

## **A SEMESTER AT EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Studying and living at the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania (ESU) for one semester (mid-August, 2015 – mid-December, 2015) was probably the best experience in our lives. We hope that this report can arouse your enthusiasm and encourages you to spend a semester at ESU.

### **EVERYDAY LIFE AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

During the week, we attended the classes and were busy doing our homework, writing papers, and studying for quizzes and tests most of the time. We were lucky that we met all those great people from all over the world that we used to spend our leisure time with: Eating together at the cafeteria became a daily ritual, we went to the recreation center (gym, for free) and had movie nights together or had some drinks at the bars. On the weekends, we often took road trips together, for example to Boston, Toronto, the Niagara Falls, Atlantic City, and Washington D.C. The university's ideal location in Pennsylvania also allowed us to take frequent day trips to New York City. It only takes you a 1.5-hour bus drive (round trip: \$69, group tickets are cheaper) to be in the Big Apple. The International Office organized trips to New York City and Philadelphia, too, and the university offered many activities on campus such as picnics, outdoor movie nights, bonfires, football games and basketball games, and pumpkin carving on Halloween. We had the chance to live the typical American college life, and we never felt bored or homesick.

### **STUDYING AT ESU**

The visa regulations require you to be enrolled as a full-time student. This means that you are obligated to take at least four classes. The classes take place two or three times per week. Usually, you can get into any class that you are interested in if you are an exchange student. The classes that you take at ESU (at least the classes of the English Department) usually count for course credit in Germany.

We got the impression that college in the USA is much more school-like because you get homework, your oral participation is graded, and attendance is compulsory. If you miss class more than two times, you will have to bring a doctor's note. Most professors, however, are extremely lenient with exchange students; if you have visitors from home and/or want to go on a trip, they are totally fine with your missing class and even encourage you to travel. Just announce your absence in advance and be honest with them.

We think that the work load is heavier during the semester than it is in Germany: You will have to hand in several papers and essays and take quizzes and mid-term exams throughout the semester;

assignments are due almost every other week. Those of you who intend to take English literature classes should not take more than two literature classes because the reading amount is huge. We also recommend you to take one or two “fun”/ “hobby” classes. Please note: The classes are numbered according to the respective difficulty level and the workload required (e.g. 100-level classes are for beginners).

In general, you have to work continually and a lot during the semester, but the difficulty level of exams etc. is lower. Especially exchange students from Europe usually do not have problems and often perform very successfully in class. They often perform even better than the American fellow students.

## **FINANCES**

Be aware that studying in the USA for a semester is incredibly expensive. You should be prepared to cover the following expenses:

### **VISA (J-1)**

In order to apply for the J-1 visa (ca. **350€**), you need to go to the U.S. Consulate General in Frankfurt am Main (**costs for the trip to Frankfurt: ??**).

### **FLIGHT**

You should save around **800€** for the flight (round trip) to the Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) or to the JFK International Airport (JFK). If you arrive at EWR, the Office of International Programs of ESU might arrange to pick you up and bring you to campus. Try to book as early as possible to get a good deal!

### **MEDICAL COSTS**

If you want to live on campus, you will be required to have some vaccination, and you will be required to get tested for tuberculosis (ca. **100-200€**).

### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

You need to have health insurance, which costs about **150€** (e.g. ADAC Auslandsversicherung).

### **HOUSING FEES**

[http://www.esu.edu/students/enrollment\\_services/student\\_billing/tuition\\_fees/housing.cfm](http://www.esu.edu/students/enrollment_services/student_billing/tuition_fees/housing.cfm)

As an international exchange student, you are required to live on campus, in either Minsi Hall or Hemlock Suites.

Minsi Hall is a traditional residence hall, where you share your bedroom with a fellow student (same gender) and the communal bathroom with the rest of the people from your floor (same gender). To

tell the truth: We think that Minsi Hall is less comfortable and less modern; many people call it “the ghetto”. Costs: around **\$ 2700/ semester**

Hemlock Suites is much more modern and comfortable than Minsi Hall. You usually have a single room and share a bathroom with a fellow student. Costs: around **\$ 4000/ semester**

### **MEAL PLAN**

Since cooking on campus is very difficult to manage, you should select a meal plan and eat at the cafeteria. We recommend the 19 Meal Plan (around **\$ 1200/ semester**), i.e. you receive 19 meals per week (all-you-can-eat buffet).

### **ADDITIONAL FEES**

You should also be prepared to pay general fees (around **\$ 1000**).

### **BOOKS**

The books required for the classes are very expensive in America. We advise you to rent them on Amazon or in the bookstore on campus. You probably still have to pay about **\$ 200** for them.

### **LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

How much money do you need to budget for leisure activities? Of course, it really depends on what you want to do, what you want to buy, how often you would like travel, and which places you want to see. We spent about **\$ 400 per month**.

As costs add up quickly, we strongly advise you to apply for the *PROMOS-Stipendienprogramm*!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us!

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