



Exchange Program summary

Fall Semester (Sep – Dec) 2011

Northwestern University
Kellogg School of Management

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Academics

The School

'Kellogg School of Management' is the business School of Northwestern University, which has almost 20,000 students, most of them are postgraduate.

The main campus is located in Evanston, a nice campus town just north to Chicago, and there is also a smaller campus in downtown Chicago.

The school is highly ranked among the top MBA schools in the US and in the world, and every year more than 500 students start their MBA in several programs, the majority of them as part of a 2 years full time program, with a fair mix between Americans and Internationals. I estimate that the average age is 27-28 years old. The semester lasts 11 weeks, out of them one is Thanksgiving break, and then an additional week for finals. So it starts at mid-September and ends at the beginning of December. Before the semester starts there is a pre-term course (1 week) which is mandatory for the regular students and optional for exchange students, and before that a one week orientation for the new first year full time students (called CIM week, see later below).

Exchange program

When I attended, at the fall semester, we were between 40-50 exchange students from around the world.

The International office and the students' affairs office made sure that we will have all the information needed, and were very helpful with all the relevant academic and campus related issues. That includes very detailed info about all the needed arrangements before arriving to the US and to Kellogg, including courses and housing registration, visa info and assistance, and more.

In addition there was also a special 1 day orientation for the exchange students just before the semester started, which was very helpful for getting into business quickly and getting to know each other.

Courses

Before the semester started the international office sent a list of open courses for the exchange students, and a very detailed courses and professors' evaluation chart from the previous year, which was very helpful for choosing courses. Almost all the electives are open and there are many options for incoming students.

We needed to prioritize 10 courses from the list, and were registered to 4 of them. As opposed to that, Kellogg students need to bid for courses (just like at TAU), and therefore there is an advantage for the exchange students (I, for example, received 4 of my top 5 selections). In addition, at the beginning of the semester there is always an option to add / drop / change classes.

Courses can be worth 1 credit (equivalent to 1.5 Recanati credits) with 30 contact hours or 0.5 credits with 15 contact hours (half a semester).

I took 5 courses, one of them a pre-semester course, with total 4 academic points. Kellogg is considered to be a very general school (and therefore probably also has the highest percentage of consulting graduates), but is well known for his marketing department, and still you can find great professors there in the field of finance, general management and organizations, and others.

To my opinion, the best way to choose your classes is according to your field of interest (I took 2 strategy courses to complete my major), professors evaluation, workload, and most important - consulting with other/previous students.

Grading

Grading is different than at TAU, and if there is an exam it is usually determine only a small part of the grade. The rest is based on attendance and class participation, submitted assignments and group work.

The grading is A, B or C. no failures.

Learning Method

Attendance is considered mandatory in most classes, but with the professor approval you can skip classes if you have a justified cause.

Group work is very common, and the school puts a lot of emphasize on that. As a result in almost all courses you will have a weekly group work, with no or almost no individual work (except the readings, and there are many).

The workload depends a lot on the courses and your group, and for each class you should expect readings (one or more cases + book / articles) even if there are no assignments for this week.

In general, I think that my work load was ok, so I spent few hours a day on the academics and the rest on the extra activities that the school has to offer (see later).

Other Activities

For the full time students the courses are only the 2nd priority, before that (and maybe even more time consuming) are coming the extra activities at School.

Clubs

There are hundreds of clubs at Kellogg, basically for every relevant topic, and you definitely want to join them!

Clubs can be around industries (like High-Tech, Health, Energy sectors etc.), job functions (consulting, business development, strategy), groups (Jewish Business

Association, European business club) or just for fun (sports, food, wine).

The clubs are running by the students and for the students, and all of them are of course open for exchangestudents, at least as members (being part of the executive team requires at least a year participant). Being a member basically means that you are on the mailing list for newsletters, events and other activities. Those usually includelectures by companies or industry experts, recruiting assistance, and networking events.

For example, I was a member of several clubs, but attended mostly the high-tech, strategy and business development, and entrepreneurship clubs' events.

Career Center and Recruiting

Probably the full time students top priority. The fall semester is hunting time, companies are looking for the best students, and those are looking for their dream job or internship. For the exchange students this is the perfect time to be there if you are looking for a job or just to hear about new opportunities in different industries or roles.

During the semester, almost every day, there are several companies that coming to recruiting events. This is a great opportunity to hear about the industry, the companies, openings to new graduates or interns or just to network. In addition, at each event (like any other event at Kellogg) food and drinks are supplied 😊.

Almost all career center and recruiting activities are open for the exchange students. The exchange can use all the resources beside the access for the alumni network and bidding for interviews (you can still get invited, which is more important). The career center provides workshops for CV and cover letters writing, mock interviews, resources usage and more – and they all can be very helpful if you search for a new job and specially a career change.

Companies are coming to interview students on campus, and exchange students can be invited to these interviews as well. Still, many companies are not interested in students without permanent US work permit, and even less than that in exchange students without temporary work visa.

So recruiting is possible, but mostly if you have a work permit or looking for international opportunities outside the US.

CIM Week

3 weeks before the semester starts there is a one week long orientation for the new full time students. At the beginning of the week the students are divided into 8 sections of ~70 students, and the whole week is about being part of the section and getting to know your section buddies through many contests and other activities (something like Harry Potter...).

For the exchange students that choose to participate (the downside is that you need to arrive Evanston early before the semester actually starts, therefore only 6 joined

last year) is provides a very good opportunity to meet some of the full time students and make a lot of new friends.

I participated in this week and it made a huge difference. It broadens your personal and professional network, and makes you a part of a close group for the rest of the semester.

Even if you don't choose to participate, you will still be assigned to a section. This will put you on the section's mailing list, so you can get invitations to their parties or any other relevant events.

Campus and student life

Evanston

The main campus is located in Evanston, a small and beautiful students' town located next to Michigan Lake, about 11 miles north to Chicago. The center of the town consist only several streets, and everything is in a walking distance from the campus, including many restaurants, shops and the few bars of Evanston.

Chicago

If you don't know Chicago yet, then it is about time. Chicago is an amazing city, with very reach architecture, culture and good night life.

Chicago is well known for its blues bars, and it is very recommended to visit some of them, but there are also great restaurants there and other bars and clubs, located either down town or at Lincoln Park area.

I recommend doing your homework about what the city has to offer, and take advantage of it to the full, especially at early stage before the winter really arrives.

Parties

Like many others, Kellogg students love to party. Therefore there are many formal and in-formal parties organized throughout the semester, either in Evanston or in Chicago.

In addition, every Tuesday night is 'Kellogg night' at the Keg – one of the local bars. There are no Wednesday morning classes at Kellogg, so lots of people are coming to these parties.

If that is not enough, every Friday afternoon the TGIF is taking place (Thank God Its Friday!), and there are free drinks and snacks at school, and each week is hosted and sponsored by different clubs. This is also a good place to get together, meet the rest of your classmates and open the weekend.

Food

It is really up to you. There are nice places to eat out in Evanston, there is the school cafeteria, there are very good restaurants in Chicago and you can cook at home. In addition, there is free food at school during companies and clubs events (which is basically always).

Ski Trip

If you love skiing or snowboarding, want to try for the first time, don't miss on that! Every year at mid-December, just after the exams week, the school organizes a ski trip in one of the main resorts in the states. It is a HUGE event with 750 participants from school, and it is an intense week of skiing and partying. The cost is a bit less than \$1000 and it is open for exchange students. So if you are up to it – make sure to bring your ski gear with you.

Administrations

Visa

You will have 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. Take care of that early! The international office will send you all the relevant info and will assist with the needed papers in advance.

Housing

There are on-campus housing options for Kellogg students. The main facility is McManus – a facility for Kellogg students only. Still, only half of the exchange students were lucky enough to get a place there.

I got a shared apartment, with a living room, bathroom and a kitchen that was almost fully furnished. The cost was about \$1100 a month for each student (apartments without a living room are a bit cheaper).

The International office helped those who were not lucky enough to get a place at McManus, and most of the others stayed at a different place in campus. The others found apartments in Evanston (but finding a short term place at a center location is not an easy task).

Health Insurance

You will have to join the school health insurance program or equivalent. The cost is \$600+, take that into account.

Transportation

In Evanston everything is close and in a walking distance. Kellogg (Jacob building) is located 10 minutes' walk from the town center and McManus. So there is definitely no need for a car, you can buy bicycles too, but remember the weather. Chicago is about 40 minutes' drive during medium traffic. And there is a free shuttle for students between Evanston and downtown Chicago Mon-Fri, 6:30am-10:30pm. A train/subway ride costs \$2.5 and it is also convenient.

Living expenses

The following is based on a 3 months stay, which is the length of the semester.

Housing	- \$3000
Equipment for the apartment	- \$100-\$200
Health Insurance	- \$650
Books and case packs	- \$250
Transportation (Taxis & trains)	- \$200
Food	- \$1000-\$2500
Drinks & Going out	- \$500-\$1500

In addition you can travel in the US or to Central America – The cost is up to you.

General experience

If you thinking whether you should go on exchange or not – I think the answer is YES. Especially at Kellogg, but never mind where, if you can afford the time and cost, it will be a great experience for you.

Semester abroad, and specifically at one of the top US MBA schools, is a total different experience than in Tel-Aviv University. I recommend going to a school with a full time program, which makes a lot of difference. I met many new friends, and made lots of connections around the world. There is a lot to gain from that experience, and it is all up to you.

Tips & important things to be aware of

- Weather – Chicago area can get very cold during the winter, and it is not called “Windy City” for nothing. Take that into account and bring warm clothes with you. The good news – The semester ends before the winter strikes hard (it snowed only 2 days during my period there).
- Don't make it about the studies only. There are many other activities that I mentioned above, which make the experience different than from what you are

used to. Join clubs, meet other people, and go to recruiting events and other extra lectures even if you are not really looking for a job.

- Try to meet as many students as possible, also from the full time students. If you can, join CIM Week – you will make many new friends doing so, and will really know your way around when the semester starts.
- Take advantage of Evanston and the school facilities. There is a lake just next to you, nice places to dine or go out in town, and you have a lot of facilities at school – Gym, soccer fields, and so...
- Enjoy Chicago! There are many things to do and see there. I was at Chicago at least 2 times a week - going out, shopping or just walking around to see the city. Use the university shuttle when possible, it is very convenient and free.
- Travel. There are nice places outside of Chicago, and there are a lot of places to go to in the states or out of it. A domestic flight, if booked early enough can be as low as \$150.
- Try to get a spot at McManus. If you didn't, you better try to find a place early. Use the help of the international office for that while still in Israel.
- Books and school case packs – Amazon is a much cheaper option than the university store for books (get an Amazon prime account!), case packs are expensive, but can sometimes be shared with other students.
- Remember, there is a ski trip at the end of the semester that you can join!

If you have any other questions – Feel free to contact me.

Good luck!

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