
learn to have better time plan and management leading to a more relaxing life.

Sharing

Get well preparation before departure. It is very hard to adapt to a new environment especially in a non-English speaking country. It is difficult to communicate with people who do not know English very well. For example, when I went to supermarket in Germany, everything is labeled in German. I even could not distinguish between shampoo and bath oil. Also, only German menu is provided in most restaurants.

Overall Rating

5



Exchange in University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S. Giving Insights of Other Countries' Cultures

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BENG3-INFE, Yr 3

Just Arrived...

The weather is freezing! And it's getting colder every day! So if you are coming here, be sure to pack warm clothes with you!

The people are nice and helpful. If you need help, do not hesitate to ask for it!

After the plane had landed at Chicago, we had to take 4 more hours of bus to get to the city Madison. The girl with whom I shared the

apartment with drove to the bus station to pick me up, which was very nice of her.

Orientation

The university's international student service center organized a whole-day orientation, at where some important messages about health insurance, course enrollment, tuition fees, etc. were delivered.

There were some ice-breaking activities (e.g. Ice skating) to let us exchange students get to know each other and also a campus tour. It was definitely helpful. We made friends with other exchange students and got to know the campus better. Handouts like campus map, bus route map and schedule and so on were very useful later on in my exchange life.

My Place

I lived off-campus, but it is still the university-owned apartment. So the environment is pretty tidy and nice. It has free university shuttle bus going between where I lived and the campus every few minutes. The apartments are mainly for graduate students or research staff with families.

As it is university-owned, all the utilities except electricity are free. Free water supply, hundreds of cable channels, laundry machine and tumble dryer and so on. The price is also very reasonable. My roommate and I each enjoyed an individual bedroom and the rent per month for each of us was no more than US\$400 (electricity bill included). I really felt like it was my home at the US.

My First Class

The class atmosphere was more relaxing but interactive. Students always raised questions whenever there were something they did not understand or did not agree with the professor. There were more in-class discussions compared with here in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, especially at engineering and science related classes, the teaching style is usually more laid-back and students tend to be passive in answering questions.

This is something I really benefited from. I have become more confident to raise questions in class and less afraid of asking so-called "stupid" questions, because no question is stupid as long as you can learn something from it.

People I Met

I have joined a program named BRIDGE organized by the university. It is an international friendship program where an international student is paired up with a local UWM student. And usually 8 pairs of students make up a group. Our group had a weekly get-together time for activities such as movie night, super-bowl night or custom party night. I really enjoyed myself there and have made so many friends, not only with local students but also with other international students.

Furthermore, from the study group in the class I have met some amazing people. We did projects together and eventually ended up to be friends.

Out of Classroom

Exchange students can apply for working on campus, which is a great way to blend into the life here and get to know people.

As for the extracurricular activities, here at Madison, Ice hockey is a pretty popular sport. In weekends, students will go to stadium or outdoor ones to watch hockey games. Because it snows a lot here, ice-skating and skiing are also very nice activities for weekends. Once you have tried them, you would definitely fall in love with them!

Money

As I cooked for myself during the exchange semester, I have saved a lot on food by doing this. You can also choose to eat at dining halls at school or eat outside, but these two options are relatively more expensive.

It is quite different from Hong Kong and many other places that, in US, living at student residence is usually more expensive than renting your own place. And sometimes, it comes along with a mandatory meal plan. It can be costly, but meanwhile, living in residence is no doubt more convenient, considerably safer and easier to get involved into the community life. Both options have their own upsides and downsides. So, it is more of a personal preference.

Goodbye

How strange it was when I was still complaining about the freezing weather at Madison, the semester was soon over and I was saying goodbye again and again to my friends. It became warmer and the

trees started to “green-up”. They said that it was the most beautiful time in a year at Madison, however, it was time I needed to leave this peaceful, heart-warming and pretty little city.

After the exchange experience, I found myself more determined on living my own way of life. I care less about how I will be thought of and judged by others. Thanks to the exchange life, I have become more of myself!

Home Sweet Home

I think I will become more active in classes and more self-motivated about learning. Both my fellow classmates’ and my own exchange experience have triggered me to rethink why I chose my major and how I used to find interest in it.

I will not spend too much time worrying about whether I can speak English fluently or accurately when I communicate in English. e-Language is for communication, and as long as one keeps on practicing, this language is not difficult to master.

Sharing

Exchange is a great way to gain insights about a different country, culture and life style.

Being in an entirely new and different environment, you will face a lot of problems and situations that you never expect. Don’t be afraid! Don’t hold back! Just reach out to others and be confident about yourself. There are many nice people around that could be eventually your close friends.

Also, student exchange provides a great way for those who want to pursue further study abroad after degree study to get a beforehand experience.

Overall Rating

4

