



THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, US

FINAL REPORT

by Kristian Strmenik



FALL 2011

“The world belongs to those who set out to conquer it armed with self confidence and good humour.” (Charles Dickens)

This quotation by Charles Dickens also inspired me, long time before I decided to apply for an exchange semester in a foreign country. In today`s increasingly globalizing structures it is important for students to acquire as much experience as possible through language courses, internships and studying abroad. Students who still believe that spending a semester in a foreign country is like going on holiday and therefore a waste of time are not self confident or just ignorant toward another culture. Sure, there are not just advantages by participating in a study exchange program but it is totally worth it to leave your home country for some time and get to know a new culture, get in touch with people from all around the world and come back to your home country more open minded than before.

After spending five months in the United States, four of them at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, I can say that this time was definitely the best time of my life so far. I was really surprised by the friendliness and positive attitude of the American people.

Everyone was willing to help me and people are truly interested meeting foreign people. Sure I had doubts if I made the right choice to spend one semester in a foreign country because of a different culture and a language I was not used to but I was confident that at some point I will get used to my new environment. I made a lot of friends during my stay in North America, not only on-campus but also at places where I traveled during a short break and after my semester in Greensboro. It is not easy to leave family and friends behind but studying in America especially at the University of Greensboro makes you feel home again.

Preparation

The international office (BIB) of our university offers a wide range of programs for students. The programs include for example language courses, the Erasmus program for European countries and the Joint Study program for countries outside of Europe. I decided to apply for the Joint Study program because I really want to study in the United States. A list of all our partner universities outside of Europe can be found on the university page of the study abroad office (<http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/bib/inhalt/814.htm>). When applying for an exchange semester you will be asked to apply for two different universities since it is not sure you will be approved for your “first choice university”. I applied for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and for the University of West Florida. I was very happy when I got the call that I have been nominated for my first choice university.

Although I already did a lot of research before I applied for an exchange semester, the real work started after the admission. There are several forms which you have to fill out such as the health insurance forms, housing and meal plan forms and other things. All the stuff that has to be done by the exchange student is explained in a welcome package I received after my admission. An explanation, how to apply for the F-1 visa which is for full-time students is also provided. I recommend to everyone to call as soon as possible the US embassy in Vienna and make an appointment for the interview – don't worry it is just a short talk where you are asked some simple questions like where are you studying, where are you going to study and why you want to study in the US.

UNCG

Before my arrival in Greensboro I submitted my flight number and the arrival time to the international student coordinator at UNCG who organized a pick up for every exchange student. The first week at UNCG is called orientation week where we were given useful information concerning living in Greensboro and on-campus, security, the recreation center, opening a bank account, the different possibilities to eat on and off-campus and some other useful information.

The UNCG campus is bigger than the AAU Klagenfurt campus and home to more than 18.000 students and more than 4.000 faculty members. Even though the campus is large it is possible to reach classrooms, the dining hall and the recreation facilities by foot within 15 minutes from the International house (I-House). At first glance the UNCG campus seems really big but after a while you get used to it and you can find nearly every building after a few weeks without using a map.

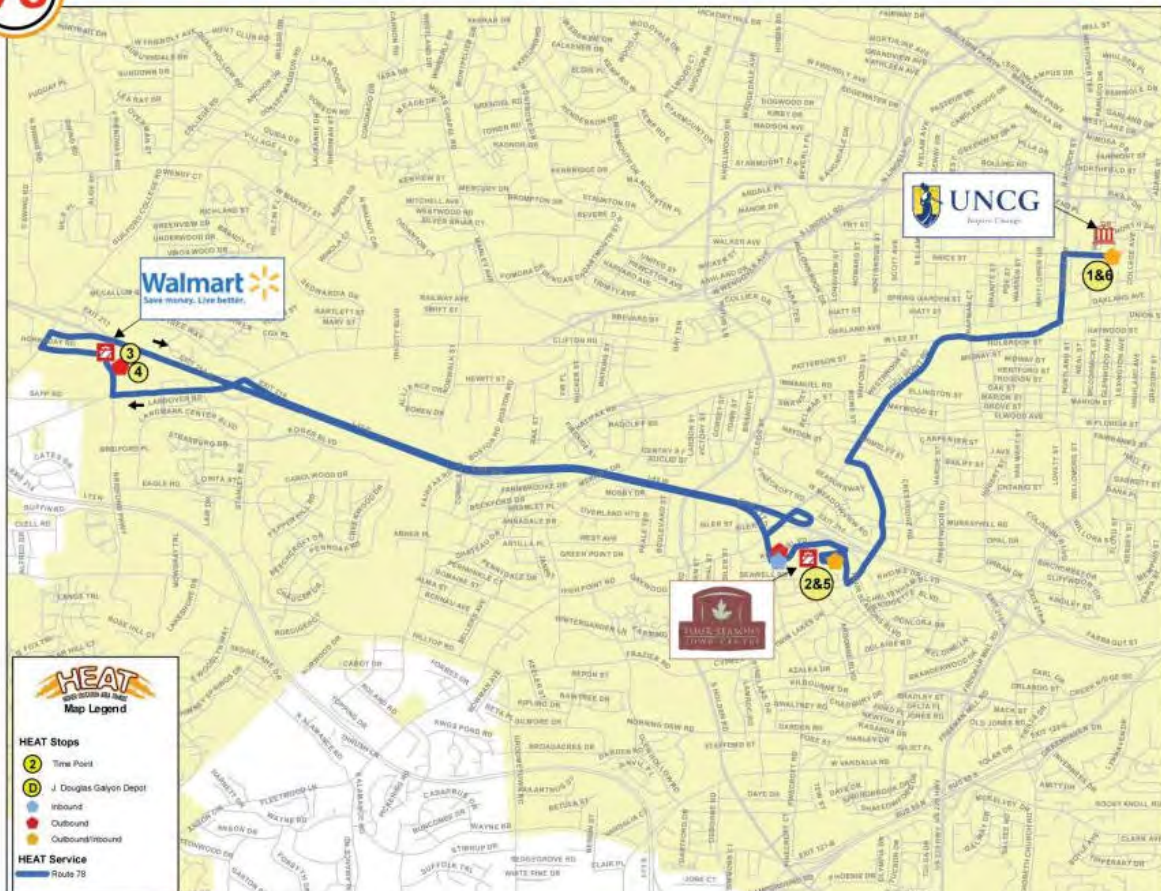


August 2011

ALPHABETICAL LEGEND

41 Admissions & Visitor Center	6 Gray Hall	80 Mossman Building (University Administration)	237 Spring Garden Apartments
42 Alumni House	59 Gray Home Management House	170 Music Building	49 Steam Plant Building
34 Aycock Auditorium	20 Grogan Hall	27 North Drive Child Care Center	31 Stone Building (School of Human Environmental Sciences)
7 Bailey Hall	25 Guilford Hall	24 North Spencer Hall	134 Student Recreation Center
177 Baseball Stadium	98 HHP Building (School of Health and Human Performance)	30 Nursing Annex Building	178 Sullivan Science Building
181 Baseball Locker Room and Training Facility	5 Hinshaw Hall	252 Oakland Ave. Parking Deck	35 Taylor Building
175 Becher-Weaver Building (Off Campus)	39 Jackson Library	29 Petty Science Building	137 Tower Village
33 Brown Building	9 Jamison Hall	15 Phillips-Hawkins Hall	94 University Graphics & Printing
82 Bryan Building (Bryan School of Business & Economics)	235 Jefferson Suites	17 Ragsdale Hall	88 University Police (Administration)
50 Campus Supply Store	26 Mary Foust Hall	260 Recreational Track and Sports Area	89 University Police Station
32 Carmichael Building	38 Melver Building	19 Reynolds Hall	141 Walker Ave. Parking Deck
162 Carter Child Care Center	169 McIver St. Parking Deck	84 School of Education	99 Weatherspoon Art Museum (Cone Building)
174 Chemical Safety Facility	57 McNutt Building	4 Shaw Hall	12 Weil Hall
10 Coit Hall	18 Mendenhall Hall	48 Sink Building (800 Oakland Ave.)	11 Winfield Hall
21 Cone Hall	56 Moore Building (School of Nursing)	142 Smith Campus Ministries Building	150 127 McIver St.
9 Cone Building	246 Moore Humanities & Research Administration	135 Soccer Stadium	144 500 Forest St.
8 Cotten Hall	13 Moore-Strong Hall	254 Softball Stadium	139 1100 West Market St. (University Offices)
45 Curry Building		23 South Spencer Hall	
22 Dining Halls			
63 Eberhart Building			
40 Elliott University Center			
43 Faculty Center			
64 Family Research Center			
86 Ferguson Building			
143 Field Turf Maintenance Building			
107 Financial Aid			
37 Forney Building			
44 Foust Building (College of Arts & Sciences)			
247 Gatewood Studio Arts Center			
159 Genetic Counseling			
16 Gove Student Health Center			
58 Graham Building			

A few years ago the university established in cooperation with the city of Greensboro a public transportation system called “Higher Education Area Transit” short HEAT. Some of the busses are stopping at the UNCG campus in front of the Jackson library and can be used by UNCG students for free to go to the “Four Season Mall”, to “Walmart” or to the “Friendly Shopping Center”. The busses are every day on time and are really convenient for students who are living on-campus and don’t have a car to come around Greensboro. There are nine different routes served by HEAT which can be found on the homepage. (<http://www.rideheat.com/routes>).



Route 78 from the UNCG campus to the Four Season Mall and Walmart

Classes

Like every exchange student I had to choose my classes prior my arrival but it was still possible to make changes to my schedule during the orientation week. I was instantly accepted into all my classes although I was on the waiting list for one of them. Since I am a business administration major I was attending three business classes. My fourth class was a geography class which I chose because of my first study at the AAU Klagenfurt. Don't worry that you will get a special treatment by your professors only because you are an international student – you have to attend classes, do your assignments and write the same quizzes and exams as every other student in class.

My first class, International Entrepreneurship was a web-based class. It was about the creation and management of business ventures with international dimensions. Also formal/informal institutions affecting entrepreneurship were discussed.

The second class, Introduction to International Business covered a wide range of topics to introduce students to different aspects of international business environment. The main topics

of the class were the environmental factors which increasingly cause businesses to become international in the scope of their activities.

The third class, Campus Entrepreneurs focused on the basics of establishing a new business from idea to inception through the finalized business plan. Students also had the opportunity to establish a viable business on campus by obtaining a campus license.

The fourth course, Cultural Geography was an introductory project-oriented class with focuses on the geographical characteristics of population, political systems, settlement, patterns and livelihoods.

Conclusion

I never regret my choice to study one semester abroad and would recommend to every business student on our university to do the same. In five months I have met a lot of people from all over the world, made friends for life and improved my English skills.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a couple of people who were supporting me prior and during my stay in Greensboro. First of all I want to thank the international office (BIB) Klagenfurt for the support during my preparation and dr. Gunhild Sagmeister, the coordinator for UNCG, who was providing always useful information. A big thank you to Ms. Kaitlin Ritchie (IPC - UNCG) who helped me with all the forms and different kind of matters during the semester.

I also want to thank my sponsors for the scholarships I received. For students it is really difficult to finance such a big project and therefore I am very thankful for this help.

If you have any questions concerning studying at UNCG don't hesitate to contact me. I would be glad to give further information and help everyone who is interested in spending a semester in Greensboro, US.

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