

IMBA and Purdue Dual Degree Report by Stella Peng (2023)

1. Preparation and arrival

Once nominated by the NCCU IMBA office, the candidate will still need to go to the Purdue Master application website to apply, upload materials and track all progress.

1.1 Master School Application Preparation: Essential Material List

- (a) GMAT: No minimum score requirement
- (b) IELTS (or TOEFL): 6.5 or higher with minimum subsection scores
- (c) Two recommendation letters
- (d) Study Plan: A statement about why you chose the program and how it will help you achieve your goals after graduation.

1.2 KIRA Interview

The KIRA interview is a unique virtual interview format that does not involve direct interaction with a live interviewer. Instead, candidates are presented with pre-recorded interview questions and are given a set amount of time to record their answers. Candidates are typically given 30 seconds to prepare their responses before recording their answers within a 60 or 45-second time limit, depending on the question. Below are suggested questions for preparation. Below are suggested questions to help incoming students prepare.

- Introduce yourself
- Why Purdue
- Why GSCM (Global Supply Chain Management)
- Talk about your accomplishments as a leader
- Any difficulties you faced during your leadership experience
- The most challenging situation you encountered
- Future development and plans
- Any questions you'd like to ask?
- Share a team experience and describe your role in it
- Tell about a time when you led a dysfunctional team; how did you solve conflicts and what were the outcomes?
- Which features/characteristics can make a good problem solver?
- Share a recent experience working in a diverse background environment; what was your role and any insights gained from connecting with others?
- What are your thoughts on the position of developing countries in the global supply chain over the next decade? How does it impact the economy?
- Who is the person you admire the most, and why?
- Interests & Hobbies
- What are your most significant strengths/weaknesses?

2. VISA application

Due to the complex process of applying for a US F1 visa, it is recommended that you allow sufficient time and apply in advance. As a general rule, the earliest time to submit a visa application is within 120 days before the start of the academic program. Applying too early may result in the application being deemed ineligible. The US F1 visa application process is as follows:

- Receive an acceptance letter from a US school.
- Respond with intent to study and request the I-20 form from the school.
- Receive the I-20 form.
- Complete the DS-160 form online.
- Pay the visa fee (\$160) and schedule an interview.
- Pay the SEVIS fee - this is an advance payment required for F-1 applicants (\$350).
- Attend an interview at the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT).
- Pass the interview.
- Receive visa within one week of interview.

3. Accommodation and logistics

The average rent around Purdue is from \$500 to \$2000 monthly, it depends on layout, distance to school, and living conditions. I stayed with Franklin Park Apartment with one roommate, a total monthly basic rent for a 2B1B is \$1050, we pay gas, electricity additionally, around \$100-250 depending on winter or no. The closer the apartment is to the school, the more expensive it is, I heard from other classmate staying with Continuum Apartments, paying around \$1100 monthly for a 2B2B per person, and \$1700 monthly for a 1B1B per person. Additional remark is, currently the housing around the school is not enough for all students, I suggest incoming students to secure an apartment as soon as possible, take fall semester for example, if you start semester by the end of August, you'd better secure a place around March and April.

Purdue students can ride several CityBus routes for free by showing their student ID at the time of boarding (1B, 4B, 10, Silver Loop...etc.). Please download the CityBus app to see the real-time map).

If you have a car, you'll need to check if parking is available at your apartment (additional fees may apply) and if you're eligible to apply for a parking garage near the school. Since many students live off campus, it's difficult to get a parking space in a garage.

4. Studying at Purdue

The Krannert School of Management (Purdue's business graduate school) has become the Daniels School of Business in 2023. The school offers a curriculum structure in which each semester is divided into two modules, allowing students to focus intensively on specific areas of study.

- Incoming students should check their official website for the latest academic calendar. The fall semester starts around the end of August until mid-December, while the spring semester starts in late January until early May.
- Course selection is done by their system, which will send you a PIN to activate your course selection, once you miss the period, you will not be able to select.
- Business school culture can indeed vary from country to country, and the United States and Taiwan are no exception. In the U.S., business school culture often emphasizes competitiveness, networking, and a focus on individual achievement. In Taiwan, on the other hand, business school culture tends to emphasize collaboration, harmony, and the integration of Confucian values. In addition, it's common for U.S. business schools to have many Indian students; in the GSCM department, more than 80% of the students are Indians, known for their proactive nature and eagerness to express themselves, can contribute to a lively and dynamic classroom environment, bringing different perspectives and insights to discussions and group projects.
- The Daniels School of Business has its own career services team - the Krannert Professional Development Center (KPDC). It serves as a hub for students' career development, offering a wide range of services and programs designed to enhance their professional skills and job readiness. Meanwhile, Purdue's Center for Career Opportunities (CCO) serves students throughout the school. The two have been great for providing students with resume advice, job search strategy, mock interviews.
- Attending networking events hosted by a business school can be extremely beneficial and empowering on many levels. These events provide opportunities to network with fellow students, professionals, and alumni, fostering valuable connections and relationships. In addition, attending these events can help improve English language skills by engaging in conversations and interactions with people from different backgrounds. By actively participating in networking events, students can expand their social and professional networks while honing their English communication skills.
- Purdue Language and Cultural Exchange (PLaCE) is another great way to learn English and experience American culture for international students, you can register for available short courses on topics like presentation, academic writing, American slangs. You don't have to pay for these, but a commitment to full participation is required.
- F1 students are allowed to work part time up to 20 hours per week but only ON CAMPUS. You can search for part-time jobs at Purdue. By doing so, you will receive a Social Security Number (SSN) first, which will benefit your credit history in the future. Part time jobs opportunity like, school dining court, school Starbucks, research assistant, teaching assistant.
- Food around school: There are a lot of fast food choices around the business school department, Subway, Chipotle, Panda Express, McDonald's, or you can buy a Dining Dollars or Meal Plans from Purdue, so you can eat at the School Dining Court. Or a walk-in price this year is \$12.5 per entry, and it is all you can eat.
- There are two Asian markets near the school, "Better World Market" and "Asian Global Market", where you can get a lot of Asian food ingredients. Or you can use a

popular app "Weee!" to do your grocery shopping. The price in the USA is generally 2 to 3 times higher than in Taiwan.

5. Everyday life and leisure time

5.1 Cost of living

Take myself for example, but this will vary depending on different lifestyles.

- Furniture (When renting a house in the US, it's common for the rental to be unfurnished, meaning you'll need to bring your own furniture. You can purchase from previous batch international students, search for Taiwanese Student Group): \$500-\$3,000
- Rent: \$500/month
- Utilities: \$150-250/month (Gas, electricity)
- Cell Phone Carrier (AT&T): \$32/month
- Grocery: \$200-300/month (dining out for fast food is \$12~\$15/meal, \$20+ at restaurant)
- Student insurance: \$1,500/year (mandatory)

5.2 Culture shock

Taiwan has a universal healthcare system where all citizens are enrolled in the National Health Insurance (NHI) program, which provides comprehensive coverage with low out-of-pocket costs and no insurance required for access to hospitals or specialists. **In the U.S.**, having health insurance is generally required to access hospital care, and certain plans, such as HMOs, often require a referral from a primary care physician to see a specialist. The U.S. health care system includes several levels of care, including clinics for routine care, urgent care centers for non-life-threatening emergencies, and hospital emergency departments for critical or life-threatening conditions.

For example, my student insurance plan was Preferred Provider Organization (PPO), which offer a network of healthcare providers (doctors, hospitals, specialists) who have agreed to provide services at discounted rates to plan members. **Subscribers can see any in-network doctor or specialist without a referral**, and they have the flexibility to see out-of-network providers as well, although at a higher cost.

I visited urgent care out side of Indiana and the process is like:

- Check who is in-network with my insurance company
- Since it was before Christmas, I didn't have time to wait for an appointment, so I chose urgent care, which is usually a walk-in service
- Checked in personal and insurance information at the desk
- I waited an hour at the urgent care to see the doctor
- Doctor visit
- Picked up prescription and went to pharmacy to pick up medication (paid pharmacy separately)

- The bill for visiting urgent care will come out about a month later, and as they file to insurance company directly then charge the rest from patient. (some hospitals charge you first and you file to insurance company later)
- In the end I paid about \$200 out of pocket, and the total bill is about \$350, so the insurance covers \$150.

All hospital service is very expensive and its beyond our imagination, so be careful.

5.3 The dos and don'ts

Dos:

- Be on time for appointments, meetings and social events, as Americans value punctuality.
- Tip service personnel such as waiters, bartenders and taxi drivers, as tipping is customary in the United States. Tipping 10-15% for lunch and 18-20% for dinner.
- Respect personal space and be courteous and considerate in public.

Don'ts:

- Don't make assumptions based on stereotypes or generalizations about certain ethnic or cultural groups.
- Don't discuss sensitive topics such as religion, politics or personal finances unless you have developed a close relationship and feel comfortable doing so.
- Remember to obey laws and regulations, such as traffic laws, and familiarize yourself with any special rules or customs of the state or city you're visiting.

5.4 Climate and weather

West Lafayette is located in the Midwestern United States and experiences a continental climate with distinct seasons.

- **Winter Temperatures:** During the winter, temperatures in West Lafayette typically range from below freezing to slightly above freezing. December, January, and February are the coldest months, with average high temperatures ranging from -10 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Snowfall:** Snowfall is common in West Lafayette during the winter. Snow can accumulate throughout the season, creating a picturesque winter landscape. Total snowfall varies from year to year, but can average around 25-30 inches (63-76 cm) per winter season.
- **Winter Precautions:** During the winter, it's important to take precautions to stay safe in the cold. Dressing in layers, including a warm coat, hat, gloves and boots, is recommended to protect against the cold. It's also important to be aware of icy and slippery surfaces and to drive carefully in snowy conditions.

5.5 Leisure opportunities, travel tips

Domestic travel is fun in the U.S., especially for winter break when nothing happens in West Lafayette. But remember to understand how student insurance works outside the state of Indiana in case you need to use it.

In addition to famous cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, the United States also offers a wealth of natural resources. The National Park Pass, also known as the America the Beautiful Pass, is a program offered by the U.S. federal government that provides access to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites, including national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and more. The pass is valid for one year from the date of purchase and covers entrance fees for the pass holder and accompanying passengers in a private vehicle. Anyone can purchase an annual park pass (about \$80), which is good for one year from the date of purchase, giving you the flexibility to visit several different national parks and recreation sites in a year.

5.6 City and surrounding area

West Lafayette is a college town, so most of the population are students. There is nothing more to see in this area and its famous surroundings of corn and soybean fields. The closest city is Indianapolis about an hour and a half away. Chicago is 2 and half hours away and offer wide range of tourist things. Indianapolis offers cultural attractions, professional sports, museums, and vibrant city life, while Chicago offers a wealth of world-class museums, shopping, dining, and entertainment. Both cities offer a diverse range of experiences for visitors seeking a broader tourism scene.

Another nearby outdoor spot is Turkey Run State Park, a popular destination for outdoor activities:

- **Hiking Trails:** The park has several scenic trails that wind through rugged canyons, sandstone gorges, and beautiful forests.
- **Water Tubing:** Floating down Sugar Creek in a tube is a refreshing way to enjoy the park's natural surroundings during the summer months.
- **Kayaking and Canoeing:** Visitors can also rent kayaks or canoes to navigate the gentle currents of Sugar Creek.
- **Camping and picnicking:** The park offers several camping options, including electric and non-electric campsites, as well as cabins and a campground store. Picnic areas with shelters are available for day visitors to enjoy outdoor meals.