

General Details

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Program: Recanati Business School of Management, M.B.A program

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University: Duke University, the Fuqua School of Business, Durham, North Carolina, U.S.A

Date of stay: Jan-May 2015

Accommodations

For the first part of the semester (until spring break) I stayed at the Station nine (www.stationnine.com). This complex is designated to M.B.A students and contains many facilities such as: pool, Jim etc. I stayed there at the apartment of one of the M.B.A student which offered a sublet for her apartment while she was in student exchange program. The apartment was well equipment with everything I needed including furniture, dishes, washing machine etc. I found the accommodation to be very convenient in terms of location and transportation to the University. The accommodation was very close to restaurants area and supermarket too. In addition, many of the students stayed there so it contributed to my social relationships and social experience. I contacted the tenant prior to my travel through 'Duke list' website (dukelist.duke.edu) and closed all the details. The cost for the stay was 1100\$ per one month.

At the second half of the semester, I stayed at University apartments (universityapartmentsdurham.com). I stayed at a three bedrooms apartment together with one of the students participated at the exchange program from Brazil. The apartment was very convenient and well equipped to my needs. There were also pool and Jim facilities in the building area too. The location was also good, as it was close to the University. The cost for the stay was 700\$ per one month.

Transportation

Prior to my travel I thought about renting a car for the period of my staying, and after I advices with some formal students who participated in the program in the same University, I decided not to. This decision was turned out to be correct in terms of the cost. The renting cost offer was approximately ~800\$ per month. Instead I used Uber and Duke Vans (parking.duke.edu/buses_vans) transportation service. The cost for Uber was approximately 5\$ for one direction and the availability was very good (less than 5 minutes). The Duke Vans services is given for free for the students, this service is available from 17:00 to 05:00 every day within the specified service area (which included Station nine and University apartments).

Living Expenses

This really depends on your own needs and limitations, however, it is a quite expensive experience.

- Accommodations will cost approx. \$3,000 for four months
- Health insurance around \$750.
- Books and packs related costs depend on the courses you choose and may sum-up to above \$500.
- Food requirements will cost for another \$500 per month (roughly).
- Transportation will cost up to 200\$ per month.

Visa Process

All international students are required by U.S. federal immigration regulation to get in to the US on a student visa, so even if you have a tourist visa already you will need to get a new one. The international office at Duke will send you all the relevant info and will assist with the needed papers in, however, it is best to follow their instructions carefully – there are no second chances. Upon completion of your exchange (i.e. your J-1 activity), you may stay in the U.S. for an additional 30 days.

Courses

Before the semester starts, the international office will send you a list of open courses for exchange students and a very detailed courses and professors' evaluation chart from the previous year. There are so many options and it is usually hard to choose, so my tip to you is to get engaged with former and current students and ask them for recommendations. Duke uses a bidding system to allocate seats in their courses, and there can be significant difficulties in getting a place on some popular courses. Each semester is divided to two terms, each term lasts about 6 weeks. There is a registration period prior to each term and it is required to take 4 to 6 course in each semester (each

course is equal 3 points). From my academic experience I recommend the following courses:

- Financial Statement Analysis
- Game Theory
- Behavior Economics
- Competitive Analysis

Each course is studied twice a week, Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday, 20% of the course mark is for attendance and participation in class. The courses are very demanding, there are home assignments for each lesson such as reading assignments, team works etc. The grade in the courses is given also according to final exam, home exam or final project.

Social Activities

There are several social clubs in the Fuqua School such as: Investment Banking club, consulting club, Marketing club, Wine club, Latin club, Jewish club etc. Personally I participated in some lecture activities organized by some of the clubs above and really enjoyed it. For example, one of the activities included a spectacular lecture given by Meg Whitman the CEO of Hewlett-Packard. This was an opportunity for me to hear about leadership from one of the great leaders of the Technology and Economic world of our time.

In addition, each Friday afternoon there was an activity called 'Fuqua Friday'. All the student and their families are gathering to a food festival including beer, wine etc. Each Friday, a different club is responsible for organizing an activity such as live performance, dances, singing etc.

One last activity which I defiantly recommend participating is the basketball games of the Duke Blue Devils. The atmosphere in the games is really unique and exciting. Of course it is required to come with the official blue shirt.

After Hours Students Life

The city of Durham is not really known for its night life. There are three main places to go to and usually you will meet everyone there:

- **Social Club**- This is a good place to drink beer with the students, and play table games such as: pool, soccer table etc. www.socialdurham.com.
- **Tavern**- This is a nice pub, with food, karaoke, different games such as pool and Darts. The best day to spend there is Tuesday. www.thetaverndurham.com.
- **Shooters**- This is a night club, for dancing which is open between 23:00 to 2:00. All the graduated students go there on Saturday night.

In addition, there were many social gathering of the MBA student in the student homes for meals, beer and music.

Summary

This has been an amazing and meaningful experience and I would strongly recommend it to any of my fellow students. To live a different life in a different place, study at one of the world's finest business schools, challenge yourself with a new culture and to meet exciting new people, is truly a life changing experience. These 4 months will go by quicker than you can ever imagine so I suggest you make the best use of your time. Even if Duke is not an option for you, I assure you that the experience will be just as fun and amazing wherever you go. This exchange program is a "once in a lifetime" opportunity so don't miss it!

Good Luck!
Shiran

