

Dear SHHOers,

This letter is written a month after my exchange at Brown. This exchange to Brown has been one of the most memorable experiences that the college has provided me. I would like to share my impression of Brown to encourage you, my fellow college students, to enjoy this precious opportunity and make a difference in your life.

Brown

Brown puts a great emphasis on undergraduate education and it embraces diversity and flexibility. According to statistics, Brown has students from more than one hundred countries, which means that you are not alone. You will always be surprised that how exotic your friends' family tree can be. The diversity of Brown is also demonstrated in its curriculum. Students are allowed to design their major(s) and take courses as desired. With the course list of over 100 pages and different class sizes ranging from 10-300, it can be quite challenging to narrow down



the 3-5 classes you will be taking. Every time I looked at the course list, I always find something interesting. However, visiting students/ exchange students are rare at Brown (10-15 every

semester). So we are unique in that sense. Also, because of the scarcity, we normally have better chance to get into whatever classes that we are interested.

Also, there are over 300 student groups (<https://mygroups.brown.edu/>), countless events and supporting facilities that we can participate or utilize. You can even start your own group/club at Brown if you are interested. When I was at Brown, I was fascinated by the HealthLeads (long term volunteering @ hospital), Salsa Club, Boardroom dancing, and languages exchange program. There is a festival in the beginning of the 2nd semester where some clubs are gathering at a particular place to recruit members (like an info day).

As for the flexibility, typically, the Add & Drop period at Brown lasts before the final. So you can take the course for the entire semester and drop it right before the final without any penalty. Moreover, there are two grading options in Brown. One is S/Nc (Pass or Fail) and the other is letter grading (A/B/C). There are certain classes are compulsory S/Nc, otherwise, you are free to choose the grading option.

Brown students are generally very warm-hearted and helpful. As they are elites from all over the world, they can also be pretty competitive (at least those in my class). They are also very talented in many different aspects.

Location + Weather

Providence is one hour away from Boston and three hours away from New York. Brown Campus has DownCity Bus and SafeRide. Down town Providence has a bus hub and a train station. There is also an airport nearby. So, travelling from Providence to other places can be really convenient.



Winter at Providence can be cold and long. But when the spring comes, the campus is absolutely spectacular. Flowers of various colors are blooming chronologically. Spring is no doubt my favorite season at Brown.

Food & Dining @ Providence

Since visiting/exchange students have to stay on meal plan, I ate mostly at Vdub (Vernery-Woolley) or Ratty (Sharpe Refectory). These two cafeterias serve all-you-can-eat buffet (including desert, salad, pizzas, pasta, hamburger, sandwiches, fruits and some main dishes). The menu in the cafeterias changes on a daily basis. Though the meal plan is quite pricy, admittedly, dining at cafeterias is definitely a great place to meet up with friends. There are also some other late-night eateries on campus (e.g. Jo's). Restaurants on Thayer St. or downtown provide good alternative dining options if you are tired of canteen food.

Dorm Life

Well, there are a variety of dorms at Brown. Some are brand new (e.g. Miller Hall) and some are fairly old (e.g. Graduate center). Unfortunately, we can't choose where to live and whom to live with. Normally, we will be randomly assigned to a single room. I had a single room in a suite at Graduate center. Life was mostly quiescent except once or twice rock-music parties downstairs.

After Brown—Academic Training (summer)

If you feel that 5 months at Brown/USA is too short for you, right now you can lengthen your stay at Brown/USA (not just the courtesy period) by applying Academic Training through Office of International Student and Scholar Services (OISSS). The requirements for Academic Training are 1) you have found an intern or a research opportunity 2)you can show that you have enough financial support. If the Academic Training is approved, then you will receive a new DS2019 form with a new date on it (if you are holding a Chinese Passport with J1 visa). Though the entire process can be tedious and extremely slow, I have personally proved this Academic Training application is applicable.

There are more in Brown than what I wrote. So go and explore them yourselves! An incredible journey awaits you!

Yuqi Tan 谭玉琪

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