Visa Application:

- I found the visa application process to the USA quite complicated and long. My recommendation for exchange students who have never obtained one before is:

  1. Apply for the visa as soon as possible to give yourself time if anything goes wrong
  2. Spend the time upfront to read all the steps involved, and cross reference the information you receive from the university with the US embassy so you are clear on what is required, and
  3. I would make a timeline of the key dates for the visa process so you do not forget any steps along the way!

- Overall the entire cost of the visa was around $600.

Enrolment Procedure and recommended subjects:

- The University of Chicago uses a bidding or auction system. We were allocated 10,000 points, and some subjects go for 20,000 e.g. Entrepreneurial Finance & Private Equity with Steven Kaplan. Subjects which do not fill up, will not cost you any points. Some of the more popular subjects include:

  - Cases in Financial Management (Very useful for analysing and understanding the financial decisions companies make and why they may do so)
  - Accounting and Financial Analysis II - Mergers and Acquisitions (Haresh Sapra is an amazing lecturer and makes an accounting subject very interesting!)
  - Entrepreneurial Finance & Private Equity (Most local students save up most of their points from two years of study to get into this subject - very low chance of getting in)
  - Managerial Decision Making (The George Wu class is the most popular and that fills up very quickly)
  - Commercializing Innovation (Really interesting but 16+ hours required per week!)

- Remembering the key dates for the different bidding sessions was very important. You have to be patient with the bidding process. Often popular subjects can free up in the later rounds of bidding as people drop out for various reasons and the remaining spots for the subjects can go for quite a low number of points.
- As this entire process is done online, it is important to have all your passwords and online access to the enrolment sites and email exchange setup before you leave.

Workload at exchange school:

- Generally higher than AGSM. Every session here is kind of like session 2 at AGSM (MBA), so expect to spend the weekends studying if you want to get the best learning experience.

- More frequent in terms of team meetings than AGSM, but work load seemed to be lighter overall. Highly depends on which courses you take though, as my accounting and financial analysis II class (M&A accounting) took 70% of my time compared with 30% of the remaining courses.

Accommodation options:

- I stayed in on-campus housing in Hyde Park. They’re cheap and easy for short-term stays but the neighbourhood is quite dangerous. I would choose to live in downtown.
I highly recommend staying in the downtown area with another exchange student as most of the study groups and night life is in the downtown area. Definitely tougher to find for only 3 months, so arrive a week or two in advance to take time to look around.

I stayed at the International House because the application process was very easy and it was within 5 minutes walk of the business school. The International House is not exclusively for business students or students from the University of Chicago, in fact no business students stay there except for those on exchange. However I found the atmosphere to be very communal, and because quite a few of the exchange MBA students from other countries were there it was a great experience.

Campus Facilities and Careers Services:

- Excellent, period. There’s a mandatory fee of US$230, which covered some basic medical needs and school gym. Gym is excellent.
- There is a service provided by the University of Chicago called the “Safe Ride”. These buses operate from 5 or 6pm until the early hours in the morning and will take anyone to any part of the university including those burdened with groceries! This is their number +1 7737022022. The service is completely free and they are very friendly. You can call this service if it is late and you feel unsafe about going home, or simply to assist with your grocery run!
- You have full access to their career board, career consulting services, and you will have access to the alumni directory for life.

Student life:

- Busy but you will have incredible opportunities to network with other people, go partying and drinking, as well as meet high level executives from fortune companies. Overall an incredible student life.
- There are groups for literally everything and anything, including any profession you are interested in, any culture/nationality, and any sports! You will find the number of emails you receive about events become almost overwhelming when you try to sort through them on a daily basis.
- Thursday nights there is a ‘Thursday Night Drinking Club’ or TNDC organised by the students. The venue is normally announced a day or two before and you find out by joining their Google group. A lot of full time students go and it is a great place to meet and talk to students outside of class.

Things AGSM MBA students should consider/be aware of when applying to this school for exchange:

- You should apply for this school if you want to do advanced finance courses. Booth is the number 1 school in Finance in the world, 3 out of 5 major rankings in the US rank Booth as the No. 1 MBA school in the US. One thing to note is that if you want to take advanced finance courses such as M&A accounting, entrepreneurial finance and private equity, commercializing innovation, and cases in financial management; you should have a decent understanding of corporate finance, and at least be able to build a very basic DCF model.
- You are going to sit in a class full of competitive students from PE and investment banks that were top of their class at Yale, Harvard or Stanford. Be prepared!
- It is a very fast paced and intense semester you will spend there, but it is equally rewarding and a once in a lifetime experience that I would not hesitate to recommend to all AGSM students if they have the opportunity to take that time off.

Highlight:

- Barrack Obama use to live around Hyde Park (you can still see the house he owns near the university but it is under constant guard by the secret service) and he also taught three law subjects at
the university before he became president. During my stay I was very lucky to see him attend a political rally right outside the International House!
- Networking, drinking, CEO networking events, on-campus recruiting, teachers/professors, other students