

Experience Report USA

University of Texas at Austin

McCombs School of Business Spring 2020



Exchange program: STAP Master (M.Sc. Business Administration - Corporate Development)

MBA Courses: Venture Creation, Global Management, Advocacy, Digital Consumer Behavior

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Intro

I was a full-time MBA exchange student at McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas (UT) in Austin during spring term 2020. Spending my semester abroad at UT Austin was one of the best decisions in my life. With this report, I share my experiences about my STAP in the United States.

Preparation

Planning

If you want to study in Texas, you should start thinking about organizing your semester abroad at the beginning of your studies at the University of Cologne. The academic year in the U.S. begins in August and classes usually end in May, which means that there are bridgeable periods of time when integrated into the studies at the University of Cologne, which can be arranged in a sensible way if planned early enough.

A semester abroad in the U.S. has a few hurdles, starting with scholarship preparation. For example, institutions such as the Fulbright Commission announce their travel scholarship a year before the semester abroad begins (application for the spring term 2022 is open from December 2020 to February 2021). Since scholarships of this type usually require two letters of recommendation from professors or other faculty members in the application process, I recommended that you provide these letters from your bachelor's degree. Obtaining them just at the beginning of the master's program until the application deadline can be stressful due to the relatively late awarding of grades.

Have a look at the contents of the MBA program in advance in order to thoughtfully plan your studies. Depending on the semester, different courses are offered, which cannot always be integrated into the curriculum at the University of Cologne. It's not possible to predict which courses will be specifically credited in advance, as the current course schedules are not published until well after the ZIB and the UT have confirmed the acceptance of the application. Therefore, I advise to retain a certain flexibility with regard to the choice of courses and to be mentally prepared for the fact that the courses in Texas will not be credited one-to-one with those in Cologne. But you should not study in Texas to substitute courses in Cologne, anyway. The MBA program at UT offers great academia taught by top-notch faculty. With this in mind, I chose courses based on my interests, which I didn't regret.

Preparing for the scholarship and courses is important but it's not a deal breaker. The visa, on the other hand, is. After successfully applying to UT, you will receive a "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (J-Nonimmigrant)" also called "DS-2019 Form" from the UT International Office. You can use this form to apply for your J-1 visa. The J-1 is an Exchange Visitor Visa and is issued by the American Consulate to exchange students for semesters abroad like the one at UT. For the visa you need many more documents which you can find on the website of the U.S. Department of State (link: <http://cdn.ustraveldocs.com/de/de-niv-typej.asp>). It's especially important that your passport is valid for six months beyond your stay in the States; for a spring term your passport should expire at the end of December at the earliest. When applying for a visa, it might be helpful to have proof that you are in a solid financial position and that you will return to Germany at the end of your studies abroad. For this purpose, I had two balance confirmations issued. Tip: The consulate only accepts documents in English. Appointments can only be requested at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin (not the one at Brandenburger Tor, but at Clayallee 170) and at the consulates in Frankfurt and Munich via the online application process.

Visiting the U.S. Embassy in Berlin was a whole new experience for me. For the appointment, you are not allowed to arrive earlier than 15 minutes prior to the booked time slot. No electronic items (including smartphones) and no backpacks or bags are allowed inside. I left everything at home except for my documents. The American officials are friendly but firm, now and then asking why you are here and giving specific instructions on what to do. It's best to keep your feet still here and rather wait once too much for your instructions. Tip: Most visitors are dressed extremely neatly; you should also take this into account when preparing for your visit with the Americans. The actual interview lasted only a few minutes. In particular, a friendly official asked me questions about my plans for the U.S., why I wanted to study in Texas, and when I'd be coming back to Germany.

While you are preparing for your visa, you should also start looking for an accommodation. On the one hand, you have to indicate your place of residence in Austin when applying for the J-1, on the other hand, the search for housing in Austin can be a challenge. Also, be sure to update your immunization record. UT Health requires all international students to have record of a "tuberculosis screenings test," a "meningococcal (bacterial meningitis) vaccine requirement," and a "proof of immunity to measles, mumps and rubella" (info at <https://global.utexas.edu/iss/life-at-ut/pre-arrival/immunization>). Tip: Globetrotter in Cologne has a medical office on second floor where you can get vaccinated.

Application

The application process at UT Austin is comparable to the application process at the University of Cologne. A few weeks after the acceptance by ZIB, UT contacted me with my first access data, the UT ID, which I had to use to submit further documents on myIO, including CV, profile picture, bank certification, letter of recommendation (ZIB), proof of English proficiency (ZIB), ToR and the TOEFL iBT score. As I progressed, information was sent to me through ISSS (International Student and Scholar Services) and Texas Global. Debbie also guided me through the application process and offered her support. Some weeks before departure, I received my DS-2019 via FedEx Express and was able to schedule the visa appointment at the embassy.

Finances

A budget of at least \$10,000 is appropriate for an MBA semester abroad at UT. Keep in mind that you will be joining a group of people, some of whom are paying over \$100,000 for their MBA studies and may have already earned similar amounts per year. If you want to participate in Austin life away from Rowling Hall, I recommend being financially capable to the extent that you don't have to watch every penny. The costs of my venture slightly changed due to coronavirus pandemic, because I only stayed in Austin from January 5th to March 18th, 2020. However, I was stuck paying rent until the agreed end of the lease in May, so my actual costs serve as a good first point of reference for your planning.

Type of cost	Approx. costs per month	Approx. total costs
Roundtrip flight (including rebooking)	-	\$1,150.00
Tuition bill (including UT health insurance)	-	\$1,370.00
Vaccinations (booster and certificates)	-	\$200.00
Obtaining visa (including SEVIS Fee)	-	\$270.00
Lease from Jan. to May (all inclusive at ION)	\$980.00	\$4,900.00
Purchases for household	-	\$200.00
AT&T-Prepaid	\$30.00	\$120.00
Groceries and everyday necessities	\$320.00	\$960.00
Activities	\$400.00	\$1,200.00
Transportation	\$100.00	\$300.00
Travel (including Chicago & New Orleans)	-	\$1,600.00
Total	\$1,830.00	\$12,270.00

Organization

UT has a lot of facilities to support you during your stay abroad in Austin, but the MBA program basically requires you to organize yourself. The program coordinator at UT is Debbie Carney. I am very happy that I met her. She is a very warm and helpful Texan who helped me a lot with the organization of my studies, especially with the course schedule.

Since many students leave UT for Christmas, it's rather quiet in the city until the start of the semester. Nevertheless, I already scheduled my arrival for January 5th to be able to take care of the apartment, health insurance, UT Card, car and all important arrangements. During this time, the International Office organizes many entertaining events, such as the Internationals Welcome Day, a Campus Scavenger Hunt, or a 2-step dance class to which new exchange students of all majors are invited. MBAs tend not to participate in these events, but you can still make first connections with internationals. The courses usually start after MLK Day, which for me was January 21. The week before the course started, Debbie invited me to meet the other exchange students. There were six other exchange students in my cohort, representing Canada, Austria, Germany, Singapore, UK and Argentina. It was very pleasant to get to meet fellow exchange students before the start of the semester and to exchange ideas about course selection and studying at UT. At the meeting we also received important information, e.g. how all "registration bars", such as the submission of a vaccination record to UT Health, can be waived. You cannot register for classes until these bars are lifted.

There are also many opportunities to meet fellow students at the start of classes; some professors kick things off with a casual warm-up and introductions. As your studies progress, UT Canvas will be your constant source of information. UT's counterpart to the Ilias service at the University of Cologne provides access to all course documents, grades, and news. It's very clearly structured and helps you to organize your studies. For communication with other MBAs and individual groups, I recommend that you register with your MBA Slack group. All important information is shared there and in the "Fun Group" you will also find the time and place of weekly "Think & Drink" nights, which you should not miss, at least not in the very beginning.

Accommodation

General Advice

My first stops for apartment hunting in Austin were Debbie, the platforms Craigslist, apartments.com, and apartment houses right away. Debbie tried to connect me with MBAs who were looking to give up their apartment or sublet - sadly, there was nothing suitable. Searching on Craigslist and apartments.com is tedious and inefficient. Many listings are scams, outdated, or just redirect you to the real estate company's own website. The most common platform for temporary housing in Austin is Facebook. Groups like "UT Austin Sublets/ Roommate Finder" and "University of Texas at Austin (UT) Housing, Sublets & Roommates" have numerous people posting daily searches for a subtenant or temporary tenant. Many students graduate in December and try to sublet their apartment until the academic year ends in July. After contact is made via Facebook, contracts are signed digitally with the landlord (usually a large real estate company). Rental deposits for subleasing contracts are uncommon. Sometimes landlords want Venmo to be used to pay the rent. You should be careful if the tenant wants to complete the rental without notifying the landlord, as this will not entitle you to receive the services involved in a rental, such as air conditioning repair. I messaged the dad of a graduating student in response to his Facebook post and that's how I got my room in an apartment building.

Apartment Houses

My limit for rent was \$1,000, which is quite tight for Austin rents. The average price for a room in West Campus, a popular residential area directly connected to the Campus and inhabited nearly exclusively by students, is \$1,200. I lived there in ION, 14th floor with a view of the campus. My room in a 3-bed flat share was equipped with absolutely everything (bed, closet, desk, chair, private bathroom, etc.). I just had to pack my suitcase. The apartment was very modern, it was clean and also very well furnished. The ION is located 2100 San Antonio St, Austin, TX 78705, which runs parallel to Guadeloupe Street, also called the Drag. On the Drag you will find all the major stores such as Target, CVS, AT&T, Chase, or University Co-op. Rowling Hall is just five minutes away. You can hardly find a better location.

Most of the residential buildings on West Campus are large apartment buildings like the ION. They are all similar in layout: on the ground floor are the entrance, mailboxes, administration, and access to the parking garage, then above are the gym and study rooms, next come the levels with usually 3-5-bedroom units, and finally on the top floor comes the pool. What was unusual for me was that most of the rooms don't have windows, so pay close attention to that if daylight is important to you. In my experience, the apartment buildings on West Campus are mostly inhabited by undergrads, so it shouldn't bother you that the average age is in the early 20s and that it gets a bit noisy in the evenings. I really liked the ION: there was always some activity and I was able to make friends right away: e.g. my neighbors in the corridor frequently invited me to their place and I became friends with them. In the appendix you will find a list outlining other decent apartment buildings.

Like most young professionals, many MBA students live in condos on the outskirts of the city. It is much quieter there, but you have to accept longer distances to UT or supermarkets, and despite the good bus connections in Austin, this can be exhausting for those without a car. Most condos are better equipped and appeal to a different target group, so the prices for rooms are roughly 20% above the prices for accommodation on West Campus. If you are an exchange student with a larger budget, I recommend the new developments on 4th Street in Downtown, between North Lamar Boulevard and West Avenue, such as the Bowie. Studios on the 20th story and up start at \$1,800. In return, you can enjoy a great view and get a better sense of what the city might feel like after graduation.

Residence Halls, Dorms & Co-ops

UT offers international students to stay in the Residence Halls. These halls are spread across the campus and offer newcomers a good start into university life, as many new people can be met. You can only apply for residence halls after you have been accepted by UT. It was only during the application process that I realized that the Residence Halls are actually dorms. Dorms like the Dobie Twenty21 are apartment complexes where you can only rent a place to sleep. While this is nothing to worry about for most freshmen, it reminds me of a time back in school. I think that this type of living is completely unsuitable for any MBA candidate.

The College Houses, also known as Co-ops, offer more privacy than dorms and are still inexpensive. There are seven different locations with monthly rent starting at \$532. The Co-ops maintain a very social atmosphere, e.g. the residents regularly clean, cook and socialize all together. An acquaintance from Mannheim lived in the Co-op on 21st Street and was quite satisfied.

Study Life

Campus

UT's campus is the largest contiguous university campus I've ever seen. With an area of more than 30 football fields, it's not called the 40 acres for nothing. The University of Texas at Austin has an annual budget of about \$3 billion (for comparison, the University of Cologne has a budget of about €800 million with an equivalent number of students). All facilities are very well maintained, from TurtlePond to UT Tower to Little Fountain - nice places to relax and socialize everywhere. The facilities that most mattered to me, such as the Main Library (tip: on the 5th floor you have a beautiful view on the Capitol), the Texas Union (tip: on the ground floor you can find Starbucks and plenty of fast food, on the 1st floor is a chill-out area) or the Gregory Gym are located on the southern part of the campus and thus closer to Robert B. Rowling Hall. Something is always happening on campus. Even on the weekends, undergrads are lining up at a Wendy's next to the Residence Halls just after midnight. The green area on the Sixpack (six university-buildings below the UT Tower) is comparable to the Uniwiese in Cologne except that you better not open a Kölsch - drinking is prohibited on the entire campus, with one exception: Rowling Hall.

Robert B. Rowling Hall

Rowling Hall is the newest building on campus. On the first page of this report, you can see the building from MLK Jr. Boulevard. Completed in 2018 after four years of construction and approximately \$186 million in project costs, it is home to the MBA students. Five floors of state-of-the-art facilities include 180-degree classrooms, team lounges featuring XL-monitors, common rooms furnished with refrigerators and microwaves, landscaped terraces, a cafeteria with great lunch options, and they even have a gym. The building was designed in such a way that you constantly meet other students, for example on the illuminated staircases or at the chill-out areas on the 1st floor. I had many good conversations with fellow students and professors there.

There is a flip chart showing the most important events of the month located in the foyer of Rowling Hall. Events of interest are held regularly, such as conventions at the AT&T Conference Center across the street, nightly events at Memorial Stadium, coffee chats organized by the 40acres, etc. It is possible to participate in many of these events as an exchange student.

Academics

Basically, the lecturers at McCombs and at many other American universities - especially at the MBA level - do not necessarily have similar academic backgrounds as lecturers in Master of Science programs at public German universities. Some lecturers have never obtained a doctorate and rather report from their professional experience. These insights are highly sought after by MBAs in the United States, since the MBA revolves around networking. Courses are usually no larger than 50 participants. Teamwork and active participation are encouraged and demanded. There was hardly a class where I didn't get a chance to speak, if only because there was a lot of discussion in my classes and high interest in my perspective as a German exchange student on global issues (I was the only German in all my classes and the only European in most of them).

My fellow students were in their late 20s/early 30s and came from a wide variety of companies. The finance and consulting industry are strongly represented, as I had expected. The majority of students were from the States (some from Texas), followed by Asian countries, Latin America, Russia and Europe by far. New and interesting to me were my fellow students from military careers, some of whom had spent a few years in foreign wars, such as a fellow student of mine who was a captain with the 82nd Airborne Division Artillery and decided to pursue a career as a consultant by taking up the MBA program at UT. In addition to the diverse backgrounds, the disciplines were also very diverse. For example, one of my classes included an aspiring plastic surgeon who was able to provide first-hand information on the global coronavirus pandemic thanks to his job at UT's University Hospital.

The courses are structured in such a way that various readings are required for participation in class, the contents of which are then built upon in discussions. You should not go to the classes unprepared, otherwise you will not be able to participate. For example, I participated in the course "Real Estate Investment Decisions". In this course, the teaching assistant regularly assigns tasks whose solutions are to be presented by the MBAs. In "Venture Creation", business plans were discussed every week based on frameworks, displayed in various book chapters. If you want to stand out, you should have a look at the documents beforehand.

One exception was "Global Management". In this course you can't really prepare. All that is needed is a sharp mind and an open mindset. The course was really special to me. In my entire career as a student, I have not had such varied discussions on global political and economic issues as I had in this class. Like the formats, exam grades are different: while grades for courses such as Advocacy are primarily formed by standard written exams (open-ended questions and SC/MC), other instructors examine through presentations, collaboration, and submitted papers. Typically, about one-fifth of the course grade is influenced by the quantity and quality of your contributions. Teamwork is an important part of the MBA program at UT - each of my courses had at least one team assignment, sometimes with alternating teams, other times with teams of my choice. American teamwork was an enjoyable experience for me. Tasks are assigned very quickly and fairly, then each person works on their own with little discussion. It's all about delivering results quickly.

My Courses

As an exchange student you can attend any course. Capacities are kept free. It is absolutely no problem to try out courses during the first two weeks of the semester. I signed up for five courses of 3 CP each after talking to Debbie and kept four of them. I chose my courses based on the information provided by Debbie (course list, syllabi) and the bibliographies of the instructors at <https://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/Directory>. Partly I decided on the basis of my assessment of the lecturer, partly because of my interest in the subject. Have a look on my spring term course list in the appendix (the first digit of the course number indicates the receivable credit points).

Based on my experience, I can recommend these courses to anyone interested in the fields of entrepreneurship, management and psychology.

- Venture Creation by Stephen Courter (we call him Coach), a very charismatic former U.S. lieutenant, investor and founder who, as a millionaire, likes to spend his free time on the golf course and brings with him an above-average network of corporate contacts. In the 90s, he also taught at the University of Cologne. His course develops a business plan that aims on conceptually implementing an idea for a startup. He knows what venture capitalists want to see and advances your startup ideas.
- Global Management by John Doggett, an ex-McKinsey executive who has professional experience in over 36 countries. This course is about the global orientation of companies and cultural differences within the fastest-growing economies. Doggett has remarkable historical and political knowledge in addition to his business expertise - his course was always one of the highlights of the week.
- Advocacy by John Daly, one of the most esteemed professors at McCombs. The course is about the art of marketing ideas/innovations in business and prepares students for a role as a decision maker and advocate in business. Daly has his experiences in selling ideas written up in his book "Advocacy" - highly worth reading.
- Digital Consumer Behavior, by Adrian Ward, a professor who, unlike the other three, has only been teaching at UT for a few years. He is originally from Harvard. He provides a hands-on approach to the topic and many interesting examples from the business world that we discussed together. The course revolves around experimental market research and includes very interesting studies from psychology.

Cultural Experience

Austin Culture

"Everything is bigger in Texas". The saying is true. Texas is big and so is everything in it, like the city of Austin. Austin was love at first sight. From day one, this city just thrilled me. The huge streets, the massive pickup trucks, the tall buildings and the hustle and bustle from the Colorado River to the campus on my drive from the airport to my apartment had me hooked already. The people are young, dynamic and happy to live in one of the fastest growing cities in the US. Housing is in demand: the residential projects downtown, more new corporate headquarters in the south and north of the city show how fast Austin is growing. The food scene is diverse and offered me, a big BBQ fan, great joy. Very important for me too was the opportunity to make connections. From the experiences of various students at American universities, I wanted to be right in the middle of the hustle instead of living on an isolated campus. The campus is located in the center of the city. Right above the political center of the state of Texas. Parallel to the axis that is formed by UT Tower and the Capitol runs Interstate 35, one of the most traveled federal highways in the States.

Austin has an extensive cultural offering. Despite the conservative political influence of Texas, the city is very open-minded and reminds me a lot of Cologne, especially in terms of diversity. Throughout the city, there are many hip, modern establishments, especially in the artistic field: Music pubs, flagship stores, theaters, Tex-Mex and BBQ pits or stylish hotel bars. Downtown is a bit more businesslike, but thanks to the proximity to 6th Street, it's still pretty vivid in the evenings, while other American downtown areas are hardly awake after 6 p.m. Particularly nice were my walks on South Congress with a view of the Frost Bank Tower, a strangely built

skyscraper that keeps Austin weird. I met some very weird people in this city like this hard-boiled car mechanic who takes a pug for a walk during his lunch break. While I was shopping at Walmart, I met a very tiny man in his 70s wearing a gigantic homemade hat showing Trump's face (off campus most people support Trump in Texas). After all, "keep Austin weird" is the motto in this city and it works for me, too. Take a look at 6th Street and you'll see it with your own eyes.

Spare Time

All in all, there is a great leisure offer in Austin. I present to you my top three activities:

1. Golf: You don't have to be a member of the Austin Country Club to enjoy a few hours on the golf course. Besides the PGA Dell-Technologies Match that takes place annually at the end of March on one of the most beautiful golf courses in Texas, you can also swing your own 3-wood at moderate prices. There are many clubs where you can join a round as a UT student. Ask your fellow MBAs, one is sure to be there on a free Friday morning. My roommate had a subscription to Topgolf, a driving range where you can spend some quality time in the evening with friends and some Miller Lite.
2. BBQ: There's nothing like stopping at Terry Black's BBQ after an extended hike through Barton Creek. If you're ever in the heart of the U.S., you can't miss the 12-hour braised tender brisket or the juicy ribs. A visit to Franklin Barbecue, Black's Barbecue Austin or Stubb's Bar-B-Q is also very high on the list in Austin. Burger lovers will also get their money's worth with a double-double at In-N-Out Burger, or the classics at Whataburger and P. Terry's. My personal favorites in fast food include Torchy's Tacos (the sauces alone are to die for), Pluckers Wing Bar (Fire in the Hole almost brought tears to my face) or Papa John's Pizza.
3. 6th Street: Country, Black music, streets full of party people, bar to bar and club to club - that was my first impression of one of the wildest streets in the USA. From the beginning of the semester, 6th Street is in a state of emergency from Thirsty Thursday until the weekend. Many students and young people spend the night here. It is an ideal atmosphere to get to know people. You should not be shy here, the Americans simply party harder than the Germans. Tip: Vodka soda is a popular drink in the USA and the soda water helps to keep the hangover under control the next morning. If you want to have it a little quieter while partying, you should check out West 6th Street (Little Woodrow's always has live NFL - I watched the Super Bowl here) or Rainey Street (Banger's Sausage House & Beer Garden is a great place to score points as a German and put your beer knowledge to the test).

Travel

Since all full-time MBA candidates in my cohort went on a Global Connections Study Tour in spring term, all MBA courses were cancelled in the week before spring break. This gave me two weeks off from early to mid-March and allowed me to plan a longer trip. Keep in mind that the first midterms are scheduled after spring break. I decided very spontaneously and booked a flight to Chicago. The cheapest airline is Spirit, which offers flights from \$20. Another cheap airline is Southwest Airlines. The flight took three hours and brought me to one of America's largest airports: O'Hare International Airport. I backpacked around Chicago for five days and was thrilled. After almost two months in Texas, I had to get used to the new temperatures - due to the proximity to Lake Michigan, Chicago is very cold in winter - but the bone-chilling cold coupled with the monumental buildings of glass and steel was simply breathtaking for me. Those who know New York will quickly find their way around the Chicago grit. During a walk on Concrete Beach in the north of downtown, I had to compare the two cities. My conclusion: New York and Chicago equally fascinate me. Chicago is cleaner, more orderly and radiates a sense of tranquility; Manhattan, on the other hand, is more vivid, full of energy and versatility.

Following the cold of the Great Lakes, I flew to humid New Orleans. Mardi Gras had just ended, and so more space in the narrow streets of the French Quarter was suddenly available. The business-like hustle of Chicago turned into a vibrant day and night life. Along Bourbon Street, in small restaurants and bars I explored a very European America. Originally, I had planned another visit to Miami, which I had to cancel due to the sudden coronavirus panic arriving in the States. Hotels were shut down; all major events were canceled. So was SXSW (South by Southwest) in Austin, a major international festival consisting of conferences, presentations, etc. in music, film and media. Almost 300,000 visitors come to this ten-day festival every year. Many companies from various industries, e.g. also German car manufacturers, invite MBA students to talk to them. Thus, the festival offers not only personal but also professional benefits.

Texas offers beautiful road trips. Big Bend National Park is a popular destination. For this purpose, MBAs or other exchange students can be found to organize a longer weekend. For those who decide to go on a short trip, a walk-up Mount Bonnell, through Shoal Creek, or along the new boardwalk on the south side of the Colorado River is always worthwhile. I also visited a great rodeo show in San Antonio that was accompanied by a ZZ Top concert on Valentine's day and a couple of Longhorns college basketball games at Frank Erwin Center.

Transportation

Public Transport

After receiving your UT-Card you will get free rides on all bus lines in Austin. The connections to downtown (6th Street) are very good and bus drivers usually answer any questions you may have. It might be complicated to figure out exact routes and departure times, as there is no schedule posted at the bus stops. Depending on the line, some stops may be skipped, especially during rush hours when fast track services operate. At the stations you can check your next departure times by sending a text message to the number displayed at the station.

The city is full of scooters. There is virtually no street without a Lime or Jump. Be aware, American models are slightly faster than German ones, and traffic on the main roads is usually heavy, making it especially dangerous at night. For this reason, Uber and Lyft are most popular and straightforward means of transportation. They are also quite reasonable in price; I spent around \$20 for my ride from campus to the airport.

Own Car

Initially, I had planned to buy a pickup truck for mobility in the city. Texas is known for its pickups. Among the most popular models are Ford F150, Toyota Tacoma and Dodge Ram 1500, with the latter starting at \$2,500. In the market of lemons, though, finding a reliable car for a decent price was quite difficult. Friends from Denmark bought a pickup with a broken fan belt after only a few miles following a two-week search. In any case, get a Carfax and, if you're not familiar with cars, don't buy one from a wholesaler (cars are bought at auctions). Garages in Austin usually offer buyer's checks for \$100, for which they perform an inspection of the vehicle.

Great places to buy a car in Austin are the dealerships Maxwell Ford, Covert Ford and Leif Johnson Ford. You can always find good Ford Mustangs for under \$5,000 there. Moving away from the classic muscle cars, I highly recommend Toyota Corolla. The Corolla is one of the most reliable, most affordable and most sold cars in Texas. At \$2,500, you stand a good chance of finding a decent one.

When buying a car, keep in mind that there are various uncertainties involved in buying and selling within the 5 months stay. Paperwork is sent to the DMV from the dealer or bank at the time of purchase. Even if papers are received without encumbrances, the process of transferring ownership can be weeks. Buying from or selling to a private party is more complicated. Usually, a joint appointment at the registration office is required. What is still a pain when buying your own car are high insurance premiums. The driving experience accumulated in Germany is not acknowledged by American insurance companies. Comprehensive insurance costs about \$450 per month, liability only costs about \$120 per month. Inexpensive insurance providers are Progressive and Geico.

Rental Car

Should you need a car occasionally, you can use the ZipCar services. On and along the campus, e.g. near the Turtle Pond, Toyota Corollas can be rented by the half hour for \$25 an hour. Registration and rentals are handled online or through an app. Another good service is Turo. It's a great way to rent cars for a day to a couple of weeks. Starting at \$30 per day, it ranges all the way up to more than \$100 and allows you to test drive cars like the Dodge RAM 1500 SLT or Dodge Charger RT 5.7 V8 HEMI. ZipCar and Turo both offer reasonable insurance and cancellation options at short notice.

Conclusion

For me, the United States of America is the greatest country in the world, and spending time in the Lone Star State has just strengthened my conviction. McCombs School of Business has allowed me to build my strengths, broaden my horizons and develop an open mindset. The courses that I chose were held by exceptionally good speakers and had been very impressive and helpful. The networking with amazing people from all over the world was incredibly fun and brought me to the next rung on the career ladder. I think back to every day at UT with pleasure. "Once a Longhorn, always a Longhorn", that's how Texas Exes feel all over the world and I am no exception. I never had such a great sense of belongingness before. The people I met at UT and in Austin see the world as a positive one and go after their chances. Living in Texas I felt somehow what most people refer to the American way of life.

Appendix

MBA Course List Spring Term 2020

Unique Number	Dept	Course Number	Course Description	Instructor
2490	ACC	380K	7-Financial Statement Analysis	Badolato, P
2520	ACC	380K	8-Petroleum Acc: Prin/Proc/Iss	Hays, J
2855	BGS	380C	Strategic Corp Communication	Patterson, J
2860	BGS	380E	Global Political Economy	Gawande, K
2875	BGS	381M	Social/Ethical Resp Of Busn	Murray, P
2890	BGS	382	Corporate Political Strategy	Richter, B
2895	BGS	388	Behavioral Economics	Irwin, J
3530	FIN	294	1-Advanced Corporate Finance	Schneider, J
3554	FIN	294	5-Financial Technology-Mba	Fracassi, C
3590	FIN	394	Mergers And Acquisitions	Almazan, A
3600	FIN	394	7-Raising Capital	Almazan, A
3605	FIN	394	10-New Venture Finance	Alexander, J
3615	FIN	394	17-Adv Valuatn & Fincl Modlmg	Butler, J
3620	FIN	394	19-Econ Princpls Mgr Decisions	Hatfield, J
3655	FIN	297	1-Investment Theory & Practice	Brown, K
3700	FIN	397	Quant Methods/Invstmnt Analy	Schneider, J
3725	FIN	397	4-Financial Risk Management	Ronn, E
3735	FIN	397	10-Envir/Social/Gov Investing	Starks, L
5420	I B	395	Intl Business Fellows Seminar	Dodd, D
3045	LEB	380	26-Law For Entrepreneurs	Meakin, C
3055	LEB	380	39-Energy Law: Reg Energy Mkts	Spence, D
5000	MAN	383	Advocacy	Daly, J
5025	MAN	383	20-Art And Sci Of Negotiation	Brodsky, A
5120	MAN	385	Enterprise Of Technology	Nichols, S
5125	MAN	385	Global Management	Doggett, J
5130	MAN	385	Healthcare Business Ecosystem	Loescher, K
5145	MAN	385	Management Sustainability Prac	Doggett, J
5150	MAN	385	Managing Diverse Workforce	Murphy, S
5160	MAN	385	Mng Corp Rstr/Turnarnd/Bnkrtty	Courter, S
5170	MAN	385	Perf And Sports Analytics	Goldsberry, K
5175	MAN	385	Pharmaceutcl Entrepreneurship	Walkow, J
5180	MAN	385	Social Entrepreneurship	Thornborrow, J
5185	MAN	385	Technology Strategy	Polidoro, F

5190	MAN	385	Texas Venture Labs Practicum	Butler, J
5200	MAN	385	22-New Venture Creation	Courter, S
5205	MAN	385	23-Intro To Entrprnshp	Pritchett, K
5215	MAN	385	24-Entrepreneurial Growth	Doggett, J
5220	MAN	385	62-Corporate Governance	Cunningham, W
4140	MIS	381N	15-Intro To Electron Commerce	Whinston, A
4160	MIS	382N	Healthcare Tech Innovation	Bardhan, I
4180	MIS	382N	13-Pred Anly And Data Mining	Saar-Tsechansky, M
5745	MKT	382	Integrated Mkt Communications	Hoyer, W
5760	MKT	382	4-Strategic Marketing	Walls, S
5770	MKT	382	29-Consumer Behav Digital Wrld	Ward, A
5780	MKT	382	32-Creativity And Leadership	Raghunathan, R
5785	MKT	382	36-Pricing And Channels	Bentzin, B
5795	MKT	382	37-Strategic Branding	Brister, S
5800	MKT	382	38-Science Of Good Business	Kumar, A
5805	MKT	382	53-Analytical Tools For Mkt	Mahajan, V
4460	O M	386	Supply Chain Analytics	Gutierrez, G
4465	O M	386	4-Operations Practicum	Anderson, M
3865	R E	386	2-Real Estate Investment Decis	Smitheal, J
4690	STA	380	Time Series Forecasting	Shively, T

Housing Proposals

Property Name	Equipment	Distance to Rowling Hall	Rent per month
ION Austin	Above average	5 min	\$1100
Rio West	Above average	7 min	\$1084
The Block	Unfurnished	10 min	\$799
Nueces2400	Above average	10 min	\$1335
Skyloft	Above average	10 min	\$1144
Signature1909	Above average	10 min	\$1154
Quarters	Average	15 min	\$1125
Villas	Above average	20 min	\$1100