

Exchange summary Wharton School of Business, Fall semester, 2015 (Aug. 2015- Dec. 2015)

Wharton and Philly

The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania is one of the top 5 business schools in the world. Although it is considered more of a finance-oriented school, it offers a variety of interesting courses in marketing, management and strategy as well. The school is located in a beautiful campus in Philadelphia.



Philadelphia is a great city as there are plenty of shops and restaurants but it is not as hectic as other big cities. In addition, it is fairly close to NYC (you can take the bus or train) so you can spend the weekend in Manhattan.

Once you are chosen to do an exchange at Wharton (Yay!) you will receive a fact sheet from the TAU office. I sent an email to the Wharton contact listed on that document and received a very elaborate email with all the procedures I need to go through and take care of, before the exchange. Below you can find additional details that might be helpful.

Academics

Full-semester exchange students can take only elective courses and are required to take a minimum of 3 credit units. Similarly to TAU, students are issued auction points to make bids for seats in an online auction on a system called Course Match. You can use the SPIKE website to read about the different courses, the offered professors, the syllabus and reviews from students who have taken the course in the past.

I've taken 3.5 credit units – Negotiations, Creativity, Managing the Established Enterprise and Technology Strategy. Keep in mind that some of the courses require purchasing books but for the majority of the courses I've taken the course materials were uploaded by the professors to Canvas- a website similar to Moodle.

Tip- There are no courses on Friday. Out of the courses I found interesting I chose the ones that I could arrange in as little days as possible. I ended up studying Mon-Wed which resulted with a very long weekend.

Visa

The university offers two kinds of student visas- F-1 or J-1. Choose the J-1 as that is the visa for exchange students (the F-1 visa is for students who are studying for more than a year in the states). The visa issuance process can take some time and requires you to obtain a student ID number, filling and submitting forms and finally scheduling an interview at the embassy. Therefore, I would recommend starting the process as soon as possible.

Housing

There are two main areas where students choose to live- University City and Center City.

University city- as the name suggests, it is close to campus and it is usually the cheaper option as these are dorms. A good option for MBA students would be the Sansom Place as the majority of the students living there are grad students and so it is more quiet and laid-back than other dorm options. However, the rooms are very simple, with basic furniture, tiny kitchen and shared bathrooms.

Center city- You can sublease an apartment in this area either by yourself or with roommates. The MBA office forwarded us emails from Wharton students who were going on an exchange programs themselves and were looking to sublease their apartments. Price range is \$1,100-\$1,700 per month.

I chose to live in Center city as most students live in that area and all the bars, restaurants and shops are located there. It is only 30 min walk to campus or 15 min by bus, which runs very frequently. Another option is catching an Uber or a taxi with other students who live in your building or in your area.

General tips

- If you are planning on opening a bank account in the US, I would suggest PNC bank. The biggest advantage is that you don't have to have a minimum balance at all times. Other banks require a minimum of a few thousands and if you don't comply they charge you ~12\$ a day. You can find ATMs in the

bookstore close to campus and in Rittenhouse square and a number of other locations in center city.

- As a student you can enjoy Amazon Prime for 6 months for free. It's extremely useful as you can order almost anything and have it delivered in two days for free.
- There are dozens of student clubs you can and should join. Some are more profession and recruitment oriented, some are more culture based and some are just hobbies. It costs money to join each of these however as an exchange you can pay for only one semester instead of the entire year and it really is a great way to meet people and enjoy fun activities.
- Once you are admitted, join a Facebook group called Wharton Market. It is used to buy and sell books, furniture, tickets to events etc.

Please feel free to contact me with any question you might have, either by phone 0547904570 or by email sharon.goldblatt1@gmail.com