



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	21/09/2022 until 07/12/2022
Country (exchange)	United States of America
City (exchange)	Corvallis
University (exchange)	Oregon State University
Faculty (exchange)	N/A

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to see what University Life would be like in another country, preferably somewhere far away. I was also looking for a wider array of courses to take, and diversify my major.

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

I chose the USA because I had never left Europe, and wanted to experience something completely new. I had also always had a bit of a fascination with the USA, especially the university experience there. I then chose Oregon State University because their list of faculties overlapped completely with the WUR faculties, which meant that I would be able to follow a wide range of courses.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

Of course you have to take an airplane to the US, and one great thing is that from Schiphol you can take a direct flight to Portland International Airport, which is the airport closest to Corvallis. From there I took a Flixbus to Corvallis. Just keep in mind that this Flixbus drops you off at the OSU campus, so if your accommodation is far away from campus it could be quite a walk. There is a bus network within Corvallis as well though.

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	Intersection between Plants and Humanity	6	Explores the way plants have shaped the history of humanity.	4	This is a BACC core course, which basically means that it is a lot of work, but also a lot of interesting content, especially the lectures early on in the term
2	Ecological Restoration	8	Project based course that will have you go about creating an Ecological Restoration plan for an area	5	Very engaging, and to me a personally a really amazing course that provided great insight in what I could actually achieve with my Landscape Architecture degree. Has a lot of overlap with Ecology, Botany, and Land Management
3	Introduction of Wildland Ecology	8	Introduction course that focusses on the land management of wildlands and rangelands in the US and the rest of the world	5	Great teacher, interesting course material that explores a type of land-use that is not seen in the Netherlands. Could be a little easy for people with a background in Ecology.
4	Biodiversity; Causes, Consequences and Conservation	6	In-depth Zoology course on the Earth's biodiversity and how we can conserve it	5	Interesting and very in-depth, extremely knowledgeable teacher that actively engages his students in the course material.
5					
6					

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

What I noticed is that US courses focus a lot more on intermediary grading, instead of leaving the passing or failing of a course up to just one test. To me this worked out very well, as I prefer writing assignments over tests, but if you feel like you tend to struggle with writing assignments in English, I would say look more deeply into the courses you choose. In terms of academic level, I would say it is on par with the level at Wageningen University, if anything a little easier. However as stated before, the workload per course is a lot higher.

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?)

I experience the University culture to be a lot more open and friendly. Teachers are engaged more, and in my experience, were very kind and welcoming to their students. I think it depends on the courses you choose, but I also noticed that with the courses I chose the classrooms were a lot smaller and less crowded, so you get more personal attention from the teachers. In terms of the students,

Corvallis has a very diverse international community. Every year, a lot of exchange students take classes there, and they are easy to recognize. American students were sometimes harder to engage with, because the frat and sorority culture is fairly prevalent in Corvallis. Americans in general are more welcoming to strangers than Dutch people are though, so it is easy to approach people.

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

You get access to an array of sporting facilities from climbing walls, to swimming pools. There are a lot of dining halls on campus where you can grab a meal, but I personally did not attend these a lot. I preferred going down Monroe Avenue, which is at walking distance from to campus, and get my coffee and lunch there.

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?)

It is possible to stay in the official University dorms, but I would not recommend this. It is very expensive, and you have no idea with what kind of people you will share a room with. I stayed at the Ihouse, which is one of the few student houses in Corvallis that accepts students for one-term. It is a little pricy for the state the house is in, but it did allow me to meet a lot of other students which added a lot to my experience.

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

In a lot of ways similar to the Netherlands, but just Americanised. Within Corvallis you can easily get around by bicycle, however if you want to go anywhere outside Corvallis you really need a car. In terms of cuisine, there are a lot more chain restaurants, and the portions are very... American.

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

I payed 600\$ a month incl. for my room at the Ihouse. To be fair, this is overpriced. It really varies on what kind of accommodation you manage to arrange for yourself. For example, the campus dorms cost about a \$1000 a month (please don't go to the dorms), but I also knew people there that only paid 200\$ a month for their room.

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

Within Corvallis you can use a bicycle, or walk. The town is around the same size as Wageningen, so you can get around town similarly. There is a bus network, and the university provides a free taxi service, called OSU SafeRide that picks up students for free all around Corvallis from 19:00 until 01:00.

6. Free time

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

Portland and Seattle are both great cities to spend a weekend trip. I would also recommend going to the coast, specifically areas like Cannon Beach and Newport. Initially I travelled by Flixbus, but at some point I made enough friends with cars so I drove around with them.

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

I'd say Triangle Lake. It is about a 2 hour drive from Corvallis and features a waterfall you can slide down!

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

Going out in Corvallis is pretty limited to a few bars on the aforementioned Monroe Avenue. I liked Lupez café for drinks, and Bombs Away has weekly activities like comedy nights, trivia, and open mic events. Other leisure activities I would recommend is to go hike around the Corvallis Green Belt. Corvallis is surrounded by State parks of all different kinds.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

It's the little things. Doorknobs, toilets, traffic rules, etc. all work slightly different from how they do in the Netherlands. It also took me a while to get used to public customs. For example, if you enter a store or a coffee shop, you will be often be greeted with a "Hi, how are you?" to which you then reply "Good, how are you?" and then place your order. It's those little things that took a while to get used to, but in general I would describe my experience as smooth

What was your best memory abroad?

During thanksgiving break, me and a friend went on a road-trip down the Pacific coast. (As I said, make friends with people that have cars). I visited Big Sur national park, and the Redwood forests. It was absolutely gorgeous, and ended up not even being expensive, since we went with cheap motel accommodations (which are by far not as shady as people make them out to be).

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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