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**Degree Program at TAU:** Management of Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

**Host University:** University of Pennsylvania, the Wharton School

**Exchange term:** Spring 2019 (January-May)

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## Exchange Experience

### Overview

Philly is bounded by two rivers, the Delaware river from the east and the Schuylkill river from the west. The Schuylkill river has a nice promenade that leads to the Art Museum (where Sylvester Stallone climbed the stairs in the famous scene from Rocky).

Philly is the city where the declaration of independence was signed and was the first capital of the united states. The Independence Park includes major historical buildings and statues, including the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, which are substantial to the American history. the Reading Terminal is the city's food market, where you can find a variety of street food, including the famous Philly Cheesesteak (although the most popular cheesesteak is located at the corner of South Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street – Jim's Steaks).

Most of the graduate students stay in Center City (Rittenhouse Square area), which has many shops, bars and restaurants, all in 5-10-minute walking distance.

From Philly you can get to New York City either by bus (2 hours) or train (1-1.5 hours). The bus tickets are substantially cheaper (around \$15 per one-way ride, as opposed to \$60 by train). You would probably travel a lot, either for a weekend or a day trip.

### Weather

In the Spring semester (January-May), the weather is mostly very cold. It is mostly between -5 and 1 Celsius degree (although it ranges anywhere between -15 and 7), and starts to warm up gradually from mid-April.

### The Host University

UPenn was founded by Benjamin Franklin and the first institution of higher learning in the United States which referred to itself as a university, and the Wharton School is the first collegiate business school in the United States. Most of the University buildings are from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Wharton classes mostly take place in

the Jon M. Huntsman Hall (the famous round building). The university offers housing solutions, however most graduate students choose to live in Center City.

The atmosphere on campus is amazing (just like you see in the movies). There are always students hanging around campus, and there are many restaurants and coffee shops around campus.

If you are interested in buying Wharton/UPenn merchandise, be sure to visit the Penn Bookstore (36<sup>th</sup> & Walnut). The store is enormous and has all sorts of branded merchandise.

### **Social Activities**

Wharton hosts many social events, whether these are hosted by the school itself or by student clubs. Student clubs are a main attraction in Wharton since students are full-time students and do not work during the two-year studies (except for summer internships).

Almost each student is part of at least a few clubs, whether professional (tech, design, marketing, consulting) or social (ski, dance, wine, cocktails). For Israelis, there is an Israeli club and JAMBA (the Jewish Association of MBAs), both are usually led by Israelis who study at Wharton.

You can check for updates on the different activities offered by the clubs as well as pay for memberships or specific events in the following link:  
<https://groups.wharton.upenn.edu>

In addition, the different clubs organize something called “Lunch and Learn”, which takes place during lunch time (12:00-13:20). These are short lectures on a variety of topics from industry experts (some of which are Wharton's graduates). You don't have to be a club member to register, and these events are free (including lunch!).

Every Thursday, Wharton students (mostly MBA first-year students) go out to “the Pub” (on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Armory, an historic building). You can buy a “subscription” for the entire semester or pay \$20 each time if you don't want to attend each week. This is a great way to socialize and keep in touch with your classmates.

### **Courses and Professors**

Wharton is considered a leading business school and as such offers a wide range of great courses. Grades are subject to normalization. The course election process is similar to the Bidding in Tel Aviv University, and takes place on a platform called Course Match. You would be provided with extensive information on the process in due time. During the semester, everything takes place in a platform called Canvas (the Wharton version of Moodle). You can choose either 0.5 CU (quarterly) or 1 CU courses.

I took the following courses:

1. **Digital Marketing (Prof. Ron Berman)** – 1 CU: This is a course taught by an Israeli Professor. This course covers the entire digital marketing world and includes relevant and up-to-date mathematical approaches and researches for analyzing and gathering insights from digital marketing data.
2. **Consumer Behavior/Customer Analysis (Prof. Americus Reed)** – 1 CU: This course teaches technical methods according to relevant algorithms for understanding the company's consumers. This is a very interesting class with an amazing professor.
3. **Negotiations (Prof. Rachel Arnett)** – 1 CU: **The best course that I have taken**. The course is very practical and contains a lot of hands-on experience. As the course is built on many simulations, you get to know your classmates. At the end of the class there are awards nominations, and the students vote for different titles (e.g., best negotiator, most ruthless negotiator, etc.).
4. **Entrepreneurship (Prof. Ethan Mollick)** – 0.5 CU: This is a more theoretical course, but it includes a hands-on project on a “start-up” idea. If possible, I would recommend taking this class over a full semester, rather than a quarter, to make it sparser.

### **Accommodation**

Most graduate students prefer to live in Center City, in the Rittenhouse Square area. When coming for a semester, it is best to look for a furnished apartment (however note that the short term and furniture increase the rate substantially). Not all buildings offer a short-term lease (less than 6/12 months). I stayed in the Rittenhouse Claridge (18<sup>th</sup> & Walnut), which is an older building but has a great location and all the amenities you need (learning center, fitness center, lockers for deliveries, doorman, etc.).

### **Visa**

You can choose between J-1 and F-1. For a short period, there is no actual difference between the two (the main difference is that your spouse can work under a J-2, which is the visa they would get should you choose the J-1 visa, however they can only apply for a work permit a few months after you arrive to the US and therefore it is irrelevant for a period of 4-5 months). I had a J-1 visa.

### **Transportation**

Wharton is located in University City (37<sup>th</sup> & Walnut), and you can get there from Center City either by walking (15-20 minutes), by Uber or by Trolley (part of the local underground transportation, operated by SEPTA). During winter I preferred using Uber.

## Food

**Restaurants:** In Philly, you feel like every other store is a restaurant. The city has every type of food you can think of, and even an Israeli restaurant which was recently chosen as the best restaurant in the world (“Zahav”).

**Groceries:** There are three main places to shop –

1. **Trader Joe’s:** This is the cheapest option. It is a huge supermarket which only has its own branded products.
2. **Target:** You can find every brand.
3. **Whole Foods:** You can order from your Amazon account online and receive the delivery the following day. This is a more expensive option.

## General Tips

1. **Amazon Prime** – Students get a 6-months trial in Amazon Prime for free. This includes expedited shipping and Prime TV. Use your Wharton email address.
2. **GroupMe** – This is the way students communicate in Wharton. Download the App and ask one of your classmates to add you to the relevant groups.
3. **Let go of your FOMO** – During the semester there are hundreds and even thousands of events, lunch and learns, get-togethers, etc. You can’t attend everything, not even close. Choose those events that interest you. Don’t “Fear of Missing Out”.
4. **Leadership Program** – You can apply to leadership workshops for no cost at <https://leadership.wharton.upenn.edu/>. I participated in one of the workshops which is related to the American history – the Gettysburg Battle.
5. **Socialize – This is probably the most important tip.** Try to communicate with your classmates, go out, you can find friends for life.

## Summary

On a personal note, I truly recommend participating in the student exchange program, it is the most insightful and amazing experience that the Coller School of Management may provide you during your studies. It would enrich you with personal and professional skills, that you probably would not get elsewhere and would introduce you to people from all over the world.

I know it is not an easy decision to make a sudden change in your life, but it is definitely worth it.