahickon Park This park is a bit farther (30 minutes by Uber/Lyft), but I wouldn't miss it. Feels more like a nature hike than an urban park, great hike during the weekend.

Nearby - New York

New York is just a couple of hours away. There many bus companies that run between Philly and NY. You will most likely find yourself going for a weekend or taking a day trip.

Weather

The weather was great during almost all September and October (around 20C). It gets cold towards November.

About the Host University

The University Campus is a beautiful place around 20 minutes walking from city center. It's like a small city filled with many impressive old 18th and 19th century well maintained buildings of the university as well as different housing and many restaurants and coffees. The atmosphere is great! The campus is very "alive" and you will see tons of students sitting with their laptops and moving between the different parts of campus.

Recreation Center

UPenn's fitness center has great facilities including few floors of gyms, swimming pool, basketball court and many different classes. Since I arrived during the first quarter it was free for almost the entire period, it costs few tens of dollars per quarter.

Clubs

There are many clubs operated by the students in Wharton in many areas: Professional clubs (Analytics, Marketing, investment, etc.), International and cultural clubs (Jewish and Israeli are recommended), Social and special interest clubs, Athletic clubs (Basketball, Fitness, etc.) and community service clubs.

You can either join a club or attend an activity and pay only for it. Updates regarding activities in the different clubs, as well as payment for club membership or for a specific event are on <https://groups.wharton.upenn.edu>

Courses and professors

Wharton offers a great variety of courses. Since my degree specialization is in business analytics and data science, I took courses that were mostly focused in these areas. All the courses are accessed by a system called "Canvas" which is very similar to our "Moodle" where all the slides from the lectures, readings, assignments and announcements from the professor are available (additionally there is "Study.net" for some of the readings embedded in Canvas).

I took 4 courses each 1 is 0.5 cu (since I arrived for a quarter):

Business Analytics – nice course reviewing different analytics methods like Linear Programming with constraints and simulation. Very structured course. The professor explains really well. Recommended if you have not taken such courses before.

Marketing Special Topics – Great course! The professor was reviewing many different methods of analytics (regressions, ML, and their implications in different use cases in the fields of marketing). The course includes coding assignments in R, applying different methods to real datasets and making managerial decisions based on that. Highly recommend if interested in this field.

Healthcare Data & Analytics – unique course that describes usage of data & analytics in the healthcare space. Sometimes can over-focus the US specific concerns. The course was running for the first time so I believe it might be different in the future. Recommending if you have interest in both Healthcare and D&A, would skip if that's not the case.

Entrepreneurship – Basics of entrepreneurship, might be better to take it in Israel.

Accommodation

Most of Wharton students live in the city center near Rittenhouse square. Finding a place if you are coming to Philadelphia for such a short time (8 weeks) can be very challenging. I stayed in an AirBnB in a brownstone south to Rittenhouse Square, I

recommend that if you are arriving for a longer period to find a place in one of the apartment towers near Rittenhouse Square. Costs for an apartment during my stay in this location varied between \$1500-\$2000.

Visa

You can either choose between J-1 and F-1. Personally I chose J-1 but since I came to only one quarter and didn't plan to either work on university or stay in the US there was no difference for me, you should review the options by yourself according to your plans and decide.

Transportation

I mainly used Uber and Lyft which are very frequent in Philly and were both available and not expensive. If you would live near Market Street there is a small subway which is another good option.

Restaurants

There are tons of good restaurants and coffees in central Philadelphia. You can find every cuisine with different pricing levels, many of them concentrated near the Rittenhouse area, I would especially suggest to have a dinner in Parc and breakfast in Honey-sit-N-eat.

Supermarket

Trader Joe's – Popular food chain near Philly's city center. All the items are self-branded, can be a healthier and sometimes cheaper option to buy food.

Target – Another popular chain where you can find groceries as well as many other useful stuff here.

General Tips

- Don't worry about your English – there are many international students at Wharton (either exchange or full-time) and if you got accepted you will manage.
- Don't try to go to all events – there are way too many events running by the university and Wharton students, try to filter what you truly like and/or care about.
- GroupMe – used for connecting with other Wharton students. Ask people you meet about relevant groups to join.
- **2401** - A building owned by Wharton closer to city center, many Wharton students are meeting there for groups work after school hours or on weekends. I found it very helpful.