

**Carlson School of Management, University of
Minnesota
Semester 2, 2016
Bachelor of Commerce – Marketing**

Minnesota is a state in the Midwest of the United States. Minneapolis is the bigger half of the Twin Cities, with the other half being made up of Saint Paul – the state capital. The U is a really fun place and a place that you can get a real American college experience! Carlson are very welcoming and have a buddy system set up for all the exchange students, so you always have someone to help you out and show you around. There are also lots of events for the buddies, so you end up meeting a lot of people this way!



Accommodation

There were 4 main options for accommodation: Centennial Hall; Middlebrook Hall; University Village; and, leasing an apartment off-campus.

I stayed in Centennial. Essentially, it was a freshman hall with some exchange students. It was the same as most halls at Otago where you had a room and shared bathroom. Some were single bedrooms (like mine), but others were doubles and triples. It was hard living with freshman, as they're at a different stage in their university experience. For these reasons, I didn't spend much of my time at the dorm and really only went there to eat and sleep. A positive was the location, it was right on East Bank and beside a light-rail station to reach Carlson and the West Bank. It is catered and you have to choose a meal plan if you are living in a hall, which was convenient. You could eat as much as you wanted at each meal and there are lots of choices but the food wasn't that great at all but one of the residential restaurants. If you want a better quality of food, the Fresh Food Company in the 17th Ave Residential Hall was definitely worth the 10 minute walk from Centennial and provided much nicer meals. The meal plan also comes with some FlexDine credit which you can spend at food places on campus, such as Starbucks or Panda Express.

University Village is made up of lots of apartments and is full of exchange students. This made it comfortable, but we found that the exchange students that lived there didn't branch out as much from each other as those who lived in other places. The apartments were between 2 and 4 bedrooms each and they were self-catered and each apartment had their own kitchen. It is a bit further to campus, but the light-rail station is a close walk.

Middlebrook Hall was on West Bank so the location was ideal for classes but not much else. I don't know much about it, but from what I had heard you couldn't drink there and there wasn't much of a culture to it. I only knew one international that was living there.

Personally, if I got the option again I would definitely look into an off-campus apartment, which isn't mentioned on the website. There are with either with other

exchange students or Americans that have a spare room. A semester sublease is ideal, otherwise you can try and sublease once you leave (if you go for the fall semester). I had a friend that was in Minnesota for a full year exchange and she lived off-campus and definitely had the best deal out of all of us. The off-campus apartments are much nicer than flats in Dunedin and it isn't uncommon for the complexes to have their own gyms, pools and games rooms. Some suggestions would be the Marshall, Bridges, Floco Fusion, the Lofts and Radius on 15th. They are in Dinkytown, which is where most of the older students live and a lot of the social events are.

Academics

I took four marketing papers at Carlson, all of which I really enjoyed. The classes I took were Marketing Research (MKTG 3010), Buyer Behavior (MKTG 3040), Advertising and Promotion (MKTG 4050), and Topics in Marketing (MKTG 4090). Topics in Marketing was my favourite and I recommend it. It is taught by Joe Redden, who has recently been recognised as one of the top professors in the US. The course focused on the application of what we were being taught to real marketing problems, as if we were in a workplace setting. I found my classes to be much smaller and more interactive than at Otago and I found I was suited much more to this style of learning. Participation was a huge thing in class and you were expected to be involved in the conversation, which personally was a huge asset to my learning. Another key difference I noticed was the importance of attendance. You are graded on attendance in each class and often it does make up a reasonable percentage of your overall grade. Another really cool thing was that it is a requirement of Carlson students to have an overseas experience during their undergraduate degree. This means that when you arrive, a lot of them have already been and know what it is like to be an exchange student and are also very interested in you and where you're from.

Carlson are incredibly invested in their students and they have so many resources when transitioning from university into a career. There were recruitment drives in Carlson, often with firms such as Target, General Mills and many other well-known and well-respected firms. They have access to databases of internship and graduate position opportunities. While not all of this was available to exchange students, I would highly recommend getting involved in what you can, like talking to the firms at the recruitment drives.



Transportation

The light-rail is the easiest way to get around – both around campus and into the city and to the airport. It runs right through the campus and connects East Bank to West Bank. You can get a pass that allows you to travel between the stops on campus for free, but if you want to go any further you do have to pay (not much though). From the light-rail it is pretty easy to walk most of the other places you need to get to, including Dinkytown. Other options include buses. There are buses on campus if you need to get

to places that the light-rail doesn't access and there are also buses that run throughout the city. While they might take a while to get used to, they are great to have!

Lifestyle

The U is a huge campus – both in physical size and the number of students. Minnesota people have the reputation for being “Minnesota Nice”, which means that they are very welcoming and accommodating. Greek life is prominent on campus and if you have the opportunity I would definitely recommend getting involved. It is a great way to meet people and be involved in more of the campus life. Rush happens as soon as the semester starts, so ensure that you research it before you arrive. Sport is an important part of the American college culture. Ensure that you get to football games and take part in the tailgating before the games, usually in Dinkytown. There are lots of other sports to get involved in as well, including basketball and ice-hockey. The U.S. Bank Stadium had just opened when I was there and is the home of the Minnesota Vikings NFL team. Regardless of if there is a game on, apparently, it is very worthwhile having a look in the stadium.

Minneapolis isn't a very touristy city, but if you are willing to look you can find cool places in the city. I found they weren't the places that were suggested in a Google search, but more those that the locals suggested. I loved Saint Paul and took a few days trips there looking around. Other places I visited were Shelby Ave, Uptown, a pumpkin patch, Lake Calhoun and Mall of America.



Holidays are a huge thing in the US. I spend Halloween at the University of Virginia and the Thanksgiving break in New Jersey and New York. Get as involved as possible!

Weather

Arriving in September, the weather was still hot and we spent a lot of time around the lakes in the city. Winter arrived late when I was there, which I was grateful for, however once it did arrive we definitely knew about it! While it still might be sunny during the days, most days it is around -10 degrees and easily can get down to around -20 degrees during the fall semester. The light rail is very useful during this time, and there are also tunnels under the campus to get between the dorms, classes and libraries to stay inside. Apparently it is worse later in the winter (January to April), so I'm just happy I wasn't there for that. Either way, make sure you go with a decent jacket or are prepared to buy one.

Travel

I arrived in the US 3 months before my exchange started (on a separate visa) and spend two of that working in a summer camp in Pennsylvania and one month travelling. It was a great way to do it and allowed me to experience two different parts of the USA. I also stayed for a few weeks after the semester ended to do some travel on the way home. This resulted in visiting a lot of places, but if I had to pick, my favourite places would be New York, New Orleans and Boulder, Colorado. During the semester, two friends and I

hired a car and spent a weekend up in the north of Minnesota and over into Wisconsin. We did this at the start of October, which was perfect time for seeing all the fall leaves. We visited a few national parks and drove around parts of Lake Superior. It was a great trip and I would recommend doing it!

Costs

If you are in on-campus accommodation, you pay for that and the meal plan as soon as you arrive, so it can feel like you've spent a lot as soon as you get there. There is also a compulsory insurance cost to take out at the university of \$1000, even if you have previously purchased travel insurance. Food, alcohol and clothes are much cheaper than in New Zealand, especially food and alcohol in student areas like Stadium Village or Dinkytown. Transportation around the city is cheap, as well as buses around the state or neighbouring states. Flights are reasonably expensive around the States, but obviously, it depends on where you are trying to go. Overall, depending on how often you want to eat out, go out and travel, it can be reasonably cheap to live once those initial payments are made.

You have the option to open a bank account with TCF when you arrive, however I didn't. My ANZ debit card worked the whole time without any extra fees, except for if I withdrew cash. I still have no idea how this worked, but just went with it. Do make sure you tell your bank you are going overseas though, as early in my trip they contacted me to make sure it was me using the card.

Tipping is important everywhere in the US. A general rule is 10-15% for meals or taxis and \$1 for a drink at the bar. Don't forget to do this!!

Other Things

I'd suggest getting a Minnesota ID card. This takes a bit of admin and \$30, but saves you taking your passport out. It can take up to four weeks to arrive so ensure you organise it as soon as you arrive.