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Tel:\* Zeitraum: **September-Dezember 11**  
Programm: **Hessen-Massachusetts** Fächer: Education/Psychology

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Datum: 29.2.2012



„Umass Dartmouth, here we come!“

That was the only thought I had until I realized that there were several steps which I had to complete to be eligible for the airplane! The **process with the visa** was indeed a time-consuming work.

Therefore, I strongly recommend to start as early as possible with the application of the visa.

I booked my flight prior to the day of the orientation meeting at Umass Dartmouth at the Boston Logan Airport. It would be clever to first keep in touch with the school's international office because in our case, we got the offer from the school to pick us up from the Boston Logan Airport.

**The orientation** was well organized- in my opinion. We had enough orientation leaders who helped us in every way. The two to three meeting sessions included opportunities such as the Get-To-Know- with other international students from all over the world. Besides, we received a brief explanation about the american school system, laws concerning the drinking behavior and a lot more about the so called ‚culture shock‘.

The orientation organization even arranged a bus trip to New Bedford and took us to Target where we were able to buy all the facilities for our stay, such as bed sheets, blankets, shampoo...just everything! The reason why I mention this is, there is absolutely no need to bring all these items from Germany (as I did). Very unnecessary.

**The first week of the school** was a time which clearly needed get used to it. At a first glance, the school campus seemed so big and confusing at the same time. The school has a CVPS, LARTS and the Engineering building, including the Dion and a separate Textile building.

The university of Massachusetts Dartmouth is located in North Dartmouth. Starting with a short detailed introduction of North Dartmouth, Dartmouth was first settled by the Puritans in 1650. The first fact that I have known is that North Dartmouth is surrounded by many Cape Verdeans. The Cape Verdeans has its culture that blends West African and Portuguese elements in unique and moving ways. Therefore, UMass Dartmouth offers 11 its own portugese community at UMass as well.

I decided to live **on campus** for three reasons. First of all, I wanted to get in touch with as many students as possible and secondly, not to be late in class and thirdly to profit from all the extra curricular activities which the school has gently offered. I really enjoyed the events such as the AIDS Beneficial and the Diwali Indian event.



After my exchange program, I decided to do an internship at an american highschool in New Bedford which has made me to live off-campus. But all in all, for students, who plan to stay merely for one semester at UMass Dartmouth, I do recommend to live on campus. The food you get from the eating hall was not that bad as I expected. The eating hall called ‚Marketplace‘ has been renovated which means that the location is even more comfortable to sit in and chat with friends. The food they serve at Marketplace is very diverse. A salad bar, pizza, burger and french fries will be served mostly everyday but they also have other tasty foods 😊

If you are still thinking of living **off-campus**, I lived during my internship period in New Bedford which was pretty close from the N.B. Bus Station at Foster Street. I shared my apartment with another person and paid 400 \$/ month . From the New Bedford Bus Station, there is the Route 9 Bus that goes directly to the school campus center every hour but only during the weeks. Living without a car, as I did was quite possible, especially if you make a lot of friendships with people who own a car, but can be very inconvenient as well.

The New Bedford Downtown has lots of different affordable pubs and galleries which should be explored at least once. **Other attraction places** I want to recommend are Providence (Malls), Cape Cod (Lighthouses), Marthas Vineyard (Beach) and of course Boston. If you still get tired of these cities/towns, there is still New York which merely takes four hours from Boston.



Concerning the **school courses**, I had already chosen my courses from Germany but when I got at Umass Dartmouth, some courses were not offered anymore. I took several more courses to be able to make my drop-off decisions easier. The professors are mostly very easily approachable by any concerns. The explanation about our exchange program status makes it easier to let you still get in full-occupied classes. The classes in general included a lot of participation. The final grade was calculated by active participation, exams and also by extra assignments which was given as homeworks.

All in all, to make a conclusion, for me personally, the studying abroad was more than worth it. I was able to improve my english skills in many different ways and to see myself in a different living situation. I learned to be more diligent, to make appropriate decisions, to learn not to spend money lavishly and so on. The americans showed me how to open myself with an open mind.

I am very glad that I made this experience. I can only recommend to study abroad before graduation. 😊