



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Food technology
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	17/08/2022 until 18/12/2022
Country (exchange)	USA
City (exchange)	Ithaca
University (exchange)	Cornell University
Faculty (exchange)	College of Agriculture and Lifesciences

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to experience how it is to live in a different country for a longer period and I wanted to improve my English.

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

I wanted to go to an English-speaking country because I liked that it is easier to communicate with people from that country. I looked up all the possible universities and Cornell University stood out to me because it is one of the best in Agriculture and Lifesciences. I was also curious about the real American campus experience.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I flew to New York City and then took the bus to Ithaca. The bus will take around 4.5 hours.

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	Earthquake!	6	About the science of natural disasters. Focus on earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis. A bit of climate change is included as well.	3	The professor is enthusiastic but also chaotic. I missed some engagement during the lectures. But if you are interested in natural disasters it is a fun course.
2	Introductory Oceanography	6	How the ocean works and current environmental threats (global warming, ocean acidification, overfishing, coastal pollution)	5	The professor is really good. He is very enthusiastic about his field and he tries to get students to speak up about contemporary public issues. Would really recommend this course.
3	Introduction to wines	4	Understanding terms on a wine label, discussing aromas and flavors of wines, and looking at wines from all over the world.	4	Each week you get to taste wines during class. You get a lot of information about wines from different regions and you learn all about the label. The professor is really enthusiastic.
4	Food for contemporary living	4	Laboratory course where the focus is on understanding food ingredients and techniques of food preparation. This is applied to health promotion goals and cultural food traditions.	5	Each week you cook a recipe in the lab. At the end of each lab, you get to taste everyone's recipes and do a sensory analysis. You learn about the role of the ingredients and the different techniques of preparation.
5	Introduction to psychology	6	A broad introduction to psychology. Topics like perception, memory, intelligence, morality, sexuality, mental illness, religion, language, and creativity.	3	The lectures are interesting and easy to follow. But the content is a bit shallow.
6	Wines & Vines laboratory	4	Learn about the technique of winemaking and also making wine yourself.	2	This course is a bit chaotic and very basic. The winemaking part is fun. But for the rest, it is mainly about learning how to write scientific reports (since mostly freshmen take this course).

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

Most courses had 2 or 3 lectures each week combined with many assignments. In the US your grade is often built up out of a lot of assignments. The final exam most of the time only accounts for 10-30%. The courses were a lot of work, but not that hard. I did follow a lot of introductory courses. I heard from others that the level of their courses was about the same as in Wageningen, but it is easier to get higher grades.

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?)

Lecturers are very approachable. They have office hours where you can visit them but you can also talk to them after classes. I think it is quite the same as at the WUR.

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

You can buy a meal plan to eat at dining halls. However, this is quite expensive. If you have a house off-campus, with a kitchen, I would recommend cooking for yourself. Furthermore, there are also a lot of cafés/ lunch spots where you can buy food or drinks on campus, but these are also quite expensive.

There are some gyms and swimming pools. You can buy a gym pass for the semester for around 90 dollars, which also includes group classes. There are also a lot of clubs that you can join. For example field hockey club, kickboxing club, and running club. They are often free to join.

If you have a house on campus laundry facilities are provided, but I think you do have to pay each time.

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?)

You can sign up for a room on campus, however, in the fall semester they are often already full. Then you have to look for something off-campus yourself. I think living on-campus is quite expensive and not necessarily the best option.

I found a house off-campus via Facebook. It is easier to find a room in spring semester than in fall semester. However, the weather is better in fall semester and there are more exchange students, which makes it probably the more fun semester to go.

There are also cooperative houses. Which are basically big student houses. You can send them an email to see if they have any places left.

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

Most Americans are very friendly and hospitable. They are very welcoming, invite you to their homes, and make dinner for you. However, I found it difficult to really get to know

the Americans, they can be a bit shallow. Therefore their friendliness can feel a bit fake sometimes. Also making appointments with them can be a struggle. I often heard 'oh let's hang out next week', but then it never really happens. The American food is a bit what you expect. Processed foods often contain a lot of sugar and there is a lot of fast food.

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

The rent is very expensive. Between \$700-\$1200 a month.

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

For American standards, the bus system is quite good. There are buses going to campus, downtown, and stores like Walmart. Exchange students can use it for free. However, most of the things are walkable (except supermarkets). You can also use Uber. They are not too expensive if you share with others.

6. Free time

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

There are some nice falls in the area. The Cascadilla trail and Buttermilk falls are worth a visit. Furthermore, the farmers market and apple picking are some real typical American experiences. The botanical garden at the campus is very nice in summer, fall, and probably also in spring. Uris library is a really nice library that has the Harry Potter vibes and is definitely worth a visit. You can also climb the McGraw Hill tower during the daily chime concerts. From the tower you can have a nice view over the campus, Ithaca, and the lake.

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

Anabel's groceries is a small shop on campus run by students. They sell local food products usually cheaper than in normal supermarkets. I would definitely recommend going there. Especially for the bread, which is relatively cheap and does not contain added sugar 😊.

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

In orientation week and the first weeks of fall semester there are (block) parties at College town. After that, there are frat parties in the fraternity houses. It can be a bit hard to get in sometimes. But if you know some people in the fraternity you can get in. Furthermore, there are two bars in college town. Level B and Hideaway. They are most busy on Wednesday nights when you can get a cheap 'fishbowl' at level B and there is karaoke at Hideaway. In downtown, there is one bar called Moonies which can also be fun sometimes. There are more students from Ithaca college there. During homecoming weekend there are block parties at college town during the day. Sometimes cooperative houses also throw parties.

For food, collegetown bagels is popular. Moosewood is a good and well known vegetarian restaurant, but is a bit more expensive. Ithaca beer co. is a nice bar to drink some beers. The Cornell dairy bar is also worth a visit. State diner is a typical American diner which was also nice.

It is also fun to visit wineries around Ithaca. I went to the Six Mile Creek vineyard.

You should also definitely go to one or more ice hockey games. Cornell has a really good team and it is really fun to watch.

There are also cinemas, both at downtown and at Cornell University itself. And you can go bowling at the university.

Close to Cornell, there is also a golf course where you can go to.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

The exchange was quite expensive. The rent is a lot more than in Wageningen and you have to get the student health plan of Cornell which is around \$1700. The groceries are also a bit more expensive.

Furthermore, a big struggle was that the supermarkets are all quite far away. There are buses going to the supermarkets, but often you have to wait quite a long time for the bus. Therefore, having a friend or roommate with a car is very convenient.

It is also quite difficult to get out of Ithaca. Trips to New York, Boston, Washington DC, and Niagara falls are super fun but it can be a struggle to get there. Buses that go there are quite expensive, so often it is better to rent a car. If you want to rent a car you should make sure that you have a credit card that has your name on it. The name on the credit card has to be the same as on the driver's license.

What was your best memory abroad?

I don't have one memory that stands out. Maybe it's a bit cliché, but the thing I liked most about studying abroad was meeting all new people from different countries. Ithaca might not be the most exciting city, but I had so much fun with all the people I met.

I also really enjoyed the American campus experience. You cannot get this when just going on vacation to the US. The typical college events like sports games, homecoming, Halloween, and frat parties are super fun to experience.

What I also liked was Cornell University itself and its beautiful campus. Cornell is a good university and you can really notice that a lot of the professors are very passionate about their field and are proud to be able to teach at this university. Cornell also offers a lot of interesting and fun courses, like 'introduction to wines' where you have wine tastings during class, and 'food for contemporary living' where you cook and eat each week during lab. Furthermore, the nature surrounding Cornell is really nice. I walked to campus each day and every time I enjoyed my view. It is normal to see deer walking around in summer and fall, and there are squirrels everywhere.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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