

I had the great pleasure to be an exchange student in Anderson School of Business at UCLA. The exchange program in general gives you all the great and obvious things – to try and live a new life for a few months in a new place, meet great people from all over the world, participate in professional and leisure clubs and have a great learning experience. The latter part was a great surprise for me. I did not imagine that the learning experience would be so intense and would have such a great affect on me.

The full time MBA program in the US is different in many ways than our Israeli MBA. Most of the learning is based on case studies; you have to prepare to each class, read and analyze the case, and be ready to answer the professor's question when he will be cold calling you in class (cold call= calling your name and discussing the case with you, and be sure that he will). All the students take the studies very seriously, and hence you don't have a choice but to work hard and learn everything that is needed before class. I have to say that through cases you could learn much more material than through the slides we are used to. In the 10 weeks I was there, I have learned and gained a lot of knowledge.

The second great advantage of MBA schools abroad, are the extra curriculum activities organized by the students themselves and by the career center. Every day there is an event on campus (or a few) which is supposed to let you network and meet a lot of people from different industries and learn different things about those industries. For example if you are part of a club -I was in the High Tech Club, you can spend a week in the silicon valley and each day visit different companies like Google, facebook, IBM, Zynga etc. This activity is called DOJ = Day on the Job, and lets you explore a day on a job of an MBA in different companies. The great thing I learned is that in the US and Europe many companies have special positions for MBA's (which rarely happens in Israel) and hence you get the opportunity to explore this MBA world from a different (and more serious) point of view.

Life outside of school

Be prepared to spend at least 2000\$ a month, since you go out a lot, and do a lot of shopping. The cheapest rent I have heard of is 800\$, but the average is 1200\$ a month. Don't consider this program as a waste of money, but rather as an investment. If you don't plan to rent a car, live near the campus, so that you could easily meet with friends in the evening. If you come alone, don't rent an apartment alone, it is always good to have roomies for a few months.

LA is a huge city, with many small centers. There are many things to see in LA and around it, so this is also a great traveling experience (but come early, since you won't have too much time for that during the 10 week quarter). You can surf in the ocean, play volleyball on the amazing beaches, go skiing in December (2 hour drive from LA).

Culture

I have lived there before, but many of our students from abroad had a little shock from the American culture. Be prepared – most of the chances are that you are not going to make lifetime friends among Americans. You will network, meet many of them, but very soon you understand that the relationship with them is based on benefits; they will be your "friends" if they can benefit from you. Everywhere people are extremely nice and polite, but usually it will not mean that they want to be your friends, this

is just how they are. The great thing about the exchange program is that you study with a lot of international students, and they are great!

Classes

I took a class that is called Entrepreneurship and Venture Initiation with prof. Geis. This is one of the best courses I ever took, I really advise you to check the professor's ratings, ask other students and take a class with good professors. I also advise you to take a class on entrepreneurship, since it is a very interesting issue, and not taught as well in Tel Aviv.

The second class I enjoyed was Pricing Policies, but it was much less impressing than the first one I mentioned. Another great professor is Cockrum, take his class if you like finance, he is a celebrity in the US. Be prepared that the level of the studies is much higher than in Israel, this is a full time program and not by chance, you have to study a lot each week for most of the classes. The maximum you can take in UCLA is 4 classes, which is good, since you could not simply fill your time with more classes and be able to enjoy the rest of the activities in school.

Extra:

The school takes the exchange program very seriously. You are exactly like everyone, you are allowed to participate in all the events and clubs, you get a business card, and you become a part of their alumni which is very important. I think that the great advantage of UCLA Anderson is that the school has a big emphasis on entrepreneurship and on entertainment (well it's LA).

To sum up, this is an experience I would not miss. I have learned a lot about life, about the world (since I have met so many people from all over the world), about the opportunities for MBA's, and much much more (I have to say that Israel is a very small bubble, and you have to get out at some point and see the world). Don't hesitate – go. It does not matter if it's UCLA or any of the other schools in the US, you would enjoy this whole experience anyway!!

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