

HOW TO BENEFIT FROM AN EXCHANGE PROGRAM

- illustrated by a personal experience of the author -

WRITTEN BY

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Dedicated

To my children

Tobias,

Timon,

Lukas

as a special gift for a prosperous future

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A. Introduction

Have you ever thought about spending a hilarious and beneficial time at a foreign university? Are you ready for diving into another yet unknown cultural background? If so, you are more than welcome to participate in this forthcoming essay, that is supposed to be a hands-on manual for interested applicants.

This report is meant to be a guide on how the idea of an exchange program¹ basically works ranging from the very beginning until the period of time afterwards. The intention of this paper is to give valuable advice and to make a sound contribution regarding future careers for ambitious students.

I will start off with a brief overview regarding the process of preparation and organisation for such an exchange program, reviewing crucial topics that need to be considered beforehand. Given that you are interested in a MBA program, you will definitely come across some vital issues that are applicable as well.

Then, I will illustrate major aspects of the time being actually abroad by focussing upon personal experiences at an American university. I shall differentiate between a few general issues and some academic topics which are worthwhile to be mentioned.

Finally, I will concentrate on the perception of 'real life' after the end of the exchange program: On the one hand I am going to highlight the *benefits* of such an invaluable part in one's life. On the other hand I will tackle some *tough issues* which have to be made aware of, once the participants are back in their home countries. I am going to address some problems, tricky situations or conflicts and offer possible ways to handle them in an appropriate way.

When talking about target groups which are to benefit from this paper, there might be primarily *prospective students* as well as former students ('the old boys network is the young boys network'), the *parents* as decision maker and financial donator, an institution called *DAAD* (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst or German Academic Exchange Service) and the *Akademisches Auslandsamt* (International Office/Study Abroad Office) as the administrative linking pins, the *university body of Regensburg* (as my home university) and the host at *Vanderbilt University* itself, which is located in Nashville, Tennessee/USA.

In addition, I would like to grasp the opportunity to provide this 'Vademecum' (Latin: practical guide) regarding further educational purposes for an organisation named *MELTA* (= Munich English Language Teaching Association), which I gladly joined more than three years ago.

¹ Author: Scholarship through Vanderbilt University - University of Regensburg exchange program

B. It's getting serious – how to prepare for the big event

Historically speaking, it's been about 18 years ago now since I was an exchange student. Then, I could have basically applied for a scholarship at the university of Boulder, Colorado or at Vanderbilt University, Tennessee. Besides, there was the possibility of applying for an integrated scholarship in the fields of Business Administration or for a travel-scholarship at Vanderbilt University.

I personally ranked an integrated scholarship regarding business administration on first place, followed by the university of Boulder; my third best choice was a scholarship at Vanderbilt. Nevertheless, all of those three options mentioned were equally attractive. In addition, there were other universities located in Great Britain, such as Birmingham or Oxford, but my predilection turned to the United States, which was probably due to the fact that I had already known many American students who spent their academic year in Regensburg as summer course or Fulbright students.

Anyway, the goose was cooked because my mind preferred the other side of the ocean:
Vanderbilt University, Nashville/TN, USA.

At present, the possibility of choosing an integrated scholarship doesn't exist any more as far as I know. Meanwhile, there is the tendency of implementing a Bachelor / Masters Program which is supposed to serve as the most interesting exchange basis. Moreover, students from the business administrative department unfortunately don't get the chance any more for applying for Vanderbilt University. Predominantly, students from the Arts & Science department are going to be sent to Vanderbilt.

In case you would like to get the most actual information concerning the latest exchange programs I would recommend to contact the Study Abroad Office at the university of Regensburg. They will provide you with such facts as: momentary application procedure, formal letters, requirements amongst other important issues.

In fact, there are lots of aspects to be considered essential regarding the selection process. The choice of 'Mr./Ms. Right' is often described as a mixture of 'art and science' – a good balance between subjective/objective criteria is very important.

Vital issues that have to be taken into account beforehand are as follows:

- Cross cultural savvy

Applicants have to prove that they are apt to deal with a multicultural setting, since a foreign university actually involves numerous different nationalities. Referring to the university of Regensburg, I was happy to work as a counsellor for international students for several years at the Akademisches Auslandsamt (Study Abroad Office) located on-campus. This temporary job implied such tasks like taking care of the students regarding administrative, social and academic topics as well as joining excursions to distinctive places and sites within Europe. I would definitely recommend this kind of joy very much in terms of diving into the culture and successfully preparing for the program.

- Appreciating Diversity
Mainly, candidates with a different educational and environmental background are looked for, who share and appreciate multiple opinions. Since the applicants are linking pins to their country, the principle of humanity is meant to be crucial as well.
- Motivation and Energy
It is necessary to show a strong motivation and a high degree of energy, in order to take such a program seriously. Its length may vary depending upon ones further plans and imaginations throughout the stay. It goes without saying that applicants have to make sure they can cope with the requirements of the program and their personal responsibilities as well as with obligations over a long period of time.
- Goal awareness
Interested applicants have to be fully aware of the fact that they plan ahead fair enough and reasonably, i.e. they ought to know for sure the decisive questions like *'Why do I apply'*, *'How does the program work'* and *'What do I expect from it in the long run in terms of academic and personal goals'*.
- Team player
Mostly, candidates are looked for, who like to work in a team, since it's been regarded as an essential trait to get the most out of all members of a team: altruism beats egoism!
- Success potential
The candidates' overall performance will be judged as well, i.e. they should be able to prove a sound basis of their grades so far. Besides, there might be letters of reference or other non-academic accomplishments that may also influence the final decision to a certain extent.
- Well rounded candidates
Basically, the applicants should have a wide range of interests and abilities. It can be advantageous of being a member of, for instance, a student club or other institutions, such as a fraternity (studentische Verbindung). Looking beyond the academic world is simply *the* key factor.
- Down to Earth mentality
One of the most vital characteristics of an Exchange Program is a consistent and rational syllabus of each course, trying to practically guide the students throughout the academic process during the year. Vice versa the students are fully expected to be hands-on as well.
- Fun factor
It's been highly appreciated if the applicants are vivacious, have fun to work and are able to lively tell interesting stories, which happens to be an important aspect for reaching a good performance no matter what you do.

- Integrity

Since the main purpose of such an exchange program is to promote educational development, the candidates ought to know about the concept of integrity very well. Particularly, when they want to take over responsibility later in their jobs, the value system and the perceptions of belief of their personality eventually determine the ability of an ethical leadership role. Thus integrity is a substantial indicator.

Sooner or later you will have to state the **reasons** for your intended studies and think about your classes which you plan to take. In this context, I would like to briefly mention an example for a prerequisite with which I had to comply on a written basis. This special sheet of paper had the following contents:

1. *Please state (in English) the reasons for your intended study abroad:*

[here we go: you had to be absolutely sure to write a paper including the most important pieces of information for the primary selection process. In other words, you should have tried to apply your sound language skills to its best (wording, use of vocabulary, how to structure an essay: introduction, statements, summary...)]

2. *Please list as specifically as possible the courses you intend to take in both terms (number and title according to the catalogue. If you have not decided yet, list the most likely ones):*

[for this exercise I was provided with some major extracts of the official courses at Vanderbilt to cling to when choosing my intended classes to my best knowledge; i.e. you should always take into consideration what kind of goals you have, influencing your choice; e.g. if you plan to have some of your classes acknowledged afterwards, you ought to be eager enough to take courses that might likely be accepted from your professor back home. Therefore, please be seriously aware of this matter.]

Another requirement which has to be fulfilled right now is the **TOEFL** test (= Test of English as a Foreign Language); this will be your official certificate of language proficiency, since speaking the language sufficiently is basically assumed.

With regard to my personal experience I also had to pass the required ‘*Vordiplom*’ at this stage of the application process and to guarantee that I am willing to graduate as Master of Business Administration within a specific period of time. Moreover, I had to hand in the grade of my exam at high school (*Abitur*).

Now that you have gone the whole nine yards, you will be informed within an acceptable amount of time whether your application has been approved or not.

In my case, I received a letter from the Akademisches Auslandsamt telling me that I had been rewarded with a *tuition-free scholarship* for an academic year at Vanderbilt university. This scholarship covered the standard undergraduate tuition for up to 18 credit hours in each of the two semesters of the academic year 1987-1988.

Upon receiving this approval letter you ought to be immediately game for starting your journey to this new world without having any doubts that you are the lucky person. I was simply overwhelmed and thrilled and felt proud at the same time.

Provided that you will belong to the 'elite circle' of selected students from now on, the necessity of paperwork, however, won't stop: you need to get an official paper, that you are going to interrupt your studies for – let's say – 2 semesters. This letter should make clear that you will undertake so called '*Urlaubssemester*', i.e. the purpose of this information is to officially declare that you won't lose the red thread of your original studies at home. In other words, it doesn't necessarily mean that the total number of semesters you need to graduate in Germany will be accumulated in the academic year, which is motivational by any means. In case you firmly plan on finishing your studies, however, the amount of semesters spent there will be added, which makes perfect sense either.

Nowadays, the administrative body of the university of Regensburg is going to take care of this requirement and handle the necessary formal process. For further details please refer to the local Study Abroad office.

What else is to be done? Soon you are going to be provided with an *official acceptance letter* from your foreign university. This notification may contain the following aspects which I would like to briefly highlight:

- General information about being accepted for study at the university.
- Request concerning payment of specific charges associated with the year of study.
- Provision with a form for pre-registration for courses for the next semester.
- Hint about an academic advisor as a supportive linking pin to your needs/questions.
- Request for a confirmation letter indicating your intent to study there.

From now on you may well be asked for the following two tasks; at least it was true according to the policy at Vanderbilt university 18 years ago.

First of all, I was told to hand in a detailed overview about my *financial status* to make clear that I was able to cope with all forthcoming expenditures abroad - other than tuition - without having trouble whatsoever. This synopsis included such aspects as: housing, canteen, stationery, average costs of living per month amongst others. The foreign university may give you a list of estimated expenses for this procedure.

Secondly, there was a strict requirement of guaranteeing that you were fully able to provide a sufficient *insurance package* for the entire program. Initially the foreign university is going to offer its own policy, but it is definitely worthwhile to make a serious comparison in order to choose the best one in terms of contents and emergency cases. Concerning my experience I still recall carefully studying the vital chapters and paragraphs of the Vanderbilt policy in the library at the university of Regensburg. Last but not least, I had to completely translate all important sentences and have it sent to Vanderbilt for being proved. In the long run, I was right to switch to my company due to its obvious savings and better conditions.

Today, it's your turn to get in touch with your health insurance company to be provided with a formal letter stating all decisive terms and other vital issues in English.

Moreover, I was informed about the *housing accommodation* overseas: I got a letter telling me that there is the prevailing philosophy of sharing rooms with a roommate. From the perspective of a German student, this seemed to be a rather strange matter which definitely needed to become familiar with later on.

Anyway, I had no chance to object, since the administrative body of Vanderbilt had already organised the allotment in the dormitory I was assigned to. For more details I would like to ask you to touch base with the local Study Abroad office again.

With regard to the topic of housing you should also keep in mind to clarify the situation at your domestic dormitory/apartment. I would recommend to sort things out early in order to find another student to rent your room temporarily. According to my experience it was not difficult to approach someone who is willing to make the deal.

Late August 1987, the students of Regensburg who applied for Vanderbilt were on their way for their intended studies. In our case, we had been 5 students: me and another classmate from the business administrative faculty, one student from the music science department, one student from the history and one from the language department; the latter actually worked for the 'Akademisches Auslandsamt' (Study Abroad Office) on campus as well making it easier for me to eventually join the club.

As far as I know right now, there are 3 to 5 places left for the purpose of studying at the university of Vanderbilt; students of the business administration department can't apply any more as I already mentioned before, whereas studying at the Arts & Science College turned out to become the predominant source of application.

With the usual nervousness in check and much joy in mind we were badly looking forward to this terrific experience. Of course, we figured out the historical angle of our new 'home' as well and were equipped with myriad information about the foreign university and its attractive social and geographical environment. Due to the eagerness of my parents and my friends I felt ready to go and couldn't wait to leave the country.

Somehow everything still seemed to be like a dream that ought to become reality soon.

C. The exciting life abroad – recalling the marvellous time at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN/USA

Eventually time has come and off you go: since the entire application procedure has been successfully mastered, time is flying when you are going to leave the country and head on to your new location, where ever this might be; in my case the '*land of the brave and the free*' ought to be the place to stay for the next year, namely at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee/USA. Longing for departure, I had to temporarily say farewell to my parents, all my friends and to my home university, which happened to be the sacred donator for this scholarship. After having coped with the jet lag I was taken to my dormitory, which was located off-campus but still close to the faculties.

a) General aspects:

The *accommodation*, that I was offered at home, turned out to be a real melting pot: lots of international students inhabited this place making me feel real cosmopolitan. From now on my first international *address* was official:

Extract from the Vanderbilt Directory 1987/1988:

GOO-GRI/109 Students

GRASSL Hermann A&S TN Phone: 327-0612

312 Lewis House

1410 25th Ave S, #312, Nashville TN 37212

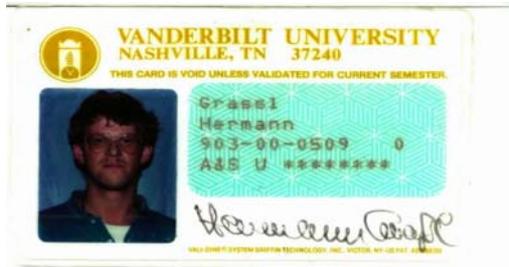
Waltinger Str. 2, 8441 Oberschneiding Germany (West)

I had been assigned to room # 312, which consisted of one living room including a tiny kitchenette and a sleeping room with an adjacent bathroom. No kidding, but these few square meters had to be shared by 2 people. This moment was the first time being confronted with the American concept of living with a *roommate*. However, there was no logical reason for an excuse, since I had to agree on this philosophy in Germany beforehand. In case you get problems regarding living with your roommate there is always the realistic possibility of changing accommodation. At that time I got the chance to move into another dormitory (McTyeire Intl. House) which was located on campus and was divided into several international sections. I highly recommend this academic location, since living closely together with students from a Russian, French, Spanish and German hall definitely turns out to become a real inspiration.

Apart from happily relishing the outstanding inspiring *environment* of the university with countless brick buildings reminding me of the Victorian century, my attention was also drawn to the vast number of *students* already arriving, predominantly even accompanied by their parents. It seemed to me like a kind of official homecoming for those students feeling secure again within this educational and spiritual surrounding for the next academic semester.

Now it was time to fulfil the first *administrative requirements* after having settled down in my dormitory. During the first days I was obliged to get some major cards and certificates enabling a hands-on life on and off campus.

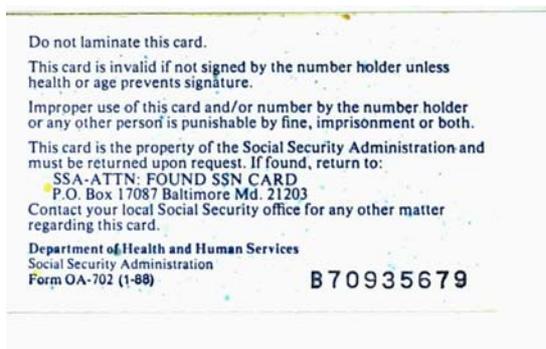
Beneath there are some selected identification cards which I still keep as beloved leftovers from my great time at Vanderbilt. This choice of ID's reveals a first glimpse of mandatory 'bureaucracy' at an American University.



This is the main ID, which was necessary for the life on/off campus enabling basic access to all faculties, facilities, canteen or library to mention just a few.



The Social Security ID is basically required for every citizen in the U.S. and/or temporary residents such as exchange students.



Above there is the back page of the central ID including mandatory descriptions and explanations of the Social Security Admin.



This ID is called the 'Validation Card' which represents the Fall Semester '87. Spring Semester has got a different colour.

With all of those invaluable plastics in my wallet I felt rather safe and self conscious.

The next issue on my 'self-guided-agenda' was to have a closer look at the *canteen*, where my mind ought to be refreshed daily with food for thought. At this point of my tour I could already perceive that I wouldn't get the chance to indulge in fairly 'haute couture' meals throughout my academic year, although the cost of living on campus was considered pretty high. Never mind, I merely had to keep a very critical eye on the calories in order to avoid wrong eating procedures and stay healthy, too. In fact, I gladly succeeded in not gaining too much weight but maintaining my previous BMI (Body Measure Index). Fast food restaurants were out of my scope.

Regine, the other student, who already worked for the Akademisches Auslandsamt in Regensburg, made me aware of the fact, that the local Sarratt *movie centre* was offering an enormous amount of all kinds of different and highly interesting movies from all over the world. This was definitely *the* creative place where I went quite often

during my stay. It was absolutely worthwhile to go there, in particular because the tickets were undoubtedly affordable and basically all films I got to see there, were fairly distinguished. This movie centre turned out to be the regular meeting point for me and Duncan, an exchange student from Leeds, GB who resided like me at Lewis house and who studied literature and languages. He happened to become my best friend and buddy at Vanderbilt with whom I also forged many plans for travelling.

Another topical highlight was music: *concerts* on and off campus played a predominant part of my life abroad. I felt very proud having been able to enjoy the performances of: Bob Dylan, Fleetwood Mac, U2, Simply Red, James Taylor, Keith Jarrett, David Costello, Dave Brubeck, J.L. Hooker and even some Cajun music. Somebody who is personally inclined to musicians will definitely acquire a taste for this cultural issue sooner or later upon arriving at his/her academic base.

I shouldn't forget to mention that Vanderbilt offered the unique possibility of participating in the *local radio program* on campus. Particularly German students had been sought after then; therefore I took the opportunity and joined in: it was great fun and a neat way of accumulating extra experience regarding presentation techniques.

One peculiarity I had come across was the clever marketing strategy of being overwhelmed with *coupons*: the principle of taking advantage of all kinds of savings whatsoever was printed into my mind from the very first days since my arrival in the States. Certainly, you will be flooded with such small items nearly every day (e.g. '241', 'Free Refill' ...). Happy hour events vividly incorporated this policy, too.

In fact there was another bewildering event I experienced during my class of Urban Economics: looking outside the windows I could hardly believe what I spotted: *marines* from the Navy *parading* across the Library Lawn after Thanksgiving Day.

One interesting issue that I also need to talk about was the existence of a *security service* on campus: knowing about this organisation made you feel rather safe and secure once you got back at night from the outside world. Especially female students wisely utilised this special service.

Have you ever been a member of a *fraternity* or a *sorority*? If not, you might be fairly surprised when you are strolling around the campus and watch several small houses where lots of students stay during their academic life. It was amazing but bewildering at the same time to pass the buildings with the Greek letters of $\Delta \Phi \Pi \Gamma$ on top of the entrance. According to popular belief countless parties and festivities had been going on as well at those distinct places.

On the other hand, it soon became quite clear to me, that the classical C.V. (Curriculum vitae) in the U.S. explicitly contained such kind of information obviously being considered vital.

The fact that students with an exquisite inclination towards physical strength and *sports* in general would have an advantage concerning the overall graduation process perfectly fits in this context. The combination of both mental and physical fitness

definitely played a crucial role in and outside the classroom. Being a member of a football team could have possibly compensated for other deficiencies in class.

Organising lots of interesting *special events and excursions* was mainly the task of the 'Office of Student Organisations and Events' (OSOE). Our linking pin throughout the academic year was a very nice and gentle person called Rosie Ashamalla, who managed to immediately bridge the cultural gaps via her outgoing and spontaneous personality. I was extremely glad having met her, since she always tried to keep us – the exchange students – busy and actively involved in numerous happenings, such as for instance: International week at Vanderbilt University, Parents Weekend, 4th of July, Thanksgiving or an international weekend of Latin American Politics with Madeleine Albright and some other heavyweight personalities from the Reagan Administration. Besides, she was eager to organise attractive excursions like an Indian summer journey to the Smokey Mountains or have us playing in an international soccer team, to mention only a few highlights.

However, participating in the life of a host family was definitely the 'Dot on the I', at least from my perspective. This was by far the best way to mutually enrich 2 cultures.

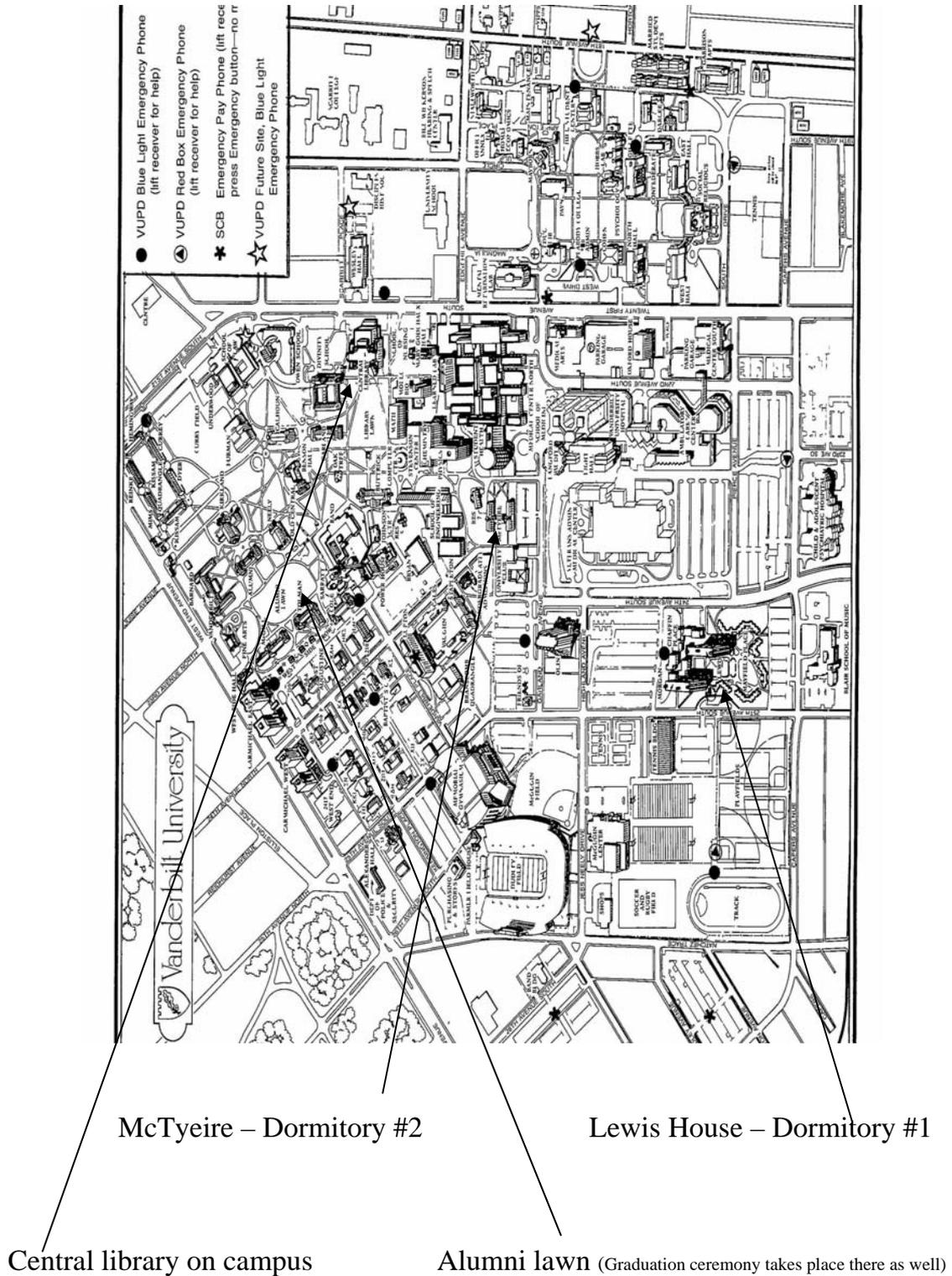
Additionally, there was the opportunity of being *interviewed* on campus, which turned out to be something special and eternal as well. It was not officially announced but it happened to be very exciting anyway. Since I already stayed in McTyeire dormitory, this was the location where everything got started. Amongst all international students a bunch of them showed great interest for this piece of remembrance. Glad to belong to them, I was ready for preparation: I had been told to go through a list of potential FAQ's² that might be asked during this interview; thus I had plenty of time to get the most out of it. Recalling this unique occasion I still feel proud having mastered the questionnaire and keeping a video, which – as a matter of fact – is a rather personal but comprehensive souvenir about the intense life at an American university.

Last but not least, you could take *advantage of getting jobs* during your academic stay. For this purpose you might have contacted the office of recruitment affairs on campus, where all kinds of different jobs could have been analysed beforehand. It didn't seem to me strange or unnecessary to take care of such a diversification in between the weeks of studying and cramming for exams. In fact, there would have been the brilliant opportunity of gaining even more experience abroad. In my case I made up my mind to assist at the Law library on campus in updating its German law books. Particularly students from Germany were highly welcome to carry out that requirement. The official description in my reference letter was: [...] supporting the International/Documents Department with updating loose leaf publications [...].

It goes without saying, that you could have searched for even more attractive jobs; however, the ideal temporary employment was not my primary goal. Nevertheless, doing one's share and showing sound interest is regarded positively anyway.

² FAQ's = Frequently Asksed Questions

Here you can see the *plan of Vanderbilt University* with all its basic facilities and faculties on and off campus; moreover you may detect both of my dormitories where I had been during my stay: Lewis House (off-campus), McTyeire (on campus). You can also discover the academic brain of the campus, the central library of Vanderbilt.



McTyeire – Dormitory #2

Lewis House – Dormitory #1

Central library on campus

Alumni lawn (Graduation ceremony takes place there as well)

b) Major academic issues

The first thing which struck my attention, when I entered the classroom, was the astounding *size of the class*. Compared to German standards at the university of Regensburg you almost felt like being in paradise regarding the inconceivably low amount of students interacting with their professor. As a matter of fact there was a dialogue but no monologue like I was used back home in those huge lecture halls, which looked so neutral but were not tailored for any mental inspiration at all.

As far as I was concerned, I greatly enjoyed this circumstance of being actively involved in the study process and progress; you could always count on an 'open door principle', i.e. if you had to discuss or argue with your teacher/professor, you did not have to officially register long time ahead but simply take advantage of a rather spontaneous but beneficial *relationship* to your *professor*. Eventually, I looked upon this academic way of life as a luxury gift making it fairly easy to achieve motivation and even maintain it for a long period of time.

Besides, the important function of a *syllabus* has to be appreciated as well in this paper. Basically, each course was characterised by a detailed and logical synopsis of all necessary activities during a given semester. A typical syllabus may have looked like this (extract from my Spanish class):

Syllabus Spanish 101A, Fall 1987

Textbook = Estudio Individual (EI), Workbook: Communicating in Spanish (...), 2nd edition

August 27: Introduction, Language Lab Orientation, EI 1, August 28: EI 1, 2

....

August 31: EI 4,5 September 1: EI 6,7 September 4: Quiz #1; EI 10 ...

September 11: Quiz #2, Oral Exercise September 22: EI 25; Composition Practice Assignment

September 23: Composition Editing in Class October 5: Review for Hour Exam # 1

October 6: Hour Exam # 1..... .. October 12: Composition 1 Due.....

October 28: Reading for Pronunciation ... October 30: Composition 2 Due

November 6: Review for Hour Exam # 2..... November 9: Hour Exam # 2

....

November 23-27: Thanksgiving Holidays

...

December 2: Review.....

December 4: Oral Interviews...

December 9: Final Review

December 16: Final Exam

At first glance, this way of strictly leading the students towards their academic goals unit per unit seemed to be fairly unprofessional in the eyes of an independent German

student; however, this strategy of clinging to a well-structured study plan eventually turned out to become a very comfortable tool of sustaining one's concentration on the relevant and essential topics. Personally, I surely would have favoured this teaching methodology at the university in Regensburg to a certain extent as well.

According to the *Student Evaluation and Course Policy* for this class the following paragraph had to be seriously taken into account:

“All assignments indicated in the daily syllabus are to be prepared before the specified due date or class session. This applies to all new material covered in the ‘Estudios Individuales’ (EI) as well as to all written work. It is the student’s responsibility to make certain that his/her assignments are prepared and submitted on time. No late assignments, including compositions, will be accepted.”

Below, I enclose an overview regarding the stringent **Grading system** for this class: [A = Grade 1, B = Grade 2, C = Grade 3, D = Grade 4, F = Failed]

STUDENT EVALUATION AND COURSE POLICY
SPANISH 101A
FALL 1987

Grading

Each student's final grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

Scheduled Quizzes (8)	15%	of final grade
Pop Quizzes	10%	"
Compositions (2)	10%	"
Hour Exams (2)	40%	"
Final Exam and Oral Interview	25%	"
	100%	

Grading Scale

94-100 = A	80-82 = B-	67-69 = D+
90-93 = A-	77-79 = C+	63-66 = D
87-89 = B+	73-76 = C	60-62 = D-
83-86 = B	70-72 = C-	0-59 = F

Attendance is of substantial importance as well; this was basically true for all classes I had taken. Concerning the Spanish class you had to be aware of the following:

“Spanish 101A classes meet five days per week, Monday through Friday, for a total of five contact hours. In a language-skill development course such as this, it is essential that each student works steadily and diligently, since the course content is highly cumulative. Active daily participation in class is expected of each student and benefits not only him/her, but also the class as a whole. Attendance will be kept daily and more than three absences will result in a lowering of the student’s final course grade by one-half point for each absence after the third. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at class on time. Consistent tardiness will result in a reduction of the final grade by one-half point for every three cases of tardiness.” [Student Evaluation and Course Policy]

Did you recognise anything peculiar concerning the contents of this syllabus above? The academic relevance of attending a **language laboratory** has to be mentioned:

“Each student enrolled in Spanish 101A is required to attend the language laboratory at Furman Hall 001 for at least one hour per week to listen to the taped exercises which correspond to the material covered in class. It is recommended that the hour be divided into two half-hour sessions. The student must fill out a laboratory attendance slip each time he/she attends the lab, indicating the amount of time spent per visit, course number and section, and his/her instructor’s name. The week at the language laboratory runs from Sunday through Friday (closed on Saturdays). Since the taped exercises are designed for oral work in the lab without the use of a printed text, there is no lab manual to accompany ‘Communicating in Spanish’. Nevertheless students should work conscientiously in the lab, since it is an additional means to develop and refine linguistic skills and will prove helpful in preparing for quizzes, exams and the oral interview at the end of the semester. Failure to attend the language laboratory for the specified time and number of weeks will result in a lowering of the final grade by one-half point for each hour missed beyond one hour. Labs missed may not be made up at a later time.” [Student Evaluation and Course Policy]

Furthermore, there is another aspect worth a note: obviously the amount of **workload**, happened to be a factual necessity. Sometimes it was really puzzling how many papers the students had to prepare throughout their academic life. My friend Duncan actually suffered a lot, since from his point of view quality was definitely outscored by quantity. Nevertheless, you had no chance to object but to hang in there and comply with the rules, in order to meet the requirements.

As you could figure out before, numerous quizzes, compositions and examinations had to be carried out. Concerning the quizzes and examinations please keep an eye on the following remarks, which are essential for academic achievement:

“There will be eight scheduled quizzes, numerous pop quizzes and two hour examinations in addition to the final examination. In general, a grade of zero will be given for quizzes and examinations missed due to absences, and they may not be made up without the consent of the instructor, in consultation with the course director. The final examination will include a brief oral interview, scheduled during the last week of classes, which will count for 25 % of the final exam grade. No alternate final examination will be given. All students, including graduating seniors, are required to take the final exam on the specified date.” [Student Evaluation and Course Policy]

With regard to the compositions that have to be fulfilled as well, please consider this:

“There will be two compositions assigned during the semester, due on the dates specified in the syllabus. For each composition, the student is expected to follow specific guidelines given by the instructor and to include assigned vocabulary and grammatical constructions. Each composition will be written twice. In the first version submitted, the instructor will circle the problem areas or specific errors, give a grade and return the composition to the student to be rewritten. The student should then make the necessary corrections and turn in both the original and the rewritten versions to the instructor. The original version will count for 70% and rewritten version 30% of the grade of each composition.” [Student Evaluation and Course Policy]

Now you have probably got a sound picture about what’s going on in a language class enabling you to conclude some personal judgements regarding this policy.

Next, I am going to draw your attention towards the *Honour Code System*, which plays a substantial role at American universities. Basically, it is expected that all students will abide by the Honour Code of the University. Any violation or abuse of the Code, whether in or outside the class, will be dealt with swiftly and will be taken before the Honour Council for appropriate action.

Without any doubt, cheating was not allowed at all and would have been punished adequately; so you'd better be careful and go with the rules.

Below, you will encounter an example of this Coding, illustrated by the cover page of an exam concerning the course "International Relations":

Examination Book	
Name	GRASSL HERMANN
Date	11/03/87
Subject	International Relations

**HONOR SYSTEM
of
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**

(Excerpts from the Honor Code)

The Council shall take cognizance of the giving or receiving of aid by any student without the knowledge or consent of the instructor concerned. This applies to all tests, themes, term papers, and examinations, and to any other work unless specifically designed by an instructor not to be under the Honor Code.

Any student taking a course or courses in the College of Arts and Science, the School of Engineering, the School of Nursing, Blair School of Music, or Peabody College, regardless of where registered, is, to this extent, under the jurisdiction of the Honor Council and subject to any penalties it may impose.

If a student has reason to suspect that a breach of the Honor Code has been committed, he or she must take action in one of the following ways (the flagrancy of the violation determines which course of action the student is expected to follow):

1. Issue a personal warning to the suspect that unless the actions which led to his suspicion cease, he or she will report the incident to the Honor Council.
2. Report the incident to the Honor Council for action to be taken in one of the following ways at the discretion of the acting president;
 - a. An official warning will be issued by the council to the suspect.
 - b. A hearing will be held by the council.

I pledge my honor that I have neither given nor received aid on this examination. I further pledge that, if I have reason to suspect that the Code has been violated, I have taken or will take action as outlined above.

Hermann Graßl

50-24 PAGE

Last but not least, I would like to give you an impression about the results of the academic year at an American University. Such an official paper is called *Transcript* that includes the academic record of an exchange student. In my case all undergraduate courses that I had taken at the College of Arts & Science were displayed as follows:

OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR		VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37240		COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE		PAGE 1 OF 1	
NAME Graßl, Hermann		STUDENT NUMBER 903-00-0509		DATE OF BIRTH 1987 FALL		SEX MALE	
PERMANENT ADDRESS Waltlinger Str. 2 8441 Oberschneiding GERMANY		PARENTS Hr. Benno & Irene Graßl Waltlinger Str. 2 8441 Oberschneiding GERMANY		PLACE OF BIRTH STRAUBING, GW		BIRTH DATE 11/04/63	
COURSE NO.	TITLE	CR	COURSE NO.	TITLE	CR		
UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC RECORD (4.0 GRADE SYSTEM)							
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE 1987 FALL							
BA 247	HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN ORGS	3.0	C	6.0			
GER 270	THE GERMAN FILM	3.0	C+	6.0			
PSCI 102	INTRO. INTERNATL POLITICS	3.0	B	9.0			
SPAN 101A	ELEMENTARY SPANISH	5.0	A	20.0			
SEMESTER:		EHR	QHR	QPTS	GPA		
		14.0	14.0	41.9	2.992		
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE 1988 SPRING							
ECON 229	URBAN ECONOMICS	3.0	C	6.0			
ECON 274	INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION	3.0	C+	6.0			
PSCI 228	INTERNATIONAL POL. LAT AM	3.0	UF	0.0			
SPAN 101B	ELEMENTARY SPANISH	5.0	A	20.0			
SEMESTER:		EHR	QHR	QPTS	GPA		
CUMULATIVE:		11.0	11.0	32.9	2.990		
NO ENTRIES BELOW THIS LINE							

PLEASE NOTE
This transcript is an official copy issued to the student. If a copy needs to be mailed from the University Registrar directly to your office, please notify the student. Not official without raised seal.

NOT AN OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT WITHOUT THE RAISED SEAL OF THE UNIVERSITY. *STUDENT IS IN GOOD STANDING UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. CONFIDENTIAL. DO NOT RELEASE TO A THIRD PARTY WITHOUT STUDENT'S WRITTEN CONSENT.

R. Gary Gibson REGISTRAR 11/06/97 DATE

Beware that this is an official copy for further intentions; it is not official without raised seal from the university

Today this transcript looks a bit different due to lots of organisational changes throughout the last years. For further details please contact the local academic office.

As you can see in this survey above, I had chosen such courses like:

- Human Behaviour in Organisations [BA 247 = Business Administration]
- Industrial Organisation [ECON 274 = Economics]
- Urban Economics [ECON 229 = Economics]
- Introduction International Politics [PSCI 102 = Political Science]
- Elementary Spanish [SPAN 101 = Spanish]

Those courses just mentioned had been finally evaluated via GPA (= Grade Point Average). The maximum achievable GPA comes to 4.0 according to the contents of the Transcript. The final grade of each class is calculated by collecting quality points and quality hours through the semester. The precise arithmetic formula is as follows: $GPA = QPTS/QHRS$ (see overview next page). Apart from Spanish and Intl. Politics all other classes were categorised by 200 level courses, that may be taken for graduate credit. Thus, for each course from which you don't withdraw you'll get full credit.

The sheet below is called *Student Schedule* [Fall semester 1987] and shows the precise code numbers of each course, the necessary credit hours, the meeting days (M = Monday, T= Tuesday, W= Wednesday, R = Thursday, F = Friday), the starting time and the respective building and room. Given that one class is being defined as 'dropped' as displayed here as well, means that this course had been once selected but finally cancelled for other reasons (time constraint, interest/priority changed).

STUDENT COPY



STUDENT SCHEDULE

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL: COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE
 CLASS: TRANSIENT
 DEGREE: UNDECIDED
 MAJOR 1:
 MAJOR 2:
 MINOR:
 ADVISER:

09/10/87
DATE

1987 FALL
SEMESTER

903-00-0509
STUDENT NUMBER

Grassi, Hermann
1410 25th Ave S, #312
Nashville TN 37212

THIS SCHEDULE REPRESENTS YOUR REGISTRATION
ANY CORRECTIONS OR CHANGES MUST BE MADE
WITH THE REGISTRAR OF YOUR SCHOOL TO BE
OFFICIAL

COURSE CODE	SUBJECT AREA	COURSE NUMBER	SECTION NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	CREDIT HOURS	GRADE TYPE	MEETING DAYS	START TIME	BUILDING AND ROOM
107-2400-01	BA	240	01	BUSINESS FINANCE	3.0		DROPPED		
107-2470-02	BA	247	02	HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN ORGS	3.0		M W	3:10	SC 1206
116-2700-01	GER	270	01	THE GERMAN FILM	3.0		T R	2:35	GA 219
120-2821-01	HIST	282A	01	ECONOMIC HIST OF THE US	3.0		DROPPED		
126-1020-02	PSCI	102	02	INTRO INTERNATL POLITICS	3.0		T R	8:10	SC 1206
131-1011-01	SPAN	101A	01	ELEMENTARY SPANISH	5.0		DROPPED		
131-1011-02	SPAN	101A	02	ELEMENTARY SPANISH	5.0		M W F T R	11:10 12:10	GA 219 GA 219

Basically, you always have to take into account the expectancy values of the foreign university and compare them with your own academic goals and personal attitude. For me, the GPA was not the decisive factor, because I did not plan on graduating there; my aim was to obtain a good performance and focus upon choosing amongst as many courses as possible, to be able to look *beyond* the academic routine like I was used in Germany. Besides, I intended to have one or two classes accepted from Regensburg University, to reduce my remaining time of studying in Germany to a certain extent.

Since variety is the spice of life, I suggest to simply go for a broad range of subjects, which will eventually make your stay last forever in terms of expanding your horizon.

Below I have appended a letter of the Vanderbilt administration that gives you some basic facts about my status as an exchange student, my courses and the prospective date of my graduation in Germany. This reference letter was issued by the *Office of the University Registrar*.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37240

TELEPHONE (615) 322-7311

University Registrar • Direct phone 322-7701

SC Oct 87

To Whom It May Concern;

This is to certify that HERMANN GRASSL,

S.S.N. 903-00-0509 is/was enrolled at Vanderbilt University for the period 8/27/87 - 5/13/88. *

His/Her enrollment status based on hours of registration

is/was FULL-time.

The student's date of graduation: is anticipated to be MAY 1988.

was _____.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth B. Froderman

Elizabeth B. Froderman
Student Records Systems Specialist
Office of the University Registrar
242 Alexander Hall
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37240
(615) 322-7701

* It is Vanderbilt University policy to only verify past or present enrollment.

*P.S. HE IS TAKING THE FOLLOWING COURSES
HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN ORGS
THE GERMAN FILM
INTRO INTERNATE POLITICS
ELEMENTARY SPANISH*

HE IS A FOURTH YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT

Now time has come to conclude this section about Vanderbilt University hoping that you gleaned a lot of valuable information from my descriptions and explanations. I would be happy if you can manage OK and find your way through. The following part of my paper will offer you some hints regarding the overall *benefits* from the program and potential *problems* coming up when settling down back home again.

D. The real life after the Exchange Program

a) What are the *benefits* after coming home?

First of all, I would like to assure you that there are countless benefits once you have successfully managed the academic year as an exchange student and come back to your home country.

Of course, you personally perceive immediately that you have changed, however it might well be that 'your' environment won't recognise it to the same extent.

Perhaps, time will surely tell you after a while how those changes became effective.

Regarding *status* and general *acknowledgement* you have definitely reached a class of its own. You won't feel like "just another face in the crowd" anymore; instead, you are looked upon as somebody being in the limelight. Predominantly, people appreciate what you have done and achieved so far; they show pride and respect towards your endurance and persistence of mastering such a long time abroad on your own.

Self-consciousness is another topical highlight that can be concluded from your experience at a university in a foreign country. By the way, do you remember the scene in the movie 'Titanic', when Leonardo di Caprio and Kate Winslet ascend the rail at the very front of the ship and he happily exclaimed, "I am the king of the world"? That way is best described how you might feel afterwards: on cloud nine! Gosh, you want to embrace everybody and start doing so many things that you did not even dream of before.

One substantial issue is defined by *openness* in terms of social integrity, adaptability and intercultural sensibility which are all key factors for a successful future employment. Potential well-known employers (e.g. Linde, MAN, DaimlerChrysler, Consulting firms....) consider these traits fairly essential for ones own career. There is no doubt, that the development of professional and educational manners in this respect will have an obvious impact on your prospective performance later on the job.

Strengthening the overall *eagerness* is another invaluable contribution. After such a grand experience you'll turn out to be keen on learning and studying. You feel as if being equipped with an inherent power of willingness and interest towards new subjects and horizons, i.e. you are really striving for further perfection and progress.

Besides, you have learnt to develop a strong and *distinctive behaviour* towards new and different cultures, people, attitudes and languages. You have got the unique opportunity to go for your personal inclinations and try out things that you normally won't be able to focus upon. The sky's the limit – that might be *your* motto.

Participating in an Exchange Program is definitely regarded as a *useful investment*; it's meant to be an additional education which ought to promote your career in every respect. Basically, you figured out how to behave and solve problems in international teams/classes due to time constraints, modern applied theories and other environmental conditions that may be experienced in the job world, too.

Now that you have spent a considerable amount of months abroad and got to know much about a new cultural system you'll certainly have absorbed lots of ideas concerning the contents of your *Curriculum Vitae* (C.V.).

Updating your C.V. due to internationally required standards will become even more important once you reach the end of your studies. In this respect, I was lucky to incidentally come across an announcement of Wall Street Institute, an organization located in Munich offering language courses. Then, I registered for a workshop called 'C.V. and Job Interviews', a real eye catcher for graduated students. In the end, this afternoon happened to be fairly beneficial for me in terms of acquiring a sound knowledge of professionally improving my C.V. regarding formality (layout, structure, use of language) and materiality (main issues, topics, how to condense information); moreover, I gleaned valuable information concerning the interviewing process. I had been gratefully provided with numerous useful facts, in particular a hands on list of FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions) which I enclose on page 25 for further application.

The advantage of clinging to this questionnaire is obvious: you have got a practical recipe how to carefully prepare for a "*Bewerbungsgespräch*"; you basically won't get badly trapped when being interviewed. As far as I know, this summary encompasses a rather broad variety of topics that might be asked during this appointment with your potential employer. Therefore, attending an interview does not necessarily have to cause nervousness and insecurity anymore.

What I also learnt is the fact, that '*telling a story*' is meant to be a key issue for successfully persuading an employer; i.e. clearly stick to your C.V., make it sound interesting and attractive but keep it short and snappy, however still worthwhile to be listened to, since you really have got something to say after this experience abroad.

Have you ever heard about an abbreviation named '*MBTI*' ? It symbolises: *Myers Briggs Type Indicator*. What's it all about? According to popular belief the majority of American students favour the existence of such an evaluation on their calling cards. This makes sense due to the internationally official character of this personality indicator which can be defined in detail as follows:

- E = Extraversion: ability to take on energy via external world
- I = Introversion: ability to absorb energy via internal values
- S = Sensing: ability to perceive reality via your five senses
- I = Intuition: ability to perceive reality via personal intuition
- T = Thinking: ability to make decisions in a logical and analytical way
- F = Feeling: ability to decide via subjective moral concepts
- J = Judging: ability to take care of your way of life in a structural way
- P = Perceiving: ability to care of your life-style via flexibility and openness.

As a consequence, you'll get a feedback after you have completely replied to a list of distinguished questions. Personally, I ended up being an '*ESTJ*' type.

Basically, I can live with that result, because it mainly reflects my personality, i.e. my inclinations definitely had a certain impact on my career so far.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS ASKED IN AN INTERVIEW

A. EDUCATION

- * What were your major courses of study at university?
- * Why did you decide to go to university?
- * Why did you choose those courses?
- * What was the most important thing you learned at university?
- * Did school/university meet your expectations or were you disappointed?
- * To what extent do your grades reflect how much you learned?
- * Do you feel your education was worthwhile?

B. WORK EXPERIENCE

- * What were your major responsibilities at your last job?
- * At the job before that?
- * Which of your previous jobs did you like (or dislike) most? Why?
- * What was the most rewarding experience at work?
- * What do you find most satisfying in a job?
- * What was your single most important accomplishment for the company in your last job?
- * Why did you leave the company X?
- * Why do you want to change jobs?
- * What was the toughest problem you had to solve?
- * How did you solve it?

C. THE NEW JOB AND THE FUTURE

- * Why do you want to work for this company?
- * This job means you have to relocate; what problems do you see for your family?
- * This job has a lot of travel: how will you handle that?
- * After a description of the job: How do you see yourself fitting in with this job?
- * What skills did you learn on your last job that you can use here?
- * Why do you want to do what we do in this company?
- * How do you think your education will help you on this job?
- * Where do you want to be five years from now?
- * How long do you plan on staying with us?

D: GENERAL

- * Tell me about yourself?
- * How would you describe your personality?
- * Which is more important to you: status or money?
- * Are you an ambitious person?
- * What is your worst fault and what is your best quality?
- * What do you think are your strengths and weaknesses?
- * We have a lot of applicants for this job, why should we appoint you?
- * What do you do in your spare time?
- * Describe your ideal boss?

Enclosure: Survey regarding the FAQ's.

Give it a serious try and answer all questions, in order to be perfectly prepared for all kinds of circumstances during an interview. Making this effort is absolutely worthwhile – you will eventually ‘reap success’.

The acceptance of courses in terms of *acknowledging certificates* is supposed to be *the* most comfortable and valuable side effect regarding academics. Eventually, the prospective remaining time of graduation might be reduced quite a bit, since you don't have to keep up with work that is still being required back home.

18 years ago, I could acquire these so called 'Seminarscheine' via reference letters of my professors at Vanderbilt and have them transferred to the business administration faculty for further processing and final approval by the professors.

Nowadays, the concept of 'Scheine' does not exist any more but there is a the policy of implementing accounts for the students including the relevant courses taken abroad. The procedure of acknowledgement is going to work on the basis of a credit point system similar to the GPA methodology in the States. Eventually, the students will be provided with a survey of cumulative credits which is considered an equivalent to a comparable class at home in terms of contents and structure. Last but not least, the final decision has to be given by the board of examiners in Regensburg.

Basically, the university of Regensburg takes care of a specific file which is called 'Flex now'. In this way, the whole procedure is unaccompanied by any forms at all.

In case you are interested in getting more information about the process of acknowledgement please do not hesitate to contact the Board of examiners (Prüfungsamt) or the Study Abroad office.

Moreover, I should mention two examples that might be described by '*philosophy of open doors*'. Since I have always fancied a predilection of languages it almost went without saying that I additionally applied for a temporary teaching job at an adult education centre. This was possible due to my sound educational background so far.

This golden opportunity of giving language lessons was also appreciated at my former company (Public Utility), where I taught English and Spanish. Since the year 2003 I also got this chance at my present firm by focussing upon English classes.

Furthermore, I took advantage of 'embarking the *MELTA* cruiser' three years ago, i.e. I became a member of this organisation: Munich English Language Teaching Association. Through this institution I was lucky to participate in so many different workshops and seminars held by a broad variety of international speakers who professionally provide valuable advice and useful hints for the teaching business.

The 'Cross on the T' is the fact, that I was given the possibility of publishing articles, which I am going to continue right now by offering this paper to you.

Last but not least, there is one key issue that is definitely worthwhile to be mentioned: **Contacts!** Once you have been lucky enough to have experienced such an exchange program, you'll certainly have kept a little diary including a bunch of addresses that can still be of superior importance further on in your life. As a matter of fact, you have come across many internationally renown professors and teachers, whose support and assistance you might ask for sooner or later, depending upon your career path.

Besides, you got to know lots of student buddies who could play some part in your life. Anyway, take a wild guess and try to remember everybody whom you firmly rely on and who really agrees on being considered for this purpose as well. Now, you are on your way to realise "*the old boys network is the young boys network*" philosophy to its best.

Here we go – for your convenience I put together a list of some useful contacts; *the precise (Email) addresses/websites you can find in Annex V on page 37.*

- DAAD: German Academic Exchange Service – Organisation which enhances the internationalisation of German Universities.
- Akademisches Auslandsamt: this department (Study Abroad Office) you will encounter at every university in Germany on campus. Working as a counsellor there would surely be advantageous for your intentions.
- Alumni – Regensburg/ESdUR: this organization supports students besides helping pupils at a Gymnasium (high school) for their decisions/plans about studying at the university; they offer a so-called ‘university day’. They also manage scientific seminars for their members, keep contacts between the former students and their university and organise social events at the so called ‘*Dies academicus*’.
- Alumni Vanderbilt: the equivalent to *Alumni Regensburg*, but far more sophisticated in terms of maintaining contacts and fund-raising.
- ROOTS: a similar organisation like ESdUR mentioned above but more suitable for students of business administration (BWL/WiWi = Wirtschaftswissenschaft).
- Vanderbilt University, TN/USA: this is my frame of reference for this entire paper.
- Friends Reunited: this organisation might be of splendid assistance regarding tracing friends, students and other people you have lost track of in the meantime.

b) Face the music – there might be problems!

Don't panic – when you start reading this last chapter. Undoubtedly, the benefits and positive aspects are prevailing. However, you have to be aware of the fact, that there is *no* such equation like “Participating in an Exchange Program = Career, Money”.

‘Myth vs. Reality’ – that's one big area of conflict which needs to be looked upon.

Time has somehow changed looking back about 16 years when I went overseas. Obviously, there is a new perception regarding Exchange Programs to be taken into account, apart from the attraction to a vast number of interested students. Of course, you have invested much money and effort to go this extra educational mile. At the same time, you have certain but justifiable vocational expectations that should be fulfilled sooner or later, but it doesn't necessarily mean to obtain the ‘dream job’.

On the contrary, this picture ought to match with the employer's imagination of recruiting people being young, flexible, adaptable and multilingual at the same time.

Organisation/Selection Process: What's becoming much more important primarily is to put a lot of energy in the (pre) selection process of the most suitable university and its location, i.e. a prosperous scientific environment. Once you have made this decision the choice of the appropriate contents surely happens to be a piece of cake. *On pages 34-36 you will find a survey about Vanderbilt University with a lot of useful facts incl. its ranking amongst all universities and colleges in the U.S. and the world.*

Acknowledgement: Concerning your intentions and endeavour of having your courses acknowledged to some extent you might be confronted with barriers: the acceptance of certificates gained in Germany is for American students like a ‘rule of thumb’, whereas German students can't depend on its realisation. Hey – why can't we put it like this: “the exception proves the rule”. Nevertheless, succeeding in this issue you will have to carefully analyse the situation at your home university and its relationship to the exchange colleges maybe already built up throughout many years. This will definitely ease the procedure. It is obvious that you are willing to promote your studies when going abroad, meaning that you will presumably focus upon classes that are not required but of interest to you. However, you may have to renounce acknowledgement; there ain't no free lunch!

As far as I know, there are efforts of the DAAD to make the acceptance of a foreign performance more common and attractive in terms of supporting integrated exchange programs. The impact of a harmonisation policy in the E.U. regarding acceptance of certificates has to be considered as well in this context.

Achievement: As a matter of fact, you should always be ready to call into question what you have actually achieved via this Program, i.e. nothing will happen without *you* being involved in the process. It's simply *you*, who is continuously – and particularly after lots of years - obliged to make sure that you are *still* something special. Don't rely on a self-fulfilling prophecy. Don't take success for granted!

Anyway, the principle of “*the old boys network is the young boys network*” won't work automatically either without critical personal evaluation or further input.

Be critical: Basically, you believed that *‘being a high potential candidate’* from now on would be *the* guarantee to an excellent professional platform; however, the program alone won’t be sufficient. It’s worthwhile to critically ask yourself if – for instance - those case studies you got to work on during your academic year really reflect the business life nowadays. Simply try to seriously ponder about all kinds of skills and job requirements way ahead, in order to be better prepared for the real world.

Job objective: If you are striving for a managerial position, you’d be able to cope with circumstances that need to be handled without recipes you’d been mostly used to in midst this perfect university environment with its sophisticated equipment; in other words: reacting professionally upon unexpected developments or basically leading people through difficult times will become rather substantial career aspects.

C.V.: In the first years of your application rally the companies are quite impressed about this extraordinary part of your C.V. Nevertheless, when time goes by, it is your duty to fight for further acknowledgement and have the employer’s attention drawn to your achievements once more. I suggest to keep an eye on how and to what extent you might need your expertise gained abroad, however always being alert to environmental transitions. Even after years the outcome of your academic challenge is still available and can be used in many different ways depending upon the demand of the company.

‘Small is beautiful’: You should take into consideration that it may well make perfect sense to apply for smaller or medium-sized companies, too, instead of focussing upon the big multinational firms, what everybody does anyway. That way you might have even more of an opportunity to fully utilise your knowledge, your skills or your educational advantage of having mastered this program. Due to the company’s policy of *“Don’t call us, we call you”* you should always grasp the chance of agreeing upon an interview, even if you think you suffer from time constraints.

Head Hunter: In my opinion it would be a wise decision to figure out how many head hunters you should touch base with. According to a personal frame of reference I once registered for one specific organisation but was rather surprised when I got back my application map after some years. Upon asking about the reason, I had been informed that I was simply overqualified for their purposes. This decision seemed to me very strange, since I really counted on its effectiveness regarding job seeking matters as it was *the* company’s trademark. As a consequence, you can’t simply rely on those head hunters you once got involved long time ago. So keep in mind: Variety is the spice of life – Choosing two or three addresses will be a clever strategy.

Age: It goes without saying, that your advantage of having been an Exchange student is slowly fading after a certain amount of time. Needless to say that the age factor is of essence as well. I can tell that unfortunately, our society won’t really appreciate applicants around 40, who are seeking a new job despite this invaluable treasure of experience. On the other hand, it can’t be neglected that there are lots of other requirements which are essential as well from the perspective of an employer and which will play a vital part for the recruitment process.

E. Summary

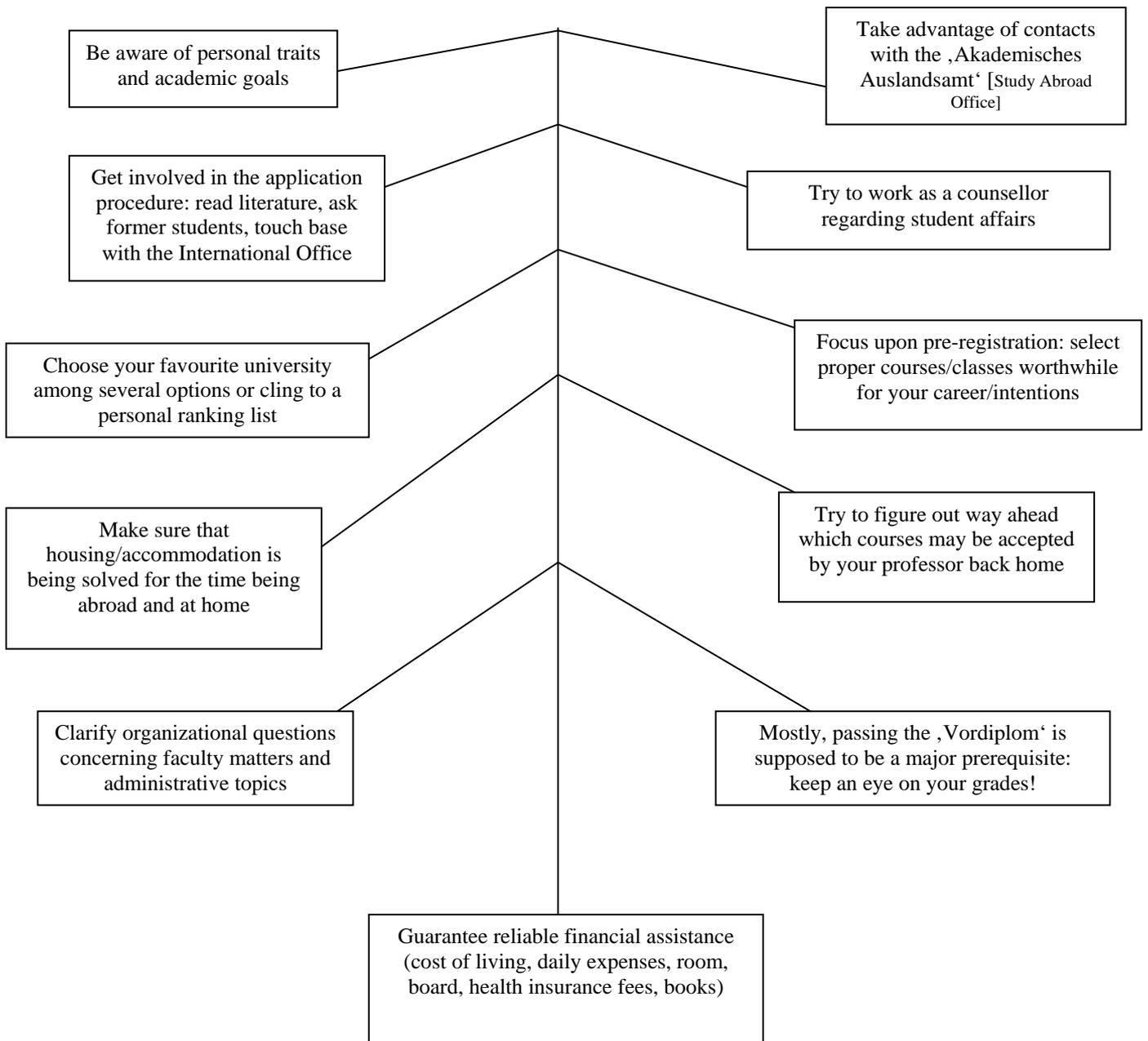
Now that I have come to an end, I would like to summarise my findings as follows:

- Those of you, who firmly intend to spend an academic year abroad should be fully aware of the fact, that investing a lot in the process of application is mandatory but absolutely worthwhile due to the obvious positive result.
- Applicants should have a certain understanding of their own provenance as well as a sound historical background knowledge, since they are representatives of their countries.
- Interested students should be open-minded and adaptable to a new environment. They ought to be equipped with an inherent feeling of intercultural sensibility which is part of those soft skills that are badly required in the job afterwards.
- Students have to make sure, what kind of personal and academic goals they like to pursue. In case of focussing upon achieving an academic degree they have to sort out the proper courses and classes beforehand in a very diligent and reasonable way, in order to obtain the necessary credits they need in the long run.
- Ambitious students should try to get a hold of their teachers and professors very early and on a regular basis, in order to build up a strong relationship during their stay at the university, which enables them to reach the targets more effectively.
- Exchange students from Germany should minimise gathering with fellow German students in order to fully benefit from the linguistic progress and the multinational group dynamic process. Therefore, the proper choice of the appropriate dormitory might be fairly substantial.
- Participating in as many events as possible ought to be the basic motto of an exchange student. This could range from an international coffee hour once a week to organised excursions or social happenings on and off-campus.
- The students should take advantage of the opportunity of getting involved in the concept of a host family, in order to become familiar with local habits, customs as well as with traditional family structures. In this way, they will acquire a deeper comprehension of the way of life and the cultural settings.
- Once being back in their home countries the students should try to register for an organisation called *Alumni*, in order to touch base with the foreign university and former students regarding future development and further progress in one's career.

ANNEX I

MIND MAP REGARDING KEY ISSUES

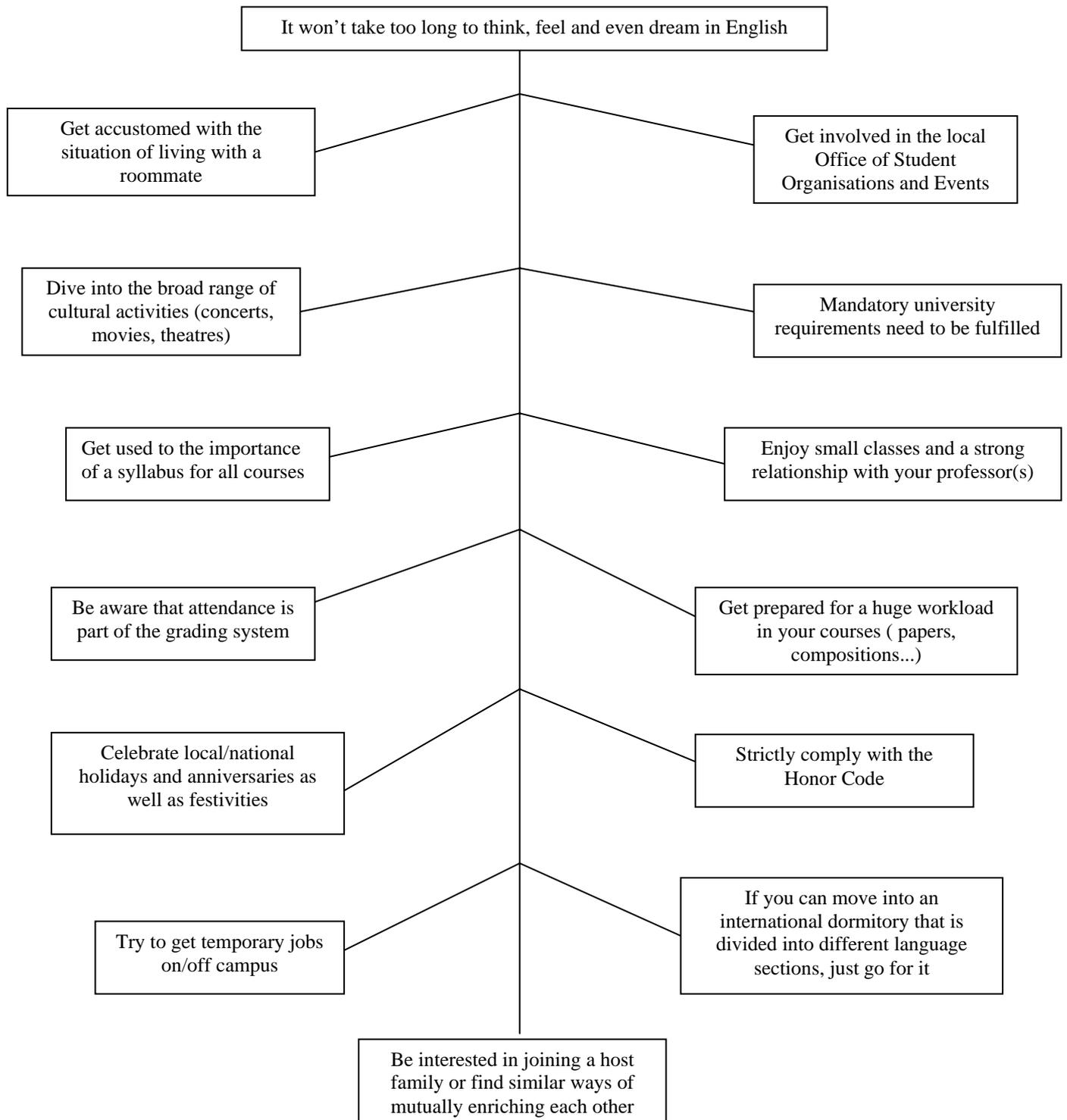
I. YOU DECIDED TO APPLY [see Chapter B]



ANNEX II

MIND MAP REGARDING KEY ISSUES

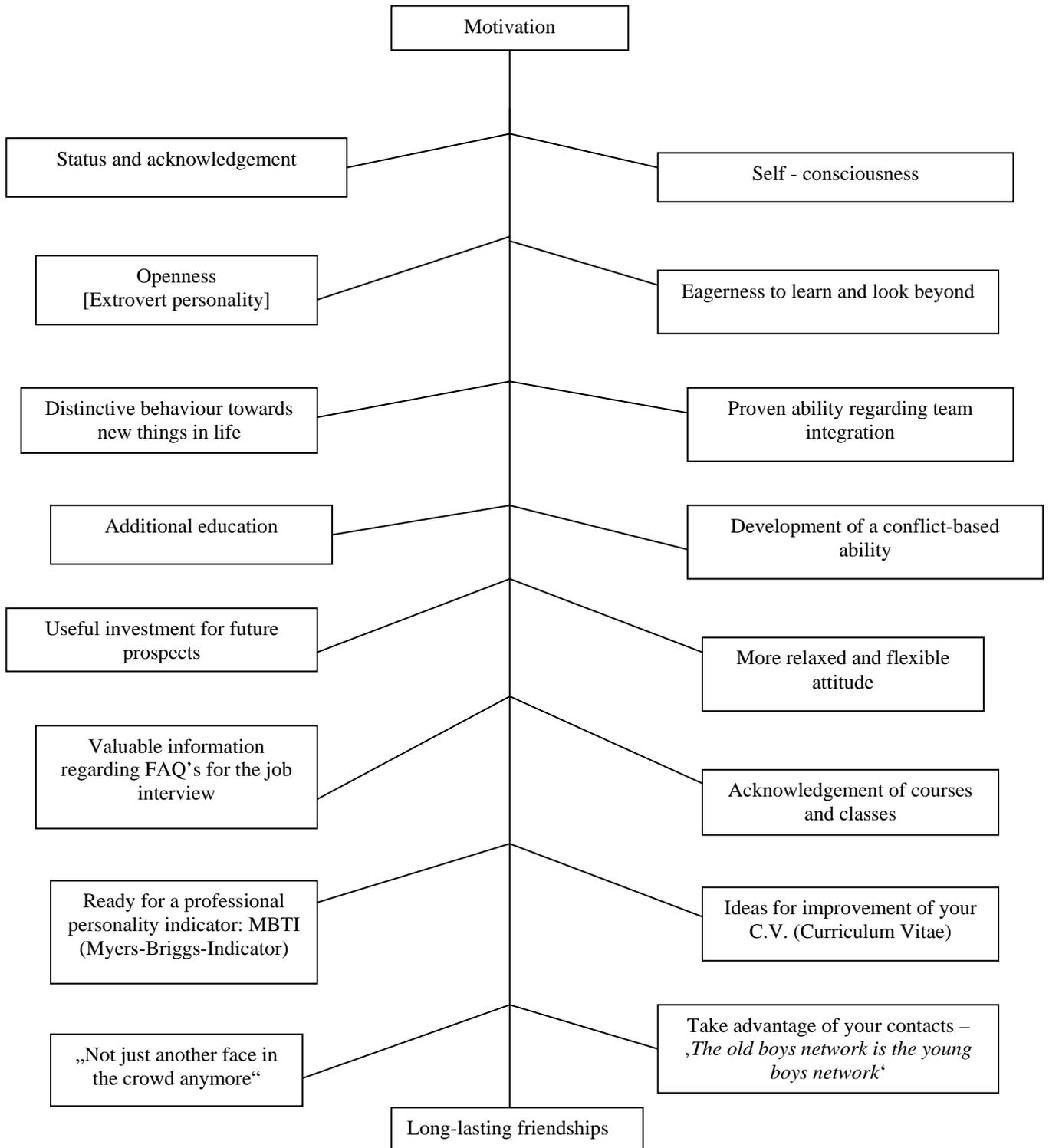
II. REAL UNIVERSITY LIFE ABROAD [see Chapter C]



ANNEX III

MIND MAP REGARDING KEY ISSUES

III. MAJOR BENEFITS [see Chapter D]



ANNEX IV

Facts about Vanderbilt University, Nashville/TN, USA [Extract from Internet Site <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facts.html>]

Students Enrollment (2003/2004)

- Undergraduate: 6,283
- Graduate and professional: 4,809
- Full-time: 10,660
- Part-time: 432
- Men: 5,33 (48 %)
- Women: 5,762 (52 %)

Degrees Conferred 2003

- Baccalaureate: 1,552
- Master's: 893
- M.D.: 93
- Other doctoral: 372
- Total degrees conferred: 2,910 [No honorary degrees are conferred]

Regional Breakdown (total student body)

- New England 4%
- Midwest 15,1 %
- South 46.6 %
- Middle States 10.3 %
- West 6.6 %
- Southwest 8.5 %
- U.S. territories .1 %
- International 8.4 %
- Unspecified .4%

Miscellaneous

- Percentage of undergraduates receiving some sort of financial aid (2003-2004): 57 %
- Percentage of undergraduates who live on campus: 83 %
- Undergraduate student to faculty ratio: 9:1
- Undergraduate tuition (2003-2004): \$ 27,720

Student Housing

- Residence halls and apartments: 31
Capacity:
 - * Undergraduates: 4,952
 - * Graduate/Professional students: 92
- Sorority Houses: 11
- Fraternity Houses: 15

Extracurricular activities

- More than 300 clubs and organizations
- Sororities: 14
- Fraternities: 17

Alumni

- Number of living alumni: 110,000
- Alumni Association founded: 1879
- Number of alumni clubs worldwide: 70

Financial Information (year ending 6/30/03)

- Total Net Assets: \$ 13 billion
- Managed Endowment: Market value: \$ 2.0 billion
 - Endowment utilised: 6.1
 - Endowment per student: \$ 182,619
- Operating Budget: \$ 1.7 billion
- Revenues by Source: Health Care: 59 %
 - Government, primarily research grants: 15 %
 - Net tuition, fees, room and board: 11 %
 - Gifts and Endowment distributions: 10 %
 - Other: 5 %

Expenses by Function

- Health Care: 56 %
- Instruction and other Student Services: 23 %
- Organised Research: 13 %
- Institutional Support: 4 %
- Other: 4 %

Research Information (year ending 6/30/03)

- Total research expenditures: \$ 294 million
- Sponsored research project awards: \$ 339.4 million
- Ranked 31st in federal research and development funding among U.S. colleges and universities based on fiscal year 2001

Accreditation and Rankings

The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Vanderbilt is a member of the Association of American Universities.

Rankings:

National Research Council survey of graduate programs

Pharmacology Ph.D. program: 6th – Faculty quality, 3rd - Program effectiveness

Religion Ph.D. program: 7th – Faculty quality, 8th – Program effectiveness

U.S. News & World Report

19th – National Universities

14th – Research-oriented Medical Schools

4th – Graduate Schools of Education (Peabody College)

45th – Graduate Business Schools (Owen Graduate School of Management)

17th - Law Schools

29th – Graduate Schools of Nursing

38th – Undergraduate Engineering Schools

Ruggs Recommendations on Colleges: Most selective Undergraduate Schools of Education (Peabody College)

Business Week

28th – Graduate Business Schools (U.S.) [Owen Graduate School of Management]

20th – Executive MBA program [Owen Graduate School of Management]

Financial Times

24th – Graduate Business Schools [Owen Graduate School of Management]

35th – Graduate Business Schools (World) [Owen Graduate School of Management]

Forbes

25th – Best Business Schools [Owen Graduate School of Management]

Wall Street Journal

15th – Best Business Schools in World [Owen Graduate School of Management]

ANNEX V

MIND MAP REGARDING KEY ISSUES

USEFUL ADDRESSES AND WEBSITES

- DAAD (=Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst): www.daad.de
- Universität Regensburg: www.uni-regensburg.de
- Akademisches Auslandsamt (Regensburg): www.auslandsamt.uni-regensburg.de
- Alumni-Regensburg (ESdUR) www.alumni-regensburg.de
ESdUR = Ehemalige Studierende der Universität Regensburg
- ROOTS (Alumniverein Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät der Universität Regensburg): www.rootsev.de
www.rootsev.de/index2_d.htm
- Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN/USA:
www.vanderbilt.edu <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/facts.html>
www.aboutvu.html

2201 West End Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37235,
Phone: (615) 322 7311
- Friends Reunited: www.friendsreunited.com