

# The Life Report of The University of Florida

## The University Introduction and Information

The University of Florida is an American public land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant research university located on a 2,000-acre (8.1 km<sup>2</sup>) campus in Gainesville, Florida. The university traces its historical origins to 1853, and has operated continuously on its present Gainesville campus since September 1906. The University of Florida is ranked 17th overall among all public national universities in the current 2013 U.S. News & World Report rankings, and consistently ranks within the top 100 universities worldwide. The University of Florida is considered a "Public Ivy", a designation reserved for the top public universities in the United States.

The University of Florida is an elected member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), an organization composed of sixty-one American and Canadian research universities. It is also one of three "research flagship universities" within the State University System of Florida, as designated by the Florida Legislature.



It is the second largest Florida university by student population, and is the seventh largest single-campus university in the United States with 49,589 students enrolled for the fall 2011 semester. The University of Florida is home to sixteen academic colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes. It offers multiple graduate professional programs—including business administration, engineering, law and medicine—on one contiguous campus, and administers 123 master's degree programs and seventy-six doctoral degree programs in eighty-seven schools and departments.

The University of Florida's intercollegiate sports teams, commonly known by their "Florida Gators" nickname, compete in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I and the Southeastern Conference (SEC). In their 106-year history, the university's varsity sports teams have won twenty-nine national team championships, twenty-four of which are NCAA titles, and Gator athletes have won 243 individual national championships.

## Relevant Information about courses

Exchange students have to choose their courses a few months before the semester begins. They will need to discuss the desired courses with the advisor. Almost each course has limited seats, so if they really need to take that course, they will have to finish the application and submit all the required materials online as soon as possible. The minimum required credit hours are 12, and

the maximum are 18. Take myself as an example. I took 13 credits and had been already very busy.

The Warrington Business College provides a variety of business courses, including accounting, marketing, finance, real estate, general business and information system. For example, I took Professional Business Speaking and learned how to make public speeches. I also acquired some interviewing and speaking skills in class. Another course I took was Professional Business Writing. The main professor taught one-hour lectures each week. Students also needed to attend breakout sessions where the other instructor taught specific writing skills and concepts.

### **Life and Culture**

Dining out is quite expensive in the US—One meal at a restaurant could cost \$10~15 including gratuity.

Therefore, I usually choose to cook myself. To buy groceries, I usually go to Publix, a famous supermarket that provides some “buy 1 get one1” products. Students can take bus #12 to arrive there.



The UF provides some rooms at the Weaver Hall for international exchange students. If you want to stay at the dorm, you would have to complete the application early. Fortunately, I got the chance to stay at the dorm and had an American roommate. The cost was around \$2200~2300 per semester. I recommend staying at the dorm because it's more convenient and easy to make new friends. If you couldn't stay at the dorm or just want to stay at an apartment, you would need to contact the housing office or search information yourself on some Facebook apartment clubs.



The bus system—RTS—is quite good either on campus or in the city. If you live at the dorm, you could take bus #121 to most classrooms holding business course. You could also check out

the RTS website to download the complete bus schedules. The bus fare is free for the UF students with valid Gator1 student ID cards.



## **Things that require particular attention**

### **Baggage Weight**

I brought too much stuff to Florida and still didn't use all of them - I carried 2 suitcases and 1 carry-on with me, and it was honestly inconvenient when I went traveling. So, it would be wiser to bring as little as possible. It would also be more convenient if you could bring only 1 suitcase because you would have less burden when you travel after the semester finishes. Some items that you could bring more are socks and underwear because you need to change them almost every day. You could also bring a formal suit in case you need to attend any formal party. On the other hand, some unnecessary items that you do not need to bring include pots and battery because Walmart sells most things at reasonable prices.

### **Safety**

Unlike Taiwan, where you can hang around at nights and do not have to worry your safety, it is very dangerous to walk around at nights in the U.S. Once in a while, robbery, harassment and even murder are reported to the UFPD in Gainesville. First, the UFPD is the local police office and reports alerts to UF students. It is important not to walk alone or go out at nights. If you really need to go out at night, please call SNAP, a police supported van, and it will arrange to give you a ride home.

### **Small Gifts**

Before I flew to Florida, I had prepared some small gifts about Taiwan and pineapple cakes. These small gifts include small badges and post cards depicting the beautiful scenery of Taiwan. Pineapple cakes is a classic snack and I believe many American would find them tasty. You do not necessarily have to buy expensive gifts. As long as you spend time and show your sincerity, the receivers can feel it and be happy for that.

When I arrived in Gainesville, UF students who received the gifts or ate the cakes all enjoyed it very much. It would be nice to give them small gifts to show your friendliness. After all, you will stay there for the first time, and it is nice to build up friendship by giving small gifts. They will also love to help you in return if you need their assistance.

### **Book Air Tickets Early**

Because the U.S. land is vast, it often requires travelers to take airplanes to reach another city or destination. To effectively save cost of air tickets, it is important to book them around 1 month earlier than your departing date. There are many useful websites for ticket information. Some famous websites include Priceline and Expedia. They have complete information about the prices and dates of flights of many airlines. You could also check these information on the official websites of the airlines. Southwest, in my opinion, has better service and cheaper price, especially you need to carry any suitcase to fly domestically. Other airlines charge passengers if they carry any suitcase, so Southwest would be a top choice under that circumstance.