
My Place

I lived in a double room in Trelease Hall of Florida Avenue Residence. Thanks to the agreement reached by our College of Science and Engineering and UIUC, housing was free in a double or triple room. This has saved me a considerable amount of money. My roommate was Faith, an American freshman majoring in bio-engineering. To my great surprise, her mother was from Taiwan and her boyfriend could speak Chinese, which brought us many topics to talk about. Faith and I had similar characteristics and got along well with each other. When I was leaving, she gave me a flag of UIUC, a card and a hug and said, “Don’t be upset. You can always come back one day if you want.” I will treasure the friendship with Faith forever.



My Exchange Experience at University of Maryland

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University of Maryland, College Park, is a well-known public funded university. It has over 150 years’ history and is the flagship institution of the university system of Maryland.

My life in UMD was a fantastic journey which was totally different from life in China. I feel the distinctions in language, skin color

and the climate, and the diversity of their way of thinking, their life style and their culture. Study in UMD seemed to depend on co-op learning, which gave me chance to communicate with local students, join local activities and get to know about American life little by little.

People

Most people in the US are warm-hearted and extremely friendly. When you get into troubles, they are always willing to help you out. I also met a lot of exchange students from various countries in the first several weeks and we got along very well. We together always hanged out, took a trip to DC, and drove all the way to Boston.

Before my trip to the US, I always thought that one who always smile, say hi and talk to a stranger was kind of weird. But now, I think it’s kind of good manner to show one’s self-confidence, and you can also gain a lot of information and make many friends. I am feeling free to talk to stranger now and have lots of fun.

Accommodation

As an exchange student, I was able to live on campus, which is very convenient to go to class every day. I only needed 10 to 15 minutes’ walk to the classrooms. The housing fee is about \$2800 and I have to pay another \$2000 for my dinning plan.

I was living in a suite with four suite mates. Our dorm was awesome. It was well carpeted, covered by both wired network and Wi-Fi and had really good air-conditioning for both summer and winter. However, it did not have a kitchen, so we had to buy a dinning plan and always ate in the diners.

Study

I chose 12 credits of specialized courses. The courses are much more difficult than those in CityU but luckily I got good grades. Classes taught in UMD are very different from CityU. Professors use blackboards and chopsticks instead of PowerPoints. Students use big notepads instead of printed PPT slides. This kind of teaching method lets us always concentrate on the lectures and never fall off.

We have fewer hours in class but more hours on homework and exams. Homework is due every week for every course. The

professors as well as the TAs always encourage us to go and ask questions during their office hours. This is what I enjoyed very much.

Out of Classroom

There are all kinds of activities around throughout the semester. With other exchange students, I had trips to DC, barbecues and dinners for free. I also helped out in Office of International Services as volunteers to give US students some understandings of Hong Kong.

There are fairs for societies and associations recruiting. One of the most helpful associations is the Chinese Student and Scholar Association (CSSA), where you can find lots of Chinese students. It was of great assistance that it provides guide book for arrival and airport pick-up service, especially for new comers.

Each week, there will be NCAA tournaments, football games and other interesting sports events. It was really great fun where I found the real US university culture. When you sat down inside the stadium wearing Maryland hoodies and hear “Go, Maryland go!” everywhere, you would be infected.

Goodbye

I really got a wonderful time living and studying in UMD. It was so sad for me to say goodbye to all of the friends I made in US. We’ll keep in touch through Facebook and email after my staying here and may be sometime in the future, we’ll meet again.

The most valuable part for this trip is that I got a lot of experience on self-driving travelling. We went to piers to get a tan. We drove all the way from College Park to Boston through eight states. We were exhausted but really excited and got an eye-feast.

Sharing to Future Exchange Students

An exchange experience is very rewarding for university students. The first month in another country is always the hardest time for you. You’ll miss your home, find everything in life difficult to adapt and start to complain. However, things will get better after this period of time. You’ll enjoy your different life and love the people and culture there. It’s an unavoidable process. Take it easy! You’ll gain more understanding when you really put your passion into your life.



Unforgettable Memories in University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)

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My blog

It is really worthwhile to have an exchange experience abroad. Studying in a totally different environment and experiencing different cultures there gave me many unforgettable memories.

When I was in UIUC, I had come across so many interesting experiences. I went camping in a camping site, experienced “bar crawl” with my roommates, had fun in Corn Maze in a chilling night and made gingerbread and Jack-o’-lantern with my own hands.

Just arrived...

It was really a tragedy to transfer flights with heavy luggage especially when the first flight was late. Due to the delay of the