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Lappeenranta University of Technology

**School of Business**

**Exchange report**

International Services

**Exchange Report  
San Francisco State University,  
USA  
Spring 2013**

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## 1 Introduction

This report will cover the exchange period in San Francisco State University in the spring 2013. The report is written by two exchange students from LUT; Kiti Friman and Maija-Leena Hyppölä.

Kiti is a 5<sup>th</sup> year student from International Marketing Management (MIMM) program. Maija is a first year student from MIMM's Master Program. Maija did her BBA in Mikkeli, Aalto School of Economics.

## 2 Practicalities

### 2.1. Flights

San Francisco is literally on the other side of the world for Finnish people, so the flights can be a bit expensive. The prices vary between 650€-900€ in the beginning of the year for a round trip. As with any other flights, it's recommended to book the flights as early as possible. San Francisco has 3 airports but the main airport is SFO.

### 2.2. Transportation from SFO

The taxi to the city is approximately \$40-50,. Remember to include the tips (10-20%). San Francisco has a decent train network and it's also possible to take a BART train to the city. The cost of BART ticket to downtown is about \$10. It's also possible to pre-order a shuttle to the airport.

### 2.3. Transportation in the city

One word: Muni. Muni includes the bus and the metro / tram. It's recommended to buy a blue Clipper card to get around in the city. The fee for unlimited transportation within the city area is \$60 for a month. It's also possible to buy \$20 to the Clipper card. Fee for one trip is \$2 and you can travel with it for 2

hours. One thing to notice is that if you're going to pay cash in the Muni, you should have exactly the 2 dollars with you, since they don't give out any change. Give a fiver, loose a fiver.

The Muni travels until 1 o'clock in the evening. After this, you can travel by Night Owl. More information: [www.511.org](http://www.511.org).

### **3. San Francisco State University**

The university has two campuses. The other campus offers courses for the bachelor's-level students and is located above of Daly City. Grad courses for MBA candidates are offered in the Downtown Campus, on Market Street. The downtown campus itself is located within Westfield Shopping Mall and it's hard to miss, since it's in the very heart of the city.

#### **3.1. Courses**

When leaving for an exchange from the MIMM program, it's recommended that the courses will be MBA-level courses. Here are the courses we took:

##### ***Brand Management, MKTG 875 (MBA), Professor Bhat***

Brand Management is a seminar course that the students take during the spring when they are graduating. In other words, if you take this course, be prepared to do extensive work both inside and outside the classroom. It's a seminar course that means that discussion is both encouraged and required. The professor is very qualified and knows a lot of the subject. He also requires A-class work and participation from everyone. If you take this class, you will definitely learn a lot but will find yourself spending a couple days every week just to be prepared for next week's lesson. Every week students are required to read some chapters from the book and many articles assigned by the professor. The in-class participation is often encouraged with cold calling, so be prepared. In addition to

the lessons, there's an essay and a group work. Clients for these group works are provided by the professor. The group project runs throughout the semester. If you are interested in brand management and will want to be a professional in the field some day, you should definitely take this course. Just be prepared to switch some beach days to study days.

### ***Management Principles and Organizational Behavior, Prof. Tosti-Kharas***

MPOB is a good class. It covers topics from organizational behavior to leadership, motivation, communication and power and politics within an organization. The teacher is a very charismatic woman whose teaching methods are very inspirational. This is a course that the MBA candidates take in their first year of studies (out of two). There's a group project also. The teams find their case organization by themselves and you can choose which ever San Franciscan company you wish. For the group project, extensive primary data collection is required. After identifying some key issues requiring improvement within the organization, secondary data collection is conducted. After this, recommendations will be provided by the group to the company. Some groups invited their case companies to the presentation. Exams measure very effectively the learning of the course concepts. There are two exams: midterm and a final. Both of them include multiple choice questions and open questions.

One defining feature of the course is extensive preparation. There's a course book, different science articles and about eight 20-pages Harvard cases. These Harvard cases are done before class and either done together as a group in the class or they are done individually and handed out to the teacher prior to the class. Again, if you take this course, please be prepared to spend a lot of outside-class studying and preparing so you will perform well.

### ***Public Relations MKTG 867 (MBA), Professor Papyrina***

PR is a nice course. It consists of lectures and two group assignments. The other assignment is a case study given by the teacher. The other group project is

bigger. The group can choose a company that they do a PR Plan for. The PR Plan is a basic 20-30 pages report followed by a presentation. This course doesn't require primary data collection so the plan can be done for a bigger company that doesn't necessarily have presence in California. There are also two tests; midterm and a final. The teacher tends to put emphasis on class participation, therefore many multiple choice questions cover topics that can't always be found in the material, but that have been covered in the class room. It's really important especially for this course to open your ears and actively listen in order to do well on the exams. The PR course opened our eyes in new ways. We would really recommend taking this course if PR is interesting, since not many business schools offer that in Finland.

***Services Marketing, MKTG 644 (under-grad.), Professor Cohen***

This course is taught by Neil Cohen, a great marketing professional with a long career in services marketing. This is the course you do not only learn what is in the book, you learn a lot from real-life examples, both from the professor and the visiting professionals.

The workload is not too heavy: one written group work consisting of two sections, and mid-term and final exams. The written report is fun to do. You choose a service company and you analyze what they are doing (strengths and weaknesses). Then you do a presentation, and you get feedback from the professor and the class. Then you can improve it before you turn it in. The other part of this group work is to suggest an additional service for the same company. Again, you will present the new idea, and justify your decisions, and you get feedback on your ideas. This is a fun and very good method to actually learn when you get feedback and get to improve your ideas (without getting a bad grade even though it needed improvement).

There are two books for this course, but we don't recommend buying the totally over-priced Service Marketing book, since you are fine with listening in class and the power point slides.

***Cross-Cultural Business Innovation, IBUS 531 (under-grad.), Professor Lee***

This was a really fun course, at least for those who like to get involved with idea-creation and innovation. During this course, you will learn about idea-development and successful businesses. You'll get to create ideas yourself and within a group. There are no exams in this course, but a lot of weekly exercises, both individual and group-related, so it takes some time to prepare for the classes. There are also one small individual presentation where you will present one given company and their success factors. Creativity is always appreciated in these presentations, so it does not have to be a typical boring company overview. All in all, this course with its professor is the place to try something different, since here nothing is ever turned down.

There is also two bigger group works, not big in terms of writing but in terms of time-consumption. The first work is to teach the class a given method or related issue concerning innovation. This includes presentation that has to also include a workshop exercise for the class that demonstrates the taught topic. It is interesting and fun and demands totally different approach to presenting since you have to consider it more from the customer/learning student's point of view: How they learn best?

The other group work goes on in sections. The main task is to create the "Next big thing" to the market. You will create an idea, which you present and justify to the professor and class, and they will critique it, and you go back to your group for several weeks to enhance it. In the final presentation, it should be refined to its best possible form. This is also a fun task, and the ideas are allowed to be a bit crazy, although the professor is pretty honest with her opinions. She does not say no, though, but she will challenge.

During the course, you will often get individual tasks to prepare for the class. There are three written (evaluated) assignments that are not long, but takes a bit time. Moreover, there are several small assignments, that are not evaluated but if the class votes them to be best ideas, you will get extra points to your grade. These are quick to do, for example, you might be asked to take a picture and make a tagline for SFSU School of business, so again you get to be creative. A great course! Highly recommended if you have any interest in doing creative stuff.

### **3.2. IEEC**

International Education Exchange Council, IEEC, is an organization for international students and for SFSU's students who wish to, or have, studied abroad. IEEC organizes parties and events throughout the semester. Every exchange student is required to take part in IEEC. There are different ways you can join IEEC, such as Ambassador Committee, which means you can either spend an hour in the week in the office of international affairs or take part in "tabling" which means that you will be hosting IEEC's info table outdoors in the campus area, every week for one hour. Other committees of choice are Creative Team and Events Team, to name a few. SFSU wants to make sure every student has a social setting.

### **3.3. Orientation Week and Semester**

The spring semester starts in the end of January or in the beginning of February. Before that, there's a week-long orientation week organized for J1 and F1 – students. SFSU recommends that the students arrive in San Francisco one week prior to the orientation week. We arrived 2 days and 4 days before the orientation week and felt like that was early enough. This, of course, depends on your housing situation; do you have to search for an apartment and live in a hostel/hotel or do you have an apartment ready for you already.

The semester ends in the third week of May. Some courses may finish early. You can see your courses timetables from SFSU bulletin.

## 4. Housing

Make no mistake; housing is expensive in San Francisco. The Bay Area is small and many people want to live there. Many students share a house or an apartment. Remember to ask yourself if you are willing to live with many international people before you go, or do you want to pay more and rent out a studio. The prices vary a lot. From our experience, you will not find a furnished room under 650\$ a month. Remember to include that to your budget. The prices of the studios can be from 1100\$ and up. We recommend you to search for a furnished place with utilities (PG&E, garbage, internet, water, heat, gas) included. It will be much easier if you don't need to do these contracts by yourself, but just to pay that along the rent to the landlord.

SFSU sends out a housing guide prior to arriving to San Francisco. They recommend Ashbury-Height's area, the Mission and Sunset. We strongly recommend Sunset, both Inner and Outer Sunset. It's an Asian vibe neighborhood that totally shuts down after nine. The area is safe and it near to all public transportation. Also, if you like to run or walk, Sunset is located just below the Golden Gate Park, which is 20% bigger than Central Park in New York and is the heart of San Francisco. In Golden Gate Park you can see buffalos, horses, turtles and many birds.

The best places to find housing is Craigslist and SFSU Facebook group. Remember not to wire any money for deposit unless you are sure about the flat. You can also ask from the people that use to go to SFSU before you.

### TIPS

- Remember, you have to buy all your course books yourself, the school library doesn't offer them. Some of the books might be quite expensive so remember to put that in your travel budget. Some of the books you can sell back to the library at the end of the semester.

- 1 ECTS = 0.5 Units. The courses at SFSU are usually 3 units.
- Avoid Tenderloin. Tenderloin is an area located in downtown of the city. Some hostels and hotels are also situated in that area. Don't go there, especially if you are alone. Tenderloin is packed with sketchy people. Homeless people, drug addicts, you name it. Avoid it. Really.
- Take pictures of your apartment when you move in.
- San Francisco can be pretty chilly in winter. Bring your woolly socks.
- If you like your sheets the Finnish way, bring them with you. The Americans don't have the kinds of sheets that can be rolled around your duvet. (pussilakana)
- Remember to take care of your insurances and make sure your vaccinations are up to date. SFSU requires you to show your vaccination card when enrolling to the school and for many Finnish people, that has been given to you from your school when you were 15. If the card is lost somewhere in your moving stuff, this can take a while to track down. (Experience talking)