



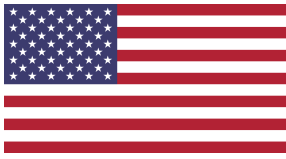
***NORTH DAKOTA STATE***  
***NDSU***  
TM



***International exchange program***  
***At North Dakota State University (NDSU)***  
***Fargo, North Dakota, USA***  
***Fall 2017 (August-December)***

By Jinnarat Tamphakdiphanit

## ***Application***



The first thing everybody has to get through for being an exchange student is application process, especially, for Thai-program students because talking about exchange program for Thai-program student is not really common since we are trying to avoid new languages. In addition, the expenses for exchange program is quite expensive comparing to our tuition fees. These two are the biggest issues about going abroad for Thai-program student from my view. However, my motivation for being an exchange student started from the orientation at Thammasat Business School(TBS) when I was a freshman. Then, I took the IELTS examination for two times and I passed the requirement of some universities in the United States. All information about outgoing and incoming students could be found on <http://inter.tu.ac.th> or Facebook page, 'Center for International Affairs Thammasat Business School' only for TBS students and the application period were different depending on region or country. Moreover, I had to write the essay and have an interview to prove that I was ready. After all, I would say this process was not as complicated as people thought but you just have to give it time. Lastly, ISEP is a good and easy way for studying abroad in the US if you don't have no idea how to begin.

## ***Reaching, living and leaving America***

The flight ticket might be one of the big issues for me and it was not definitely true when people said the earlier you book the ticket, the cheaper the ticket will be got because my ticket was booked around a month before the departure but I kept checking the price and found out that it was cheaper later. I fought with Korean Air, consequently, I transited at Incheon Airport, South Korea where there are a lot of stuffs such as cosmetics and snacks. I would recommend friends to transit at South Korea because if you have enough time at the airport, you actually can travel with transit tour for free. During flight from South Korea



to the US, they served two meals which you can pick your choices and I suggest Korean food since this is the Korean airline, also you can ask for any snacks and drinks all the time. After fourteen to fifteen hours on board, I arrived at O'Hare International airport, Chicago. I passed through the immigration easily however it took a little bit time to wait in line. I actually had two US visas at that time that made small confusion for officer so he had to look at my DS-2019 twice and asked me about my current visa status. Afterwards, I took American airlines to Fargo, North Dakota. It was two days earlier before I was able to check in to my dormitory. As a result, I took a cab from airport to hotel, stayed there for two nights which costed around one-hundred-and-fifty dollars total and found some tips about the cab or taxi in the US that it was better to call Uber or Lyft instead of local cab that they charged more expensive.

As an ISEP exchange student, ISEP provided me an accommodation which was on-campus dormitory including 7-day meal plan. I checked in to the apartment called 'Pavek Hall' and I had one roommate and two suitemates sharing one bathroom, one toilet and foyer area. At the beginning, it was gradually tough because we had not known each other, nevertheless, soon after that there was a roommate meeting with resident assistance which we agreed our room's rules. I had to be more understandable and open-minded, for example, they made the noise such as turning the music on at night and talking on their phone until late and most of them use an earplug to avoid the noise so they did not really care about it. Living with Americans was not that bad like many people think, they just do whatever they want and we could do whatever we want following our agreement. I would say I was very lucky with my French roommate since we got along with each other and I noticed I am better staying with others rather than Americans as our cultures are quite different.

Furthermore, speaking of food, I have mentioned that I had 7-day meal plan which included breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. There were three dining centers which prepared different kinds of food and you could have it all day. Most of foods contained milk, cheese, potatoes and bread for those who do not

familiar with these ingredients might need some times to adapt and usually they are frozen foods since they said the less people touch food, the cleaner the food will be.

After the semester ended, I travelled before I got back to Thailand and I will talk about my trip later. For my return flight from America to Thailand, I took Korean Air from John F. Kennedy Airport(JFK), New York and transited at Incheon Airport(ICN) same as the previous one. Unfortunately, my flight from JFK was delayed as a result of blizzard for thirty-six hours and I stayed overnight at JFK and slept on the floor. It was not good experience but it was 'new' and I would recommend people do not find from east coast of America in winter. after fifteen-hour flight, the flight from ICN was delayed affected by JFK flight hence I had twelve hours before departure and I got a chance to take the free transit tour to Gyeongbokgung palace and Insadong street. It was free only for transportation or you had an option to pay seven US dollars for meal. In my opinion, you do not have to buy the meal because there is a bunch of Korean restaurants at Insadong street which is cheaper and more various. I reached Thailand on January 7,2018 around midnight and the airport was bustling for the reason that many people got home after holiday.



Pavek Hall: room for two students



## ***Me as a college student***

The first day in school was an orientation day provided by NDSU international office. There were actually two days for orientation. To make it easier to understand, I would say the first day was formal which they introduced you about all important issues including immigration, course registration, working opportunities for international students, safety, accommodation, dining service, facilities and other services. The second was informal or getting to know others day. They let group of students called “I-CORE” team take all new international students to every place around campus in order to explore campus deeply. The orientation day for me was the perfect day to find new friends.

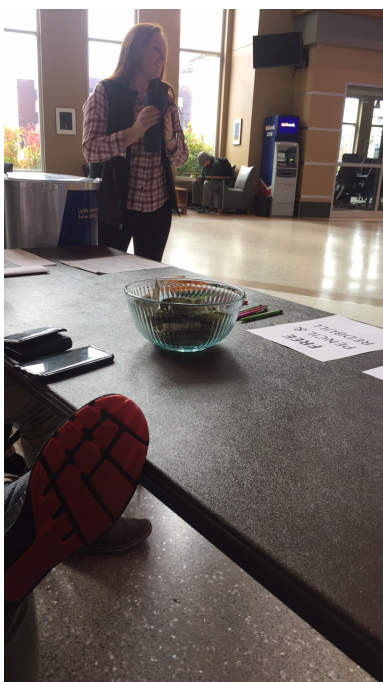


Orientation day @ Memorial Union

The first day of school, there is no class until 4PM in the evening and I am not sure if it is only in North Dakota but it is unofficial tradition for them. I registered for four courses or twelve credits in Business major area which were the minimum requirement for international student to maintain my visa status. They were ECON324; Money and Banking, COMM216; Intercultural Communication, BUSN347; Principles of Real Estate and MGMT470; Entrepreneurships. The key success for studying in the US for me is stating what is your opinion and being more confident to ask the question or when you do not understand. I talked to my instructors almost every time after class was ended or

made an appointment with them in case I did not catch up some lesson during the class. ECON324 and BUSN347 only required individual works, consequently, there were writing assignments and essay examinations which self-studying and early preparation were desired. On the other hand, COMM216 and MGMT470 assigned group works, presentation and outside activities, for example, I went to volunteer for Heart-N-Soul community café founded by Leola Dual considered as social entrepreneur. I really enjoyed classes there, they were cutthroat and I had to keep being active. However, the only thing I did not like was the grading system because there are only A, B, C, D and F unlike our system thus either staying focused on whole class and attendance was essential. Finally, I got desirable grades after all affords and I realized everything is possible if you give it a try.

Caution: I made a big mistake for studying at North Dakota State University because they do not allow exchange students to register for all finance class and unfortunately my major is finance. I would like to tell every exchange students that the requirement, exceptions and any information are really important and you need to know all information before you decide where to go.



### **Bootstrapping for recourses @ Richard Barry Hall**

*Entrepreneurships activity to find the recourses in order to create new ventures by encouraging people to leave the spare changes and get free Redbull drinks and pencils.*

## *Life at Fargo*

The first word came up when I am think about Fargo is 'NOTHING' following by cold, dark and flat. It sounds terrible, isn't it? Anyway, how good people are can make Fargo not dull therefore the only activity you are able to do frequently is hanging out with friends. I met people from all ranges of ages and they are from different countries at Pink House which held by American family in Fargo in the purpose of gathering with people from everywhere. The meeting carries on every other Friday or some special occasions. There are diverse foods from different countries around the world along with entertainments such as board game, card game, karaoke, chatting and etc. Additionally, I noticed at that time that Fargo are full of Spanish-speaker people and not so many Asians. The number of international students at NDSU are less than ten percent accordingly it is excellent for practicing English with native speakers.



NDSU Homecoming game



Celebrated Yuna's birthday

Let move on to my daily life, it was just regular one alike in Bangkok; wake up then go to school or work at dining center, go to library and hang out with friends occasionally and by the end of the day just come back home, do homework or prepare for tomorrow then go to bed. Americans have different society from us, some of my classmates that I talked to in class had never talked

to me when we met outside but some were friendly and talkative. My friends I generally went out with were Asian probably because of culture and it was easier to find something in common. With Americans, I normally went to sport games like American football and basketball or some fancy restaurants. As I mentioned, I worked at dining center for two days each week and it paid around \$7 after taxes per hour. As long as I was an exchange student, I needed to ask for work permission from both international office and ISEP. I went to Social security office to apply for Social Security Number(SSN) comparable to tax identification number. It made my life more eventful and I gained some money for travelling and shopping. There is always working opportunity for international student but you have to make sure that you are legal to work unless they will send you back.



Shopping for Halloween  
@ Target



It's time to say good bye



## *Journey times*

One thing people know about America is America is huge country. I would tell my journey abbreviated since I tried to travel as much as I could thus I have been to Minneapolis, MN, Chicago, IL, Las Vegas, NV, Los Angeles and San Francisco, CA and New York, NY. Starting with Minneapolis where it took about four-hour drive from Fargo. Minneapolis Sculpture Garden is one of attraction in Minnesota and we could not ignore the Mall of American in Bloomington claimed as the biggest mall in America. I went there with friends by Greyhound bus and stayed for one night at the hotel. Secondly, I have heard about Amtrak train in the US and Thanksgiving was the right time for us taking it to Chicago and spent our 4-day holiday. We watched McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade, had deep dish pizza at Lou Malnati's, rode Tilt at John Hancock Observatory, walked around downtown and China town and went shopping on Black Friday.



Deep Dish Pizza @Lou Malnati's



Chicago Thanksgiving Parade



Dick's Last Resort @ Mall of America



Minneapolis Sculpture Garden,



City Hall, San Francisco



Golden Gate bridge, San Francisco



PIER39, San Francisco



Boudin Bakery, San Francisco



Yosemite National park



Moving out from Midwest, I bought tour package from Taketours.com for West Coast therefore the first stop was Las Vegas where there are decorative hotels and casinos. After that, they brought us to Grand Canyon and Yosemite National park then we reached San Francisco. Before all else, I had Clam Chowder at Fisherman's Wharf and bought Boudin bakery. Later, I walked around for San Francisco city tour and rode cable car. The last day at LA was for Disneyland, California. It was fantastic and one day was not enough when I enjoyed Disney.

For NYC, it was truly random trip since the only purpose was counting down to 2018 at Time squares and Niagara Falls which we bought tour from the same website. Mostly travelling around NYC was required walking, subway and relied on the weather. Sadly, it was winter during my trip and the temperature was negative and it was freezing, consequently, I could not stay outside for a long time. These are some places I have visited, new World trade center, 911 Memorial park, Wall street, Central Park, Christmas village, Brooklyn bridge and Statute of Liberty. Niagara Falls was the coldest place and last place for this trip, I felt the water splashing to me was icy and I would recommend people to go Niagara Falls in summer. After my long journey, I was stuck in JPK airport and it looked like America wanted me to stay longer.



Central Park

Christmas Village



New York  
Times squares

Niagara Falls



However, we know all good things come to an end. It was impressive and fun being an exchange student in the US. I experienced and learned many things I had never expected. I really appreciate everyone related to this program including Thammasat university, Office of International Affairs, Center of International Affair at TBS, ISEP, North Dakota State University, NDSU International Office, Resident office at NDSU, my instructors, my family and my friends. Thank you so much for giving me valuable opportunity and supporting me all the way until the end.

## *Expenses*

As I chose America, I had to accept higher living expenses and taxes but luckily, I applied for this program via ISEP where I paid 80,000 baht plus my Thammasat tuition fees to Thammasat university for NDSU tuition fee, accommodation and meal plan. In addition, the public transportation only in Fargo area is bus and it is free for students with student ID card. Uber and Lyft are convenient when I would like to save my time and it does not cost highly. In case of flight ticket to the US, as I mentioned in the second topic, it depends on season but it would be better to get the ticket as soon as possible. Domestic flight in the US is unpredictable for me, there is a large number of airlines so I suggest to check it often and get it when it is acceptable price. I fought with Alaska airline, Allegiant airline, American airline and Southwest Airline. The conditions for each airline are differed and it is necessary to understand before buy the ticket. For instance, the ticket from Fargo to Las Vegas was only \$72 excluded bags and it was \$140 included one carry-on bag and two forty-pound luggages by Allegiant airlines. I spent almost thousand dollars for all tour packages and the average price for hotels in Minneapolis and Chicago was about a hundred or more while New York was much more than that however the hotel price is heavily related to location and date. In America, usually coffee and sweets are cheaper than most of meals besides fast food different from Thailand. For example, I paid \$4 for coffee at Starbucks but I had to pay at least \$10 for meal with rice.