

# UCLA Anderson 2011 Exchange summary

## 1. Logistics

### Enrollment to the Exchange program at UCLA

The following enrollment and Visa process is based on my personal experience, so it might be different for each one of you.

1. After you would get the message that you were accepted to the exchange program at UCLA Anderson School of Management you would get an e-mail from UCLA with a link to the registration process.
2. After you would register to the exchange program you would have to send them few files that they need in order to fill out the Visa application form. The files include a scan of your passport, resume and a bank statement with a proof that you have sufficient money for the program (I think \$10K or \$7K). Since my bank statement was in Hebrew I added a screenshot of yahoo currency with the exchange rate.
3. After you would send those files you would have to purchase a certain health insurance. As I understood the insurance is very comprehensive and it is even better than the one regular students at UCLA have, so it seems like you don't need another health insurance. I did not have to use it, so I don't know how good it is. This insurance is mandatory so you have to do it anyways in order to get the Visa. The insurance is just for the official time you are studying in UCLA so if you would come to the US before and/or stay after you would not be covered by it.
4. After you would purchase the insurance you would be able to create your user name at UCLA. This user name would be used in the future for enrollment of courses. **Tip:** choose the first letter of your first name combined with the last name as it appears in your passport as your user name. For example, my name, as it appears on passport is NirYoseph, the best user name would be nyoseph.

### Visa

You would get a student VISA (called J-1). I had the following process, even though I had a tourist Visa.

1. In order to get the Visa you would have to wait to the **DS-2019** form that you would get from UCLA by mail. I've got this form around July.
2. Immediately after you would get the DS-2019 form you would have to pay (online) about \$200 in order to get into the SEVIS data base. It is a data base that all the foreign student in the US have to be registered at. They would send you some form via regular mail, theoretically you need to have this form when you are going to the embassy.

3. After you would get the DS-2019 form you would have to fill the DS-160 form on line. This is the same form used for the tourist Visa and you would have to fill it even if you already have a tourist visa. Before you are filling the DS-160 form online pay the \$140 fee (at the postal office) and while you are there you should also buy the envelope for returning the passport.

4. You should go to the embassy with your DS-2019 form, DS-160 form, receipt of the SEVIS payment, letter from employer and letter from the university. At my interview they only looked at the DS-2019 form, but don't take the risk.

### **Housing**

1. Since LA is big it is better to live near the UCLA campus (the recommended neighborhoods are Westwood, Brentwood, West LA and the western parts of Beverly Hills). Leaving around campus is good because many of your fellow exchange students will live there (and also most of all UCLA students). But if you want to live in places which are "cooler" I would suggest Santa Monica, Venice if you like the beach and West Hollywood if you like going out and clubbing. But if you would live in those areas it is recommended to have a car too.

2. Finding housing for a short term might be problematic. I know people who found housing through Craigslist and Zuma (<http://www.zumahousing.com/>). The best way is to find an MBA student at Anderson that also doing an exchange program. At some point you would get an email with a list of the Anderson students that are doing exchange and looking for a sublet, respond quickly because many would. If you know someone who is studying in Anderson it would be easier for you (this is how I got my housing).

3. Average prices are \$1,000 – \$1,500 per month including utilities, depends on location and if you have any flat mates.

## **2. Academics and university**

The main different between TAU and UCLA is the variety of course and the activities behind studying.

### **Academics**

There is a huge variety of courses in many different fields. Many elective courses don't have a test, but then you would have many tasks each week. The courses are not hard but sometimes they are just loaded with work. I was surprised to see that just like in Israel many students find the way to apply the 20/80 rule and don't do everything the professors ask them to do, especially among the fully employed MBAs (those who work and study). I had courses in finance and real estate, so if you are interested in those fields I might help you choose.

Use <http://andersonfeedback.com/> when you choose your class. Some classes may not be on the site, since it is unofficial.

### **Anderson School**

Except for the Academics the main difference between studying in the US and studying in Israel is the activities the school has besides courses. The school has many clubs which are divided by professional interest (finance, real estate, consulting, marketing, hi-tech, etc) or ethnicity (Jewish, etc). Most clubs would accept exchange student but some of them not. Those clubs would have many events during the year (at least once a week). The purpose of those events is professional networking and exposure to the industry.

### **Campus life**

Except for studying and going to the clubs events you can use all the UCLA facilities like pools (there is one really close to the Anderson school), gym, and many classes like golf, surfing, soccer, guitar and even horse riding. Some of the activities are not on campus and the payment is really minimal. In addition, the university also organizes some hiking tracks around LA and in California (Hollywood sign, Yosemite park ect), unique activities like Whale Watching, and some parties during main events.

## **3. Living in LA and California**

I think that the main disadvantage of LA is its size. LA is really big, the public transportation is bad and even if you have a car during the rush hours (4pm to 8pm) it is bad to drive there. But when you learn how to maneuver between traffic and where to go LA is an amazing place to live. You would see many people from all over the world coming just for living there. LA might not be as glamour as you would think, but there is a reason why it called LA LA land.

LA is divided into more than 90 districts and neighborhoods. Each district has some independence and most of them would have a commercial area of their own. This means that there is no one center and that LA is basically a combination of many developed suburbs. The poet Dorothy Parker once described Los Angeles as "72 suburbs in search of a city", and this is really true. Since I was living in a good location (between the beach and University) I could go to most places by foot, bus, bikes or short taxi. Since most of students (and also I) live in the area of Westwood, Brentwood or Santa Monica during the weekdays when we went out it was usually in those areas. During the weekend or on special events we also went out to Hollywood or Downtown LA, but then we shared a taxi or rent a car.

Besides LA, California is a great place to travel with good weather, beautiful nature (Yosemite Park, Sequoia Park, etc), cool cities (LA, Santa Barbara, San Diego and San Francisco). Vegas is only 4-7 hours drive (dependents on traffic) and also the Grand Canyon is not too far away.

#### **4. Final tips**

The student exchange program at Anderson was one of a lifetime experience and one of the best I had. If you are looking to live outside of Israel for a while, meet many people, experience the studies in a high ranked university, and explore a foreign job market I would highly recommend this program.

You would probably have more friends among the exchange students rather than local. This is why it is recommended to go there during the fall quarter. As far as I know, in UCLA most of exchange students come to the fall quarter. We were around 45 students, and in the winter quarter only 11 international students came. Studying in UCLA is not hard (failing there is impossible), but time flies too fast, so make sure you make the best of it.

For any questions please contact me at: [nir972@gmail.com](mailto:nir972@gmail.com)

In addition, one of my friends from the exchange program made the following link which you might helpful <http://pear.ly/6aDr>. (It has some useful links that even student which are not going to UCLA might find useful).