

Full name: Daniel Szarf

Email: danielszarf@gmail.com

Degree Program at TAU: Sofaer Global MBA

Host University: Northwestern University- Kellogg School of management

Exchange term: Fall 2018 – mid-august to mid-December

Exchange Experience

General experience

It's usually not easy to sum up a three months life experience, and less when so many things happen as in an exchange in Kellogg. But I can start by saying that it was amazing, interesting, fun, and I would strongly recommend Coller's students to do it. I knew that my time there was just going to fly by, and the opportunities were going to be much. So, to take the most out of it, I set up clear and realistic goals and priorities:

1. Deepen my knowledge in Finance, Analytics and social entrepreneurship.
2. Work hard on recruiting and networking and get at least one job proposal.
3. Enjoy leaving in a city such as Chicago (even though Kellogg is in Evanston, 18 km to the north of Chicago's downtown).
4. Meet people and have fun.
5. Satisfy a personal curiosity: What are the main differences between a top and non-top business school?

After this short time, I can happily tell you that I'm very satisfied with what I was able to achieve. I:

1. Took excellent courses such as capital market, retail analytics, digital marketing, social impact & technology innovation and audited software development.
2. Was hired as a Product Manager for a Chilean company (through Kellogg's recruiting services).
3. Enjoyed mostly from the quietness and peace of living in Evanston and enjoyed spending one or two days per week in the city and a couple of nights there as well. (further description of the city later in this report).
4. Have met people from different nationalities, and shared insightful talks about the realities that they live in their own countries.
5. Understood, that the main differences between top and non-top business school are the recruiting services (people come out with global, well-paid jobs)

and the scale of the program (1200 students) that makes the experience completely different. On the other hand, I was also able to appreciate the value of doing my MBA in Tel Aviv with the specialization in technology and innovation. And I was able to give more meaning to my story of why I picked Collier's MBA (remember the importance of storytelling).

Tips for potential candidates:

- The first weeks at Kellogg can be overwhelming. The number of events, activities, people you can meet, clubs that you can join are a lot. So, set up your goals and priorities or you will go back feeling that you were not able to achieve any of them.
- Following up with optimizing your time and energy, let me tell you that Kellogg and the USA as well, have a lot of events that "everybody" goes (traditional parties, sport events, etc.). I recommend getting out of your comfort zone and attend many of them. But you do not have to go to all of them (I'm remembering a very boring baseball game at this moment). Try to identify what you'll really enjoy and don't feel fear from missing out if you skip a couple.
- Be really smart when planning your courses. Kellogg requires exchange students to take 3 to 5 credits. It may seem that you would have a lot of free time if you just take 3 credits, but some courses do require a lot of class preparation, and also Kellogg offers a wide range of events that you will be interested in attending, plus recruiting can also consume a lot of time if you are interested. So, a proper course planification will be very important to achieve all the goals you set for yourself.
- Don't close yourself just to the exchange students. The first couple of weeks, you'll feel that they are the only ones interested in getting to know you and every other student is busy with other stuff. But I found out that even if it is true that 2nd year students have already their group of friends, there are very open and welcoming.
- Live in McManus. It's not the best housing in the world (more info later in this report), but for three months, it is a good solution.
- If you go on the fall semester as I did, you'll need both summer and winter clothes (from 30 to -10 °C).
- Getting job offers as an exchange student is not easy. I've read that approximately 2 out of 35 get an offer. But it did happen to me. So, I strongly recommend that you give it a try. And if you are seriously interested, start practicing business cases interviews before your exchange.

- Try to go some days before the beginning of the term, to stay in Chicago's downtown and to get to know the city. Once you stay in Evanston you won't probably do it.
- Don't go in the winter term. The temperature is just too low, and it won't let you enjoy as much.
- If you want to do an exchange to travel, don't. In that case just take 3 months and travel around. An exchange is more meaningful than that.
- Take the initiative. People will be very open and helpful, but you must take the first step.
- Finally, try to appreciate the experience of attending one of the best business schools of the world!

About the city

Kellogg School of Management is in Evanston, Illinois, USA, located 18 km to the north of Chicago's downtown. It is very a beautiful city with around 75K people, where you will find everything you need to feel comfortable. Its small downtown is full of restaurants, cafes and local stores. It is a nice area place for the over 1200 Kellogg students to hang out. Michigan's lake offers spectacular views and even a nice place to swim until the end of September. And of course, it's proximity to Chicago give you the possibility to access amazing music concerts, sport events, world-known restaurants, museums, etc.



One of Chicago's most famous sculpture - The bean



Millennium Park

Transport in Evanston:

Distances in Evanston are rather short, so people usually walk or bike. From mid-November to mid-December temperatures range from 5 to -5 °C, so UBER and LIFT are more frequently used, but it's still possible to walk around. If you go on the winter quarter, you'll probably have to buy special cloth and find an alternative to walking. Temperatures this January ranged from 0 to -40 °C

Transport to Chicago:

1. Train:
 - a. The Elevated Train comes every 10-15 minutes and takes 50-60 min to the center of Chicago depending if it's on rush time or not. It costs 2,5 USD each way.
 - b. The Metra takes 35 minutes to Ogilvy Transportation Center (OTC), but doesn't come so often. It costs 5 USD each way.
2. Uber or lift: takes 25 minutes and costs 25-35 USD each way.

3. Shuttle: during the day (Monday to Friday), there is a free shuttle bus that takes you to the Kellogg's campus located in Chicago. You just need to show your Wildcard (student ID) to the driver.

See: <https://www.northwestern.edu/transportation-parking/shuttles/routes/chicago-express.html>

About the Host University – campus and school atmosphere, location, social activities, student union, career center

Kellogg School of Management

Rankings such as The Financial Times, QS World University, The Economist, Business Insider, Times Higher Education, among others, have positioned Kellogg between the top 15 worldwide, making it one of the top business schools of the world.

Global Hub

The Global Hub is Kellogg's new house, an elegant and modern building that stands right next to Michigan lake.

It has a coffee place, market place (with a wide range of food to buy), silent rooms, meeting rooms and outstanding classrooms.





Atmosphere

The atmosphere at Kellogg is great. The first days, everything might seem overwhelming, as the more than 1200 students will probably make you feel little bit lost (especially when you are used to SOFAER's 45-50 people class). But then, thanks to all the social activities, clubs, and class projects you will start feeling more comfortable. At the fall semester, Kellogg's 2nd year students are fully focused on recruiting. So, don't be surprised to see them stressing out or talking a lot about this.

Something you will notice right away is the sense of proudness and belonging people have there. It's very common for them to wear Kellogg's cloth and try to support as many Kellogg event's as possible by showing up or even organizing them. They also put a lot of effort in maintaining a strong and active Alumni network, for example by inviting them to give lectures about different topics (present job, startup, how to get jobs at certain type of companies, etc.).

Students profile

Kellogg students:

- Have usually worked in highly recognized companies before their MBA.
- Are very "corporate people" (many come from consultancy), looking for jobs rather than creating their startup.
- Come from a wider range of industries than Coller's.
- Are "older" than Coller's. The statistics shows that the average age is 28, but it's hard to find people younger than 27 on the 2nd year.
- Are more stressed about getting an internship (1st year) or a full-time job (2nd year) than excelling in their courses.
- Come from everywhere in the world. 35% are international, meaning 400 people approx. (even though many of them have been living in the USA for a long time).
- Participate much more in classes than Coller's (this is something incentivized by the School through the grades).
- Are very involved with the school's activities and feel very proud to be part of it.

Social activities

On the first week of class, the Clubs will present themselves. They are very welcoming and eager for people to join. The variety of topics is huge and weather you like sports, politics, outdoor activities, etc. you will find activities you'll enjoy.

I didn't get that involved with clubs because I had other priorities. But I did really enjoy from barbecues with the Latin Club, some games with the Tennis Club and Holidays ("Chagim") with the Jewish Club.

TGs is the name they give to the "happy hour" they organize every Friday from 5 to 7pm. It's an event at the Global Hub with beer and snacks where most of the students hang out. Most of them have a special topic and are usually very fun.

Attending to the schools' sports events is also something quite traditional. I strongly recommend participating in a fall-ball, which is getting together for food and drinks before the football games.

Sport Center

A hundred meters from the Global Hub, you'll find the Sport Center. It is free for exchange students (you enter with your wild card), and it is just fantastic.

- 6 indoor tennis courts
- 50 m swimming pool
- Gym (weight lifting, training)
- Basketball courts
- Squash
- Racquetball
- Cafeteria

They provide towels and locks.

Courses and professors

One month or so before you start your exchange, you will receive a complete list of courses available with their description (Syllabus), a review of the professor and the estimated workload. Pay special attention to this to organize your quarter.

The difficulty of the courses varies a lot. Some require a lot of preparation before classes (up to 10 hours between reading and assignments), others are almost just about attending. I would say that the level of professors is quite similar to Collier's. The size of classes is similar as well (35-50 students). The main difference is that they students are more active in classes (class participation is highly graded).

Something that I really enjoyed was that each professor organized one or two lunches with up to ten students that offer to attend. I found this time to be very helpful to meet the professors better, to get more connected with the course, and to meet other students as well.

Accommodation – dorms and other solutions

My recommendation is to try to get a place at McManus Living Center. To be honest, it is not the fanciest place (quite old furniture), it smells due to all the people from

around the word cooking their food, and it's not cheap (6000 USD for the quarter). But for 3 months, it is a good solution:

- Most exchange and many of the full-time students live there.
- They provide everything you need (electricity, water, gas, cleaning vacuum, printers, study rooms, a common area with ping-pong and pool).
- It is in Evanston's downtown, 10-15-minute walk from the Global Hub and 5 minutes' walk to the Davis train station.

Visa

International students are required to get in to the US on a student visa (J1), no matter if you already have a different type of VISA. Don't worry, Kellogg's administration will send you an email with all the information you need, and then you just need to follow simple steps to get it.

Remember:

- To apply for your VISA with time, as the embassy will keep your passport for a couple of weeks.
- That you can stay 30 days in the US after you finish with classes.
- To take with you to the airport all the papers that you got during the VISA application. They are as important as the VISA. I was retained for one hour at the airport because I left them on my bag.

Insurance and Health Services

Kellogg requires you to hire a specific health insurance. Exchange students were quite annoyed by this because it's quite expensive (1300 USD for the quarter). Unfortunately, you will not be able to avoid this.

Career service management

This is one of the best things from Kellogg (trust me you will notice the difference with Coller). From the first day, you will have access to the career management services, as if you are any other full-time student. And by this, you'll get access to:

- Online interviews coordination (on and off campus).
- Access to all kind of professional events (6-10 every day).
 - Launch and learn (events where usually companies present what they do, and career opportunities with them).
 - Lectures from different types of professionals or business people.
 - Net working nights, which happen once a week with 10-15 companies that come to talk to students.
 - Events organized by Kellogg's clubs.
- A software to work on your CV and LinkedIn.
- A software to analyze you career path.

- A database with information about career paths and contacts of people in those industries.

Living expenses

This is quite personal, but I can give you general references:

	USD
Housing	6000 ^(*1)
Equipment for the apartment	300
Health insurance	1300
University fee	100
Course packet	150
Food and groceries	2000
Transport	400
Flight ticket from Israel	1000

(*1) McManus

Expenses such as, night life, going out, trips, flight tickets, shopping, etc. are quite personal. But you should think of \$ 11K for basic expenses and add what you consider for the rest.

JVs (student's wife, husband or partner)

If you are thinking of going with you wife, husband or partner, as was my case with my wife, Kellogg has many advantages. JVs can audit classes, with prior request to the professor. Audit means you can go to classes listen, in some cases participate, but you cannot do the assignments, exams or get any official credit for it.

If you ask me, attending to classes from top professors for free is still a great deal.

JVs can also attend to club and all the other events organized by the university (talks, workshops, lunch and learn, etc.).

They do not get a wild card and in consequence cannot take the shuttles and go to the SportsCenter.