



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Biotechnology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	04/02/2022 until 28/05/2022
Country (exchange)	United States of America
City (exchange)	Ithaca, New York
University (exchange)	Cornell University
Faculty (exchange)	CALS

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I believe it is very important to study at numerous universities for both networking and academic advance. Studying in a different country allows to further my international network and gives me a feel for different working environments.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

Cornell university is a very renowned internationally recognised institution that provides strong academic opportunities and attracts highly motivated and capable students and faculty.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination? (E.g. bus, train, etc.)

Yes, although the C2C bus (which is advertised) is very useful. I advice to use Wanderu to find a cheaper bus service to reach Ithaca from NYC. Additionally, although I was not able, I highly advice renting a car for in the US as moving around is very tough.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Computer aided engineering	6	Biomedical modeling through COMSOL program	3	Although the information tough within the course is very interesting and intuitive, the workload far exceeds that of a 6 ECTS course. Additionally, the method of teaching also did not align with my preferred (Dutch) methods.
2	Statistical computing	8	Tips on tricks on fast and accurate statistical computing.	4	This course was really interesting an on a good level for me personally. However I was deeply dissappointed by the fact all programming had to be done using the R language, of which I was unfamiliar.
3	Applied design	8	Statistical experiment design	5	This was a really hard but really interesting and important course. The professor is an absolute sweetheart and really wants to help you. Again, programming had to be done in R, but this course is less programming intensive.
4	Seminar molecular biology	2	How do you approach presenting a research paper	2	This side course (for me) was boring, but easy. The professor doesn't want to be there and neither do the students. I did enjoy the deepdive in a paper that interested me, though.
5					
6					

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

Be prepared to have homework every week that accounts for the majority of your final grade. This is uncommon at WUR and therefore this was kind of hard for me as there are no 'pressure gaps' which I was used to in the hex-semester system at WUR, where pressure predominantly rises during exams, but otherwise is lower. Exams account for a small percentage of your final grade.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?)

Local students are nice and diverse. There are many international students and they all come from money... The lecturers don't seem approachable, but the Teaching Assistants are for sure. Fellow students all know each other because they share a program, but they are nice. What put me off is the apartment culture where apparently it is very common for people not to speak to their neighbors whatsoever.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?)

There is a lot of good food on campus and it might even be worthwhile to get a food-card for the semester. Americans don't cook but they eat out and this is definitely an easy way to get friends. Sporting facilities are good, but crowded.

5. Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?)

Campus housing is really expensive, it is better to get a room from a private leaser although they also synthetically raise their prices significantly. You want to live in or near college town for the most engaging community.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?)

You don't cook here, you always eat out (about 60% of the time) Starbucks is literally everywhere. If you want groceries you order them or go to Trader Joe's or Wagners. Neighbors are unapproachable and ... nasty.

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

I think I spent about 1.5 or 2x what I would spend living in Wageningen. Alcohol is cheap, but housing, coffee and groceries are expensive.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)

There is no public transport. There is campus busses, but I never used them. You should live near the university preferably atop the hill so you don't have to hike to Cornell.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?)

The three dams are really a must see. Additionally, there is a lot of beautiful nature in the area to explore. Bring boots.

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

Potters falls.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?)

The Green Dragon was my favourite cafe on the university it is slightly more artsy. Besides, all parties are house parties, there is few clubs and they suck.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

No free time and consistent pressure to perform. Highly motivated, but socially silent students they primarily focus on their work.

What was your best memory abroad?

All my friends and the time I spent with them. Additionally, during spring break my friends from the netherlands came over and we went on a roadtrip in Canada.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes	
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Riemer Pieter van der Vliet.