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

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### Exchange Experience

I see the student exchange program as a once in lifetime experience. Six months ago, I quit my job, packed my things and moved together with my wife and our six-months-old baby to Philadelphia to study at Wharton. The student exchange program is a springboard to career, an opportunity to network with international students, to understand the global business culture, and an opportunity to live in other country as student with numerous other benefits. I recommend to other students at Coller School to undergo the student exchange program, and I am sure it will help to advance their career. Move out of your comfort zone and participate in the student exchange program no matter what.

### **About Philadelphia**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's largest city is notable for its rich history; on display at the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall (where the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were signed) and other American revolutionary sites occur there. Also iconic are the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, immortalized by Sylvester Stallone's triumphant run in the film "Rocky". In 2016, Lonely Planet ranked Philadelphia as the best place to visit in the United States.

For planning purposes, the city is divided into 12 sections, the main sections are Center City, University City (The location of UPenn and Drexel University), West Philly, North Philly and South Philly. Some parts of North Philly and West Philly are considered as the areas with high crime. The Center City and University City are the most interesting areas of cultures and nightlife, where everyone can feel very safe any time of the day.

Philly is just 2 hours by car/bus from New York City and about 1.5 hours by train. I met some people that commute to Manhattan on a daily basis. Philly is also 3 hours by car from Washington DC. I recommend the tourists to visit the Amish Land located in Lancaster town which is only 1 hour from Philly. The Amish are a group of traditionalist Christian, and they are known for simple living, plain dress, and reluctance to adopt many conveniences of

modern technology. Hersheypark is a theme park and the factory of the famous chocolate Hershey's, also only 1 hour from Philly. In short, there are plenty of things to see inside and outside of Philadelphia.

Note: Maps were attached to the appendices

## **University of Pennsylvania**

The University of Pennsylvania (commonly known as Penn or UPenn) is a private Ivy League university located in the University City section of Philadelphia. UPenn is considered as one of the best universities in the world and known to be home to many educational innovations. The first school of medicine in North America (Perelman School of Medicine, 1765), the first business school (Wharton School, 1881) and the first "student union" building and organization (Houston Hall, 1896) were founded at Penn. With an endowment of \$10.72 billion (2016), Penn had the seventh largest endowment of all colleges in the United States. All of Penn's schools exhibit high research activity.

Over the years, the university has produced many distinguished alumni. These include 14 heads of state (including two U.S. Presidents); 25 billionaires – the most of any university in the world at the undergraduate level; three United States Supreme Court justices; 33 United States Senators, 42 United States Governors and 158 members of the U.S. House of Representatives. In addition, about 30 Nobel laureates, 169 Guggenheim Fellows and 80 members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences have been affiliated with Penn. Also, Penn has produced a significant number of Fortune 500 CEOs and is in third place worldwide after Harvard and Stanford.

The Penn University campus is made up of beautiful old buildings. One of the most beautiful attractions in Philly is a tour round the University. The old and amazing library of the University, Fisher Fine Art library, is another example of the ancient buildings one can find at the Ivy League University.

## **The Wharton School**

The Wharton School is the business school of the University of Pennsylvania. Wharton was established in 1881 and is the first business school in the world. This school is widely known both in the USA and other part of the world.

In 2017, Wharton's MBA program was ranked No. 1 in the world according to Business Insider, No. 1 in the United States according to Forbes, and was tied with Harvard Business School for the No. 1 rank in the United States according to U.S. News & World Report. According to U.S. News & World Report, MBA graduates of Wharton earn an average of \$158,058 first year compensation, higher than any other program. Wharton's MBA program

also ties first place with Stanford for the highest median GMAT score of 740 (Wowww) for its entering class. According to the same publication, Wharton also produces the most CEOs of the 100 top companies on the Fortune 500 list. In general, Wharton has over 95,000 alumni in 153 countries, with notable figures such as Donald Trump, Elon Musk, Warren Buffett, Sundar Pichai, Aditya Mittal, Steven A. Cohen, Jeff Weiner, Anil Ambani, John Sculley, Walter Annenberg, Leonard Lauder, Laurence Tisch, Michael Moritz, Ruth Porat, Kunal Bahl and William Wrigley Jr. II, and Itamar Levi.

The Philadelphia campus of the Wharton School has four primary buildings, Jon M. Huntsman Hall, Steinberg Hall, Dietrich Hall, Vance Hall and Lauder-Fischer Hall. Jon M. Huntsman Hall is the Wharton School's main building. In 2001, Wharton launched a new campus in San Francisco, California.

### **School Atmosphere**

The school has an outstanding atmosphere. Most of the times, the Wharton's buildings are full of Undergrads, Grads, and other visitors. During the day, there are lots of social and professional events that one can participate in. Unlike Tel Aviv University's students, the Whartoners (nickname for Wharton's students) are full time students, which mean they do not work, so all they do is to enhance their experience as students exactly like in the Hollywood's college movies.

The range of opportunities is so wide that it is difficult at times to choose what to participate in. During the day there are lectures and meetings with well-known people such as Richard Branson, Virgin's founder, meetings with firms, conferences, workshops, training at the Career Management Center and professional club activities. In the evenings, one just has to choose from a variety of options, to go to party or bar. The clubs organizes many social events almost every evening; get together, shows or concerts, special parties and much more.

The best way to stay updated is by visiting Wharton's SPIKE regularly (a website that gives students simple and integrated access to course materials, resources, information, and online services).

### **Clubs**

One of the most identified with Wharton student life are the clubs. Wharton has clubs to match almost every interest. Students create clubs, and it is a reflection of their entrepreneurial spirit. Clubs can be professionals (like Consulting club), social and special interest (like Whiskey club), community service (like Global Health Volunteers), athletic (like Tennis club) or international and cultural (like Jewish club). Most of the clubs meet once or twice a week, for one to be a member, you will have to pay a fee (each club has a different fee).

You can find the list of all the available clubs [here](#).

My recommendations are:

- Be a member of like 3-5 clubs. The clubs are fun and a good platform to meet friends, but since it costs money to be a member and you probably would not have enough time to participate in all activities, I recommend for signing up for not more than five clubs.
- Join clubs that related to your hobbies. Like Whiskey club, Chocolate club or Yoga club.
- Join to at least one club that does not exist in Israel. For example, Crew club or Sailing club.
- Join the Jewish Association of MBA's club. This club is well managed, it is a wonderful platform to meet people, to do Sabbath dinners with others and celebrate holidays together.
- As an exchange student, I do not recommend you join the professional clubs, although they are very popular, and their main goal is to help the student to find a job and prepare them for interviews. From my personal experience, for an exchange student, who is here for only one semester, it can be a waste of time to practice how to solve cases from interviews and not to do something fun instead.

### **Jewish and Israeli culture on campus**

Contrary to media reports about BDS and protests against Israelis and Jews, I got the impression that Penn is a pro-Israel University. The president of the university, Amy Gutmann, is a proud Jewish woman. There are many Jewish professors, and the 25% of the students are Jews (this fact I got from Hillel), this gives a very supportive atmosphere for Israelis. In the beautiful campus, there are signs inviting students to participate in Birthright, join to the Jewish clubs, enter to Sukkah or light a Menorah's Hanukkah on holidays. In addition, as in any large university in the United States, Penn also has a Jewish centre, Hillel. Hillel's goal is to connect all the Jews in the university together. At Hillel, you will find many activities and lectures, Shabbat meals (usually paid), holiday events and a kosher restaurant that offers buffet meal for \$ 20 (a bit expensive than other places but the food is healthy and of high quality). Those wishing to celebrate Shabbat and holidays in an Orthodox atmosphere can go to the Chabad House of the University City. The Chabad House is run by the lovely emissary (Shaliach), Rabbi Levi HersHKovitz at every Shabbat, him and his wife host the students for Shabbat meals. The meals at the Chabad House are amazing and free of charge, but it is advisable to inform them before visiting.

It is important to note that there is no need to be religious before visiting these places and no one will judge you on whether you are religious or Jewish. I highly recommend visiting the Jewish centers and getting to know American Jewry as they are excellent places to meet

students and networks. There is a great desire for American Jewry to connect and help Israelis.

### **Courses:**

Without any doubt, all the courses at Wharton are world class, so also are the professors. No matter what course you choose, you will be given world class training. But you should know that Wharton specializes mainly in Finance and General Management, they are less in Technology, so do not expect to find many courses in Technology, Big Data, or Cyber Security like in TAU.

Most of the lessons are based on Case-Studies and before each class there is a duty to read the case. Participation in the discussion of the lesson is mandatory, and one must also prepare for cold calls from the professor. A significant part of the course's final grade is the student participation in class. It is important to know that there are no breaks between classes, another class start straight after the first, and only ten minutes is given to pass between the classes. Laptops and phones are prohibited during the class, except for lessons that require computers. A phenomenon that bothered me a bit was the students' habit of eating in the class during lectures, they don't eat the only sandwich, but dishes of any kind.

Every exchange students are required to take a minimum of 3 CU (Credit Units). Usually, 1-quarter course would be 0.5 CU and full semester courses would be 1 CU. You can take a course with pre-requisite completed in TAU. Most of the courses are twice in a week, for one and half hour each. Like in Tel Aviv University, the students choose the courses by a bidding system called [Course Match](#). I recommend using [SPIKE](#) website to understand the background of the courses and the history evaluation given by the students.

### **I participated in 4 courses:**

- **Entrepreneurship**—This course was taught by a fascinating Professor; Laura Huang. The course was taught in Case study method, which means that before each lesson the students, should read 2-3 cases. Every class starts with a short quiz on the case study, and Professor Huang expects all students to be active and participate in class discussion. Unfortunately, at the end of the semester, Pro. Huang left to teach at Harvard Business School.
- **Negotiations** – Pro. Milan Prilepok is a senior expert at McKinsey and teaches negotiations at Wharton. The course is one-hour lecture duration and training, after that the students practice negotiation in a simulation for another hour, and then we go back to class to discuss the simulations. The course is practical and recommended to improve our knowledge of negotiation. This course helped me to improve my bargaining skills and understand international business cultures, since the class consists of students from all around the world. This course taught me to bring my advantage as an Israeli to the negotiating table; Israelis are known to be ambitious

and think outside the box, and not to bring other customs from Israel like aggressiveness and lack of listening to others. I really appreciate the opportunity given to me to take part in this course. I still get in touch with the instructor, Pro. Milan. Student's participation in this course is mandatory.

- **Understanding Career** – This is the best course I have ever had, and the course is very popular at Wharton. The goal of this course is to understand the structural dynamics that shape careers, to prepare for the decisions that we will need to make during the later part of our career. This course is not difficult, and it is an excellent tool for career planning and understanding of the opportunities available after the graduation. Again, participation is mandatory.
- **Data Analytics and Statistical computing** – This class mainly teaches R programming language. To my surprise, undergrads also participate in this class. This means that grads and undergrads study in the same class together. This course is not recommended if you don't focus on data analytics in your degree.

## Visa

The university allows students to choose between two types of student visas, F-1 or J-1. You can find a comparison between the options [here](#). To the best of my knowledge, J-1 has more benefits for exchange students, but do your own research.

Secondly, you need to request your form, I-20 or DS-2019. You will apply on-line via the ISSS iPenn system. Once you receive your I-20 or DS-2019, you will have to pay the SEVIS fee to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and apply for an F-1 or J-1 US entry visa at the US embassy in Israel. Not complicated but the process takes time, so start it as earlier as you can.

## Accommodation

The best place to live in Philly is the Center City. Most of the Whartons live there, there are lots of events there, and it is trek able to the campus. Another option to live close to the campus is by living in the University City, but the prices are not quite different, and more undergrads than grads live there.

Some options to find an apartment in the Center City; first, you will have to receive in your email offers for sublets from students who leave their apartment for a semester in San Francisco campus or other reason, so they look for students to take up their apartments. Receiving emails from Wharton's office is the best way to find a good apartment in good location. Other options are Airbnb, Zillow.com, Craigslist or simple google search.

By the way for some personal reasons, I lived in a town named; Bala Cynwyd, 20 minutes away from UPenn.

### **Insurance and Health Services**

The university requires full-semester exchange students to either purchase the Penn Sponsored Insurance Plan (PSIP) which is approximately \$2,100 for one semester or complete a waiver for those already possessing equivalent insurance. Since this may be much more expensive than what you expected, I recommend that you do deep research on your needs. I found good health insurance called [ISO](#) and I paid half price for the health insurance. By the way, the university does not approve health insurance from non-American company, like Harel or Migdal.

### **Last Tip – Set Goals!**

Think of Wharton as a soda machine. You have the cup, and you are allowed to taste all flavours, but it will be much better to focus on 1 or 2 flavors. In order to be focus and make the best of it, you must set goals, make a plan, stick to it and reach your goals!

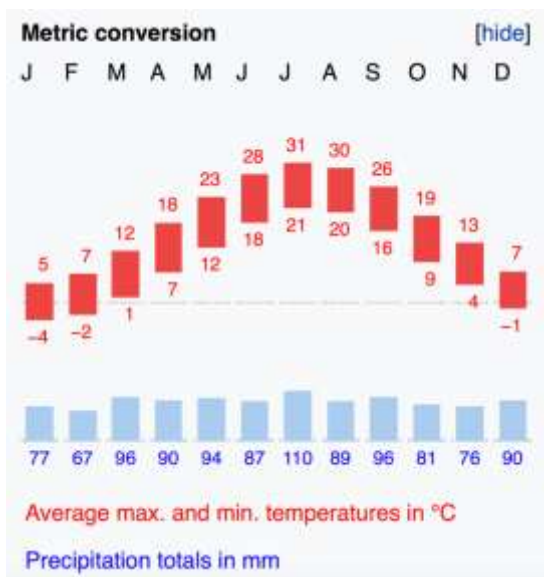
## Appendices

### Philadelphia:



### Climate:

Summers are typically hot and muggy, fall and spring are generally mild, and winter is moderately cold.





Maps of Philadelphia



University of Pennsylvania



The Wharton School





