

OCT 18 2011

Berlin

Summer 2011

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1. Arrival Overseas/On-Site Orientation:
  - a. I stayed at the Seminaris Campus Hotel which is only 15minutes walk from the Freie University Berlin. I think it is the best choice if you don't have a tight budget.
  - b. We had an orientation which is mandatory. Basically, it covers everything that you need to know, from school to free time.
2. Academics
  - a.
    - The classrooms were similar to the ones in UW. Some were new and some were old.
    - The instruction was also very similar to UW.
    - The teacher/student relations were friendlier in FUBiS, as the atmosphere in the class was more lively and fun, and students tend to become friends and hung out after school.
    - The grading/exams were similar to UW.
    - The library, computer, and classroom facilities were quite different from UW. The library was much smaller (at least the main one). The computer lab was nicer and we could also print for free.
  - b. The quality and content of instruction were good. We were able to raise questions even though the course schedule was tight. Sometimes the instructor would bring games that were related to the course materials.
  - c. From what I heard, they were all fantastic.
  - d. It was part of my elective subject.
3. Housing
  - a. There were host families, hostels, a hotel, and dorms.
  - b. I chose the hotel since it was the closest to the school campus.
  - c. I would recommend the hotel.
4. Program/Exchange Site:
  - a. The campus was not in the center of the city, but surrounding community was safe and intimate. There is a taxi stand and a U-Bahn station. Unlike UW, Freie University does not have a campus where students can hang around, besides the cafeteria.
5. Health and Safety:

- a. Berlin is relatively safe during the day and even during the night if you go out in group. The students should not be hanging around the by alone in U- Bahn stations after dark.
6. Cultural Aspects:
  - a. Clubbing was a great way to meet the local people. My friends and I also went on a sightseeing historical tour in which we learned about the culture.
  - b. I felt like in Berlin, the older people were not as nice to foreigners as the younger generation. As an Asian, I had experienced a few incidents where I was put in uncomfortable situations, such as being stared at.
7. Financial:
  - a. Cash/Credit or debit cards
  - b. With all the sightseeing, traveling, and leisure time, I would say around 1200 USD per month.
8. Program/Exchange Administration:
  - a. The IPE office was very helpful in terms of recommending the right program. The instruction of registration deadline and application was straight forward and clear.
9. Program/Student type:

The program is for students who want to take German language classes and/or students who enjoy cultural and historical aspect of Berlin.
10. Overall Experience:
  - a. I wish I could have practiced my speaking skills more. In general, my expectations were reached.