

## Exchange Experience at University of Richmond (Fall 2013)

---

### **The First Week in Richmond**

Before the semester begins, you will receive a handbook and the orientation schedule from the university. It includes all the activities you will be doing in the first week with other international students. If you arrive on the first day of the orientation, there will be staff from the university to help you with the taxi service at the airport. You will be sharing a taxi with three to four other students who arrive on the same day to the campus, and the fare will be USD 10 each. However, this service is only available on the first day of the orientation until a certain time in the evening.

Once you arrive at the campus, the first thing to do is to check in and receive your university ID card, room key and mailbox key. The dormitory, room number and roommate are already assigned since before the semester starts on the university's bannerweb. You will receive an almost empty room with beds (no bed sheets and pillows,) desks, chairs, dressers and a bookshelf. After dinner, the school will



provide a shuttle service to a mall, either Target or Wal-Mart, nearby for you to purchase any needed personal items. However, before your shopping, my suggestion is to check out the 'welcome closet', which has many items such as lamps, laundry baskets, hangers, pillows etc. that you can borrow for the whole semester.

After the first day, you will have quite a busy week that fills with activities. There will be an orientation registration, an appointment with the Health Center, phone and computer setup service, campus tour, and A LOT of listening to faculty members talking about rules and facilities. During the night, many international students will have gathering and parties at 'campus apartments' almost every night of the first week. This is a very good time for you to meet new people and make friends!

### **Classes and Studying**

Most students at University of Richmond take four to five courses per semester. Most classes will meet for one hour and 15 minutes each time, two times a week. The workload varies depending on each class, but it is likely that they will require reading before class and class participation. The course codes can roughly identify the difficulty of each class. Courses that start with number 4 will be more difficult than those with number 3 and 2,

respectively. For example, FIN 415 is normally more difficult and demanding than FIN 331.

Classes here are quite small with the maximum of 30-40 students. In these small classes, professors can pay attention to every student and usually remember everyone's names by the third week of class. Professors are always willing to answer any questions during class and have appointments with students outside of class in their office hours.

If you have difficulties with class materials, writing papers, or preparing for presentations, the school provides you with many facilities that can help you with all of these problems. The Writing Center can help with your papers from brainstorming the ideas to editing the papers. The Speech Center is there to prepare you for either individual or group presentations. The Career Service Center will help look at your resume and cover letter and prepare you for job interviews. These are only a few examples of the facilities University of Richmond provides to aid your academic lives. Other facilities that you might need can be found on the school website. [www.richmond.edu](http://www.richmond.edu)

Textbooks and other class materials are very expensive in the United States. Some brand-new textbooks can cost as much as USD 200-250. Make sure that the classes you are taking actually require them before you purchase. Textbook renting and used textbooks are the choices that can help you reduce your expense. One of the websites I used was [www.chegg.com](http://www.chegg.com).

### **Lifestyle and Activities**

Almost every student spends most of their time on campus, especially during weekdays, since about 90 percent of the students live on campus. Most of the time you will be eating on campus, especially in the dining hall. Therefore, the university requires every student who lives in the university dormitories to join the meal plan. The meal plan consists of 17 meals per week at the dining hall and 700 dining dollars for the whole semester. The dining dollars and meal swipes are put in each student's university ID card, which is called spider card. The dining dollars work like money but can be spent only at restaurants and stores on campus; except at the bookstore.



They are many facilities and activities provided on and off campus, which are especially great for those who enjoy sports and adventures. For those who like exercising, the gym is spectacular with various types of equipment for cardio workout and lifting. They also provide many fitness classes such as

spinning, swimming, and zumba. Squash and basketball courts are also available at the gym with the equipment provided. The gym also organizes outdoor activities such as hiking, kayaking, and water rafting a few times per semester. These outdoor activities normally cost around USD 10-15 for each activity. In addition, if you enjoy watching sport games like football or basketball, there will be one playing almost every week right on campus!

Richmond city itself is quite historical, quiet and small. There are many museums, monuments and shopping malls around the city. The university provides the shuttle service to certain places every one or two hours depending on the place and schedule. However, there are not many things to do outside the campus. Many students only go out for meals or shopping during the weekends. Some international students might travel to other big cities nearby such as Washington D.C. University of Richmond is perfect for exchange students who enjoy the campus life where you can always spend time with friends and do something together on campus.



# University of Richmond Testimonial

---

University of Richmond, also known as U of R, or UR, is located on the border of Richmond and Henrico County, Virginia. As a private university, the campus is quite small compared to other universities in the United States and there are approximately 4,000 students. University of Richmond is one of the top 25 happiest colleges in the United States and also has high academic rankings.

## Your First Week at Richmond



Once you arrive at Richmond, you are in for an extremely busy first few weeks. You will be required to participate in a lot of group activities, tours, and seminars. This is the perfect time to talk and make friends with other exchange students. The university will also take you to Target, a retail store, where you can buy bed sheets, pillows, lamps, and any other equipment you will need to settle in. University of Richmond also has a Welcome Closet which is where you can find items that were donated by previous exchange students. Grabbing items

from the Welcome Closet is a great way to save money but you have to be fast as things run out pretty quickly.

## Classes at Richmond

At University of Richmond, you are required to show up for classes. Participation is a big part of your grade so make sure you always give input during class time. Reading the required texts will help you participate and understand the content in class. The class size is very small and each professor will try their best to get to know every student. Professors will also have office hours where you can go talk to them personally. They love it when you show up at these hours. This can help gain you extra participation points.

Textbooks are extremely expensive in America. If you want to save money, slugbooks.com is a website for comparing prices. You can find the cheapest place to rent or buy textbooks through this site.

## Campus Life

### Dining:

Dining is probably one of the best thing about this university. You will be required to purchase a meal plan which will provide you with 17 meals per week and 700 dining dollars. The 17 meals are to be used up at the dining hall. University of Richmond has an amazing dining hall. There are many different types of food to



choose from and a huge dessert station. If you ever get bored of the dining hall, you can use your dining dollars to buy meals from other restaurants and cafes inside the university. The food at this university is extremely delicious. (One quick tip: Students do not actually say “dining hall”, they call it “d hall”.)

#### Housing:

As an exchange student, you will be required to live on campus. The university will look at your personality, lifestyle, and studying habits to place you in the most appropriate dorm and choose your roommate. Every dorm is different and there are different room formats within each dorm. There is a laundry room at the basement of every dorm and the machines operate for free.

#### Transportation:

University of Richmond has a great shuttle service that will take you to different parts of the city. These shuttles will take you to downtown, malls, retail stores, and places where you can experience nature. The shuttles are free of charge but make sure to arrive on time so that you do not miss them.

#### Other facilities:

The Boatwright Library is a great place for you to study and research. The library is opened 24 hours a day. It is great for doing group work and individual study. It also has study rooms for you to book and a place to rent DVDs and audiobooks.

Another cool facility is the Weinstein Center, which is a fitness center. It is opened until midnight and has many different fitness equipment for you to choose from. The building is huge and the best part is it's free. Spending time at the gym is crucial if you want to avoid gaining too much weight.

Finally, you can also visit the Tyler Hayne's Commons which is a great place to relax and hang out with your friends. You can play pool and foosball, watch television, and play video games.

#### Activities:

A great way to make friends and use your free time wisely is to join clubs. There is a huge variety of clubs such outdoors club, dance clubs, sports clubs, and so much more. When you sign up for these clubs, you will receive e-mails about meeting times and other activities hosted by those clubs. You should also check your e-mail for updates on different events happening in the city and other activities you can participate in. Another great activity is to go watch a sports game. As a student, you can watch these games for free. This is a great way to experience American culture and school spirit.

