



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Nutrition and Health
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	26/08/2022 until 16/12/2022
Country (exchange)	United States of America
City (exchange)	East Lansing
University (exchange)	Michigan State University
Faculty (exchange)	-

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Going on an exchange was a very appealing option to me for a longer time because I really love traveling. After the lecture on the exchange possibilities, I knew for sure I wanted to go on an exchange. I saw a lot of bright sides of going on an exchange, for example improving your English, making new friends, experiencing another way of teaching, broaden your knowledge, traveling through that country and so on.

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

I chose for Michigan State University for multiple reasons. One of the reasons is because I really like the U.S. I have been to the U.S. many times before for holidays and I really liked it there. I was also interested in their school system. I have heard a lot about it, but I never experienced it myself. Moreover, I wanted to go to an English-speaking country, because I would feel more comfortable being in a country where I can understand the language and I felt that that would be the best way to improve my English. The university itself is in a beautiful area of the U.S. I have never been to. The nature is beautiful there and the campus is very big. As Wageningen has a very small campus, this was something I really wanted to experience, just as sleeping in dorms, and having a roommate. This university emphasizes sports a lot, which lead to a lot of sports games being offered, which had my interest as well. Also, the university offered courses I was interested in.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

I flew from Amsterdam to Detroit. Many exchange students flew to Detroit. Another option is flying to Lansing. I took a bus arranged by the university to the campus, so they dropped me off on campus. Another way is to take the Michigan Flyer. It is a cheap option and also drops you off close to the campus. An uber can be taken from the bus stop. On campus itself there are free buses.

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	Global Nutrition	6	In this course the emphasize is on the problems in the poorer countries, for example on malnutrition, wasting and stunting. Other topics are also paid attention to, such as HIV. I wrote a research paper on an emerging problem in the world.	5	The teacher was amazing and explained everything well. She always made sure I understood everything, and the atmosphere was great.
2	Principles of Advertising	6	It is an introduction to the advertising world. I did not know anything about advertising before, but I could follow it well and learned a lot. Also some marketing is introduced.	4	I really liked the way the course was taught.
3	Consumer Behavior	6	Consumer Behavior was introduced to me. Different perspectives on consumer behavior were taught and explained well. We also did our own research, which we presented later.	5	The teacher was very nice and good at his job.
4	Children, Youth and Family	6	The lifespan- from conception to adult- is explained. Also, a lot is explained about families and factors	5	The teacher explained it very well and was very sweet. I could ask her anything and she always helped me out.

			that could influence them. This is also combined with every stage of life.		
5					
6					

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

For 3 out of 4 courses I had books we needed to read and study. For all courses I had lectures. For 3 out of 4 courses I had weekly quizzes to test our knowledge (which was graded as well). I noticed that in the U.S. they have a lot of assignments, which were graded. For one course I always had a weekly quiz, an assignment, readings and two lectures. We always got time for self-study. The academic level was adapted to the level of the course. The part of the examination for two courses was with exams, for one course this was a final paper. The workload was very high compared to Wageningen, this was because of all the quizzes and assignments next to the readings, exams, group work and the lectures.

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?)

The lecturers were very approachable. I did notice in smaller classes it was easier to engage with the teacher. In bigger classes this could be hard. Engagement with local students was a bit harder than in Wageningen. I made some friends in some classes, but in the bigger classes it was hard sometimes. At WUR, I already have a friend group and I know many students, as opposed to I was mostly the only exchange student in the class at MSU, so I did not know many people. However, many people were interested in where I was from and were open to talk to me.

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

Food and accommodation were included in the semester, so I could eat for free on the whole campus. Sport facilities were for free as well. Everyone could go to the gym, swimming pool, spin classes etc. for free. Also, all associations were open to everyone. This was often for a low price and a lot of advantages were there. Laundry was also for free, just as bin bags and borrowing the vacuum. During thanksgiving, the exchange organization organised a Thanksgiving dinner for us, which was delicious and for free too. Other than that, they had other activities, such as a day to the Ford Museum, which you could sign up for and pay a little fee for. At the end of the semester, we had a graduation ceremony with hats. This was a nice way to celebrate the end of the semester.

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?)

Everyone will get a room on campus, unless there is a good reason not to. Preferences can be given, for example a single room instead of sharing a room. You will answer a questionnaire so the best location and the best roommate will be chosen for you. The university will arrange all of the housing and will provide you with some contact information about your new roommate. A single room is more expensive than when you share a room with your roommate.

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

Something I noticed while being in the U.S was the difference in food. I ate in a dining hall every day and the food could mostly be considered unhealthy. Also, a lot of fast-food restaurants could be found in the area. Also, American students go to class in their leggings, pyjama pants or sweatpants. Europeans however, dress up for class. Moreover, in the U.S., the first thing people say when they see each other is "How are you?", even when they walk past each other and keep walking. Also, in the U.S. people are not as direct as Dutch people. People in the U.S. are very polite.

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

For one semester at MSU I paid around 6000/7000 dollars. This included accommodation and food. In Wageningen food would not be included and rent would probably be around 300/400 euros a month, which would be 1600 euros a semester. The U.S therefore is quite expensive.

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

The university is very big. Walking is possible, but it could easily take you half an hour. However, MSU offers free busses all day, even during the weekends. Busses 30-39 are for free, the others cost \$0.75 a ride, no matter your destination. It is only possible to pay in cash and the change is put on your bus card, which you could use for the next time. During my time at MSU, I used Uber as well. It is a safe option and brings you everywhere.

6. Free time

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

Michigan is a beautiful place to visit. I visited the west side of Michigan with the Exchange semester program of MSU (organized by MSU for exchange students). We went to Saugatuck where we did a dune ride and after that we went to the beach. We did this in the beginning of the semester, which I would recommend because the weather is still very nice. Another destination I would recommend is Toronto combined with Niagara Falls. We did this when we had a long weekend off relatively in the beginning of the

semester too. We rented a car and drove there ourselves. We stayed in an Airbnb. Another recommendation is the whole Northern part of Michigan. We did this during the fall break. The nature is beautiful, and it is a good time to relax. Some nice cities are Mackinaw City, Mackinac Island, the UP and Traverse City. We did this by car again. I would recommend doing this trip not too late as it could be cold in November/December, and you will be outside a lot. During Thanksgiving I went to Chicago. Many classes were online or cancelled so students could travel home for the little break. Lastly, at the end of the semester I went to Chicago again as my flight was from there and I could spend my last days with my friends. Traveling to Chicago is easy by train, with the company Amtrak. The tickets are not too expensive, and the train station is near the campus. An Uber can be taken to the train station. Chicago is nice in every weather condition.

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

A lot of sport games. Sports are a very important part of MSU, so watching a game is a whole new experience. Especially American football. Not only students support the Spartans, but also adults like to see the game. Before the game starts there is a tailgate. Other worth-mentioning spot are the places I mentioned in the question above.

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

Some going out places my friends and I liked to go to were Harpers, The Riv and Landshark. Some good restaurants are Omi, Raising Canes and D.P Dough. In one of the residence halls, Snyder, a theatre could be used for free, so we watched movies there or did karaoke. Besides that, I joined a women workout group called CHAARG. They organize weekly workouts and socials. Besides that, you could sign up for a small group, so you had another workout and a close group of American friends.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

A challenge for me was to get over the fear of constantly speaking English. In the beginning I felt a bit uncomfortable speaking English all the time, as I was afraid my English was not good enough. But I got used to it very quickly and after that I felt really comfortable speaking and even presenting in class.

What was your best memory abroad?

It is hard to choose one best memory, as I had an amazing time. Something I still really appreciate is the lunches and dinners together with my friends there everyday. We talked about our day and other nice things. We were quite a big group but got to know each other better and better very quickly. I loved the traveling we did together as a group. For example, the car ride to every destination, but also the whole holiday. Also, I really liked going out with the group and doing a Secret Santa.

8. Contact details (optional)

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Mylène Tjoelker, mylene.tjoelker@wur.nl	