

Duquesne University



Experience Report

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Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, USA

**Business Administration
5th Semester STAP program (bachelor)**

Completed Courses (undergraduate):

- Introduction to Marketing
- Sports Management
- International Business
- Fund of the Internet

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I. First steps

1. Information

You should plan your semester abroad one year in advance because the whole application progress will take a lot of time. I started to plan in the summer of 2013 so that I can do my exchange program in the summer/fall of 2014.

First of all, you should gather information about the different possibilities where you can go. On the website of the ZIB you can find a list with all the different universities which have a corporation agreement with the University of Cologne. I strongly recommend to pick a partner university because otherwise you have to pay the tuitions and fees of the host university which can be very expensive. You should also pay attention if the university is available for a bachelor program because a lot of universities just offer master programs. Moreover, you should check which languages and other skills are required and if you fit these requirements.

In addition to the experience reports, I gathered information about the cities, the countries and most importantly about the cultures.

2. Application

After deciding which cities could be a possible destination, you should start as soon as possible with your application. If you also decide to apply via the ZIB of the Wiso-Fakultät, the deadline will be in the early December. But for the application you will need a lot of documents, so that you should start early to work on it.

You will have to hand in your application as a pdf version to the ZIB and the following documents are required:

- Application form with your 5 favorite universities you want to go to (you will find the form on the ZIB's website)
- Motivation letter in German language (max. 1 page)
- CV in English language
- The latest performance overview (overview of your grades at the university)
- English language certificate (Even though you don't plan to go to an English speaking country, you need an English test with a level of B2 or higher. This can be either the TOEFFEL test or the FILTER test of the university which I would recommend because it is cheaper and easier than the TOEFFEL test)
- Contact address in Germany

The results of your application will be sent to you via e-mail in the end of January. You will also receive an e-mail during Christmas break about the Fullbright scholarship for the USA. The deadline for this scholarship is in January so that you should work on it immediately. I forgot about this scholarship because I expected to go somewhere else and then when I was informed about my acceptance at Duquesne, I didn't have enough time to get all the necessary documents for this scholarship. You will need two certificates of your teachers which will take some time to get.

After receiving the results, you will also receive a list of the people coming with you to Duquesne. In my case 3 other persons. Then we got in contact with each other and planned the following steps together. For example, we had to write another application for the

Duquesne University. This should be just a formal step and shouldn't affect your acceptance. But nevertheless it has to be done and send by the postal service. So, all of us decided to send it together to split costs. For the application you will need these documents:

- 1-2 page essay about how this exchange program will help you with your professional life
- Form: Student application for International Exchange agreements (you will find this form here: <http://duq.edu/admissions-and-aid/international-admissions/exchange-students>)
- Letter of recommendation (prepared by the ZIB)
- Transcript of records (Performance overview prepared by the Prüfungsamt)

After your documents reached Duquesne, you will receive your official acceptance letter. But you should be careful and tell the Office of International Programs to send the letter to your home address. My letter was sent to the University of Cologne but I have never received it because I was unknown at the post office of the university. So they had to send it again what of course took a while.

Then after a few weeks you will receive your first package with more documents and information about the arrival process. For example, you will need a bank statement which confirms that you or your parents can afford the stay. Moreover, in the package will be your I-20 document which is very important for your visa and your entry in the USA. But everything is explained very well and you will get a to-do list with all your further steps.

II. Preparation

1. Flight

You should take your time with booking a flight. Checking the prices for a few weeks can be very useful because the prices differ extremely. Usually the best prices are offered 2 or 3 months before the departure. I booked a flight from Düsseldorf to New York with one stop in London. Checking flights to different airports than Pittsburgh's can be helpful because the one in Pittsburgh is very small and not so many flights are offered there. So I chose New York and paid 650€ instead of 900€ to 1000€. The connection from New York to Pittsburgh is also very good and there are a lot of busses for cheap prices (40-50\$). The duration is around 8 hours but for 50 dollars it is more than doable. I would recommend to pick Greyhound over Megabus because they usually have cheaper prices and they are not as strict as Megabus with their luggage policy. A friend of mine had to pay an extra ticket for the Megabus ride for her hand luggage suitcase. Moreover, a flight to New York gives you the perfect opportunity to visit one of the most spectacular cities I have ever seen. I stayed 5 days before going to Duquesne and it was a very good decision.

2. Visa

For your F1 student visa you have to make an appointment at the Consulate General of the United States in Frankfurt. You should do it early because it takes a few weeks until you can get an appointment. First of all, you need to answer a lot of the typical security questions of the Department of Homeland Security. You also need to pay the SEVIS fee up first before you go to Frankfurt. Without the proof that you paid the fee, you are not even allowed to enter the building. The meeting in Frankfurt is very easy, you just have to make

sure that you got all the necessary documents because otherwise you have to make a new appointment.

You have to bring the following documents with you:

- Your Passport
- I-20 form (provided by Duquesne)
- DS-160 form (Online form of the homepage of the Consulate)
- Payment notification of the SEVIS fee

It cannot be wrong to bring more documents like your acceptance letter or your flight details. I didn't have any problems but I heard that sometimes they want some kind of proof that you are coming back and not planning to stay in the USA. But usually, you just have to wait a little bit in line and then you need to answer some short questions in German and English about the reason of your stay and then you are done. After a few weeks they will send back your passport with the attached visa.

III. Duquesne University

1. Arrival

Like I said, I arrived with the Megabus from New York. We took a cab from the station because we didn't know where to go and we had a lot of luggage. But if you arrive with the Greyhound, the way is not very complicated. The Greyhound station is located directly in downtown and it is just a 15 minute walk.

If you plan to fly to Pittsburgh, then I would recommend to take the shuttle services, provided by the Office of International Programs of the Duquesne University. You just have to tell them on the website when you will arrive and they will drive you directly to the campus. Otherwise, there is also a bus (X28) which is also stopping very close to the campus. It costs 3, 75\$ but you have to pay the precise amount because you cannot get change, like in every bus.

After arriving on campus, you will meet a Duquesne student who is a resident assistant. Every floor has one who will take care of the residents and that everything is working out. You are probably arriving earlier than the other students because of the international orientation week, so that the RA you are meeting is probably not the one responsible for your floor during the semester. But he will show you your room and give you your key.

2. International Orientation

The international orientation week will take place approximately 2 weeks before the classes start. On the first day you will get a lot of information about campus life and there will be a game so you get in contact with other international students. Then there will be a fair of student organizations where you can sign in to receive e-mail with invitations to different activities. I would suggest to sign in for nearly everything so that you will be informed and can decide later if you want to take part or not. PNC Bank will also be there at the fair and you can open a bank account. I think it is for free and probably the easiest way to get money without paying any fees. I didn't do it and in the end I had some trouble with my German banks.

The next days will be more fun and interesting. You will do a trip to a park and have a barbecue and play games or go to Target (it is like Walmart) to do shopping for your room and your upcoming classes. All in all, I can say that the international orientation week was very helpful and also fun and I definitely advise to take part. It is a good opportunity to get in contact with

others. I met all my friends at the orientation and we stayed together for the rest of the semester and did all the things together.

After the international orientation, there will be the normal orientation week for the freshmen. There, you can get in contact with Americans but they are all around 17-19 years old, so that the orientation is not very spectacular and that's why we didn't do so many things out of that program but discovered Pittsburgh with the internationals instead.

3. Dorms

All international students have to live on campus which is probably more expensive but gives you the opportunity to easily meet new people and to experience the traditional on-campus college life. Moreover, you don't have to worry about a lot of things because everything you need, you will find on campus.

After you received your first package of Duquesne, you have to sign and send back your housing agreement. Duquesne has several dorm buildings with different housing possibilities. At first, you have to choose the size of your room. There are single, double and triple rooms. Of course, the single room is the most expensive and the triple room the cheapest. I picked a triple room but ended up with a double room like the most of us. But actually, I was happy about it and I didn't complain because the rooms aren't very big, so I was happy to have just one roommate. You also have to answer several questions about your preferences for a perfect roommate and what you value the most (Neatness, sleeping hours, smoking). I think a double room is perfect because you still have enough space and you have someone at your side who is usually in the same situation or who is an American and can help you with a lot of things and introduce you to new people. I was afraid that sharing a room with someone for half a year would be complicated because you don't have any privacy but in the end this wasn't a problem at all. The 5 months are going so fast and you are not spending so much time in your room anyway.

I lived in Towers which is the main and biggest dorm building. I asked to live in Des Places because this building was just opened in 2012 and it is much newer than the others. But I lived on a renovated floor so that aspect wasn't a problem. An advantage of Des Places over Towers is, that you don't have shared bathrooms on your floor. You live in little apartments with 9 people (Three three-bed rooms) and you share your bathroom just with them. Moreover, every floor in Des places has a lounge with couches and a TV.

The advantage of Towers is that the Dining hall is located on the first floor of Towers, so you don't have to leave the building for the meals which is very nice especially in the winter or on rainy days. On my floor (11th), there were a lot of international students and that was really nice and we did a lot of things together. But there were also some Americans who were really nice as well and helped us whenever we had questions. On the floor, there were 2 bath rooms with 2 toilets and 2 showers each. Furthermore, our floor had an own laundry room with a washing machine and a dryer, a huge advantage over the old floors. There the students always had to take their laundry to the 17th floor which is the shared laundry floor for everyone else. The laundry is for free, so you just have to buy detergent and can do laundry as often as you want.

Duquesne University is a catholic school, so there are only gender-separated floors. If you want to have a visitor of the other gender you have to sign her/him in at the front desk and she/he can only stay until 2 am in the night. You also have to sign in visitors of the same gender but you are allowed to sign them in overnight but only 2 nights in a row. If the person is living in the same building you don't have the problem because you just need to sign them in because people of other buildings or non-duquesne students cannot pass the front desk door with their

Duquesne-ID. Your ID is just valid for your building and your floor. So it is very important to keep your ID with you because you will need it to come back to your room. If you forget it in your room, you can tell the front desk and they will let you in but you will need somebody to open the door for your floor as well.

You also have to sign in alcohol and only a certain amount is allowed per week and only if your roommate is at least 21.

Besides that, the front desk is opened 24/7 so you don't have to be back at a certain time.

But you will also have a meeting with your RA who will explain all the important rules to you again.

4. Campus

Duquesne University is a smaller university with a small campus. But I liked it a lot and you can reach the buildings of your classes very easily and it only takes you a few minutes to get there from your dorm room. As a business student, most of your classes will be in Rockwell Hall. Besides the school buildings and the dorm buildings, the campus also consists of 2 football fields, the gym, the library and the so called Duquesne Union in the center of the campus. The Union is the place with all the different offices, like the office of international programs where you can go if you have any questions regarding your exchange program. There are also some food places, a starbucks and room with pool and table tennis tables.

The campus is located in downtown and you can reach some stores like CVS pharmacy, Macy's or 7-eleven within 10 minutes by walk. If you go a little bit further, you will reach the market square with many different restaurants. If you are sick of the dining hall food, this could be a good alternative. A little bit further, there is the point state park which is really nice, especially in the summer. It is the place where the two rivers cross.

You can also reach Southside very quickly and by walk. Southside is on the other side of the river and it is the street with all the bars and restaurants, comparable to the "Zülpicher Straße" in Cologne.

5. Food

At the beginning, when you sign your housing agreement, you also have to choose which meal plan you would like to get. The meal plans cost all the same but differ in the amount of meals and flex money. With the meal swipes you can swipe in the main dining hall and get an all-you-can-eat buffet for breakfast, lunch and dinner. But there are certain opening hours, so that you might not make it in time and have to eat somewhere else. At the other food places, mainly in the Duquesne union, you can get food all the time until 9 pm. There, you can also pay with a meal swipe but only to a certain amount (Dinner swipes have a higher value than breakfast swipes). The rest you have to pay with your flex money. It's like actual money which you can spend on campus. You can pay with that at Starbucks or the campus market which is a small on-campus supermarket where you can buy little snacks or drinks for your room. I chose the meal plan with the second lowest amount of meal swipes and the second highest amount of flex money. I would suggest to pick this as well or even the lowest one because you won't be on campus all the time so that you can't use all of your meal swipes. Besides that, you probably don't want to eat every day in the dining hall because it is basically every time the same. The quality and range is okay but after a while you also want to eat something else.

If you want to go to a restaurant, Southside is definitely a good choice. Just walk on a sunny day along the East Carson Street until the Aldi and you will see every restaurant and bar. If

you go left at the Aldi there is also the Mongolian Grill and the Cheesecake Factory which both are really good.

If you don't want to walk that far, you can also try the restaurants at the market square in downtown. In the summer it is really nice because there are a lot of tables and chairs in the middle of the square and everyone can get food at the place they want and then you can eat together in the center.

And if you want it really close and fast, "Pizza Milano" is definitely a good choice. It is directly next to the campus and the pizza is quite cheap if you share the big ones and the quality is also okay. Nothing compared to Italian pizza but you won't find that in the US. Milano's is also very popular for Duquesne students because of their bar and their beer deals. As a Duquesne student, you will get a pitcher for only 5 dollars until midnight. But don't forget your passport because you will definitely need it. Your normal German ID won't be enough.

6. Useful advises

- **Health insurance**

You will need an insurance for foreign countries. I would recommend to do it from Germany. There are plenty insurance companies who are offering a good protection for little money. If you don't have an insurance, you will need to close the contract with Duquesne insurance. And this can be very expensive and doesn't offer the same protection like the German ones. If you look in the internet, you will find many possibilities and you can compare the different prices (Hanse Merkur, Secure Travel...).

- **Bank account**

I opened a new account just for the exchange program at the "Deutsche Kreditbank". The advantage is that you can withdraw money for free with their VISA-card. This worked very well at the ATM in the lobby of Towers. I didn't have to pay any fees for getting money. I just had problems with some ATMs outside of campus because some banks request their own fees and not the DKB. But if you press "no" to every question you might be lucky and will get your money without paying fees.

If you pay with your credit card, you always have to pay a small percentage as a fee. It is like 1 percent of your bill.

If you are planning to get the DKB VISA-card I would recommend to increase the limit. At the beginning the limit for the credit card is at 500€ per month. But especially at the beginning or when you go on trips, you reach the limit very easily and then you might get into trouble.

Another possibility is to create a new bank account at PNC bank. This is the main bank in Pittsburgh and like I mentioned above, they also have a stand at the fair during the international orientation week. My roommate did this and I think it was for free to open the account. And then, this is probably the easiest and cheapest way to get money.

- **Dori-account**

The Dori-account will be your workspace during the semester. It is very important because everything is controlled via DORI. It is comparable to KLIPS or ILIAS at the University of Cologne. So it is helpful to create your account before you go to the USA. Then you can receive and read your first emails with further information regarding your arrival and first weeks at

Duquesne. Moreover, you will receive an e-mail from the Office of Resident Life with the information about your roommates. You will be informed where you are going to live and who your roommates are. If you want, you can try to find them on Facebook or send them an e-mail on DORI.

Furthermore, on DORI you can look up the course catalogue. It might be useful to think about which classes you want to take before actually moving to Duquesne.

- **Mobile Phone**

There are four big carriers in the USA (T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon and Sprint). My friends and I decided to sign a contract with T-Mobile together. The shop is in downtown and the service was very good. Usually, all of the 4 carriers offer contracts with many "lines". 100\$ for four lines is a normal offer. So if you find 3 other people who want to sign the contract with you, you all have to pay 25 dollar per months and you will have unlimited calls, texts and data. I don't know about the other carriers but at T-Mobile, the good thing was that we had to pay every month and if we didn't, the contract was over. So you are not glued to a contract for a long time. We were 5 persons and just had to pay 20 dollars a month. If somebody wants to add an extra flat to his contract, this is possible too. A friend of mine wanted to have unlimited calls to Germany as well and then she just paid extra. I just can recommend T-Mobile but if you find a cheaper offer, this will be probably good as well.

In the end, I didn't really use the calls and texts flat rate because everything was organized through WhatsApp but this depends on who you are dealing with. For example, the Americans don't really use WhatsApp and just communicate via text message or iMessage.

IV. Classes

You will need to do at least 12 Credit Points to be considered a Duquesne student. 12 DUQ points are equal to 24 Cologne CP. Most of the classes are counting for 3 point so that you have to take 4 classes. I wouldn't recommend to do much more because with 4 classes you will have enough time to experience a lot and to do well in your classes.

The classes are more like in high school with 20-30 students in one class. You will have to do homework and the attendance might be compulsory. Moreover, you won't take just one final exam but probably 2 midterm exams plus 1 final exam. This sounds like a lot of work but in the end it helps you because you don't have to know everything for one exam.

The homework is also not very difficult. Most of the time, you just have to read something and then answer questions about it.

The classes take place either one time, two times or three times per week. The more often it takes place, the shorter the classes will last. I chose mine that I just have classes on Tuesday and Thursday. Then you have a lot of time for traveling and not just the weekend. When you picked your classes, your advisor will tell you when they are taking place. But they are really helpful to adjust. Especially for the internationals, they always tried to give us the classes we want. So if you want to change some of your classes, it won't be a problem.

1. Fundamentals of the Internet

Professor: Lorrain F. Sauchin

Time: Tuesdays + Thursdays 9:25 – 10-40

Grading: 3 exams (25% each), Assignments (25%), Participation (extra credit up to 1%)

Fundamentals of the Internet is a very easy class about the use, history and functions of the internet. It was very interesting because the internet is our daily life and I didn't know so many things about it.

Ms. Sauchin is a very nice, well prepared and clearly speaking teacher so that it was easy to follow. Her presentations were well structured and helped a lot for studying for the exams. There were only a few other students with me in the class, so it was a nice atmosphere and we could bring in our opinions. Ms. Sauchin was very interested in our own point of view and encouraged us to participate. She was also very helpful to me, the only international student, and interested about the use of the internet in Germany. The exams were very easy. First you have to take a multiple choice test at the computer and when you are done, you will get another worksheet with 2 simple essay questions about the things we did in class. Attendance is not mandatory but it helps a lot and if you have been in every class, you barely need to study for the exams. Furthermore, you have to do a few assignments. Some are very easy and short but for others you have to do some research and put some effort in it. But it is not complicated to get a 100% in these assignments. The most interesting assignment was to design a website on your own. I have never done it before and I didn't know anything about programming but she explained it very well and you will learn it really fast.

All in all, I can really recommend this class because it was interesting and easy to get a good grade.

2. Introduction to Marketing

Professor: Dr. Alan Miciak

Time: Tuesdays + Thursdays 10:50 – 12:05

Grading: 2 Exams (20% each), Quizzes (30%), White Paper (20%), Participation (10%)

Introduction to Marketing was the most time-consuming class I took. Dr. Miciak is very dedicated and expects a lot. He has a nice style of speaking and is very qualified. He also talks a lot about current marketing situations around the world, especially Germany, which was really interesting and varying but he didn't really prepared us for the exam. The problem was that he used an online learning platform which was firstly very expensive and secondly, all the questions were referring to the book. Of course, he could choose the questions but still, all the questions were made by the authors of the book and he didn't really talked a lot about it in class. The exams were multiple choice questions only and each exam was about 8 chapters which was quite a lot, especially when you have to know every definition word by word for some questions. We also had to do online quizzes at least once a week and sometimes twice a week about one chapter out of the book. But we had to do the quiz before we discussed it in class. I strongly recommend to search the internet for the pdf version of the book because the textbook is very expensive and the pdf version helps a lot with the quizzes because you can use the search function. At the end of the semester, we had to hand in a white paper. In the white paper, you have to focus on a marketing problem of your choice and to come up with solutions based on the different marketing methods we learned in class. For example, I wrote about Netflix and its impact on the movie industry and how the movie theaters can survive the arising online providers. It was fun because we could write about anything we want but it also took a lot of time.

If you are really into marketing, you are probably at the right place but if not, I would recommend to take another class because this class will take more effort than all of your other classes combined.

3. Sports Management

Professor: Dr. Ronald Dick

Time: Tuesdays + Thursdays 12:15 – 13:30

Grading: 3 exams (25% each) 1 presentation (25%)

Sports management was the funniest, weirdest and most extraordinary class. I took the class because I really like sports, also US sports, and I wanted to learn more about it. But in the first class, Dr. Dick only talked about college and high school sports and all of the internationals didn't understand a word. Dr. Dick speaks very fast and at the beginning, it was hard to follow but you will get used to it. Then, after the first week, he stopped talking about sports at all. He was more interested in our professional life and that we will get a job and that we will do it right after graduation. There were a lot of seniors in this class so we learned how to behave in a job interview, how to tie a tie, how to buy our first house and stuff like that. At the beginning, it was a little bit weird because I wanted to learn something about sport but I felt that he was really interested in the students and that he wants to prepare them for life.

Moreover, he is really funny and enthusiastic about teaching and talks a lot about his personal life and stories out of his life.

The Exams were really easy because he literally tells you in the class before the exam what will be on the test and you just have to learn this and that's it. We also had to present a marketing plan for a sports team or brand of our choice. We didn't talk about it in class so it was quite a challenge but it was really interesting and I guess really helpful for the future. The content wasn't even that important. Dr. Dick focused more on our style of presenting and what we were wearing than of what we were saying.

To sum up, it was a really funny class and a nice experience and I learned more about life than about sports. But I can recommend it because Dr. Dick is a really good teacher who knows a lot about life and who knows how students think and how to get their attention.

4. International Business

Professor: Dr. Suhail Abboushi

Time: Tuesdays + Thursdays 15:05 – 16:20

Grading: 1 presentation (around 5%) 3 exams (almost everything)

The class was held by Dr. Abboushi, an older professor who spoke very slowly and repeated things a lot. This class was most of the time very boring because Dr. Abboushi was just presenting his slides and the students had to take notes because he didn't upload his presentation. It was a mixture of many classes I already took in Cologne so it wasn't very difficult either. The 3 exams were multiple choice questions and very easy. In addition to that, everybody had to do a presentation about the culture of a country. But the presentation was just about 5 minutes for 2 students, so it was not very useful.

So this class wasn't the best but if you want to take an easy class, then this is a good choice.

V. Pittsburgh

1. The City

Pittsburgh is called the “City of bridges” and that’s true. It has plenty of them because it is surrounded by 2 rivers which form the Ohio River.

The city is actually very small. Much smaller than Cologne or the other big cities in the United States. But the good thing is that there are a lot of university (Pitt, CMU and Duquesne) and therefore many students.

Pittsburgh is also known for its good sport teams (Steelers, Penguins, Pirates) and I watched all of them play. The tickets are not very cheap but it was every time a big experience because all of the Americans are crazy about sports. So if you are into sports, then I can definitely recommend to go to a game. Even the girls in our group really enjoyed it.

2. Weather

I arrived in the summer and it was really good. The summer was much better than here in Germany. I just needed shorts and t-shirts for the first two months. But on the other hand, the winter is much harder than here. The “good” thing is that you are probably leaving Pittsburgh around Christmas and the very cold months are in January and February where it can be around -20 degrees. So if you are planning to stay in the USA after the semester is over, I would suggest to pick another city ;)

3. Sight seeing

Pittsburgh doesn’t have so many things to offer. Especially in downtown you won’t find that many places to visit. Like I mentioned above, the Point State Park is a really nice place in summer. Another worth visiting place is the Incline. It is on the other side of the river but you can reach it easily by walk. The incline will take you on top of Mount Washington where you will have a nice view over the city. Particularly during the sunset it offers a beautiful view.

Apart from that, I would recommend to take the bus from time to time and discover other parts of Pittsburgh like Oakland or Shadyside. There are some nice parks and not so many tall buildings like in Downtown.

If you like to go to museums, Pittsburgh offers plenty possibilities and most of them with discounts for Duquesne students.

4. Party

Pittsburgh is known as a good city for partying. The Southside is not very far from campus and reachable by walk in the summer and in the winter you should maybe take an uber (it’s like a cab but cheaper). In Southside there is one bar after the other and Thursdays they have college specials everywhere with beer for 1\$. The problem is that alcohol is forbidden on campus so you need to start drinking at the bars which can be expensive if there aren’t any specials offered. Our favorite bar for the beginning was “1311” where you can get a pitcher of a long drink for 5\$ and that every day of the week.

If you don’t want to go to Southside all the time, you should try Oakland. There are bars as well but also a lot of house parties because of the PITT students. On the weekend Duquesne offers a free loop bus to Oakland, Southside and Waterfront (There is the Target you are going to during orientation week).

Usually there is a lot of partying going on but you should have in mind that Pennsylvania is a very strict state regarding alcohol. So you should always bring your passport because at some bars they won't let you in with your normal German ID or your driver's license. Moreover, every bar closes at 2 am so you have to start early. And there are only 2 beer stores and 1 liquor store in the area and the liquor store closes at 7 pm. So if you plan to go to someone's house, you need to buy alcohol very early. The beer stores are opened until 11 but both are located in Southside.

5. Traveling

Pittsburgh is good starting point for traveling. There are a lot of big and interesting cities in the area and a lot of busses are departing from Pittsburgh. Washington, Philadelphia, Chicago, Toronto, Niagara, New York are possible destinations for a weekend or longer.

You will have one week off during Thanksgiving Break. Nobody will be on campus so it is recommendable to do the same and go on a bigger trip. We went with 14 people to Miami and it was such a nice city and a wonderful time.

VI. USA

I have to say that I was surprised positively by the atmosphere. All the people are very friendly and kind with each other and they will notice immediately that you are not from there and will offer you help. I also liked the multinational culture and the style of living and I really enjoyed to be part of the daily life.

VII. Conclusion

I can honestly say that these 4 months were the best of my life. You are probably reading this a lot in other experience reports and I didn't want to believe it at first until I experienced it myself. I was asking myself a lot if I am the kind of guy for such an adventure but I am so happy that I decided to do it. I will definitely take an advantage out of it. This time, all the people, all the wonderful experience is something I will never forget.

So I can just encourage you to do the same and go to Pittsburgh because I can guarantee that you won't regret it.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.