



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Biotechnonogy
Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)	3/1/22 until 10/6/22
Country (exchange)	United States of America
City (exchange)	San Diego
University (exchange)	University of California San Diego
Faculty (exchange)	Molecular Biology

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I wanted to challenge myself by living in a new environment and I wanted to expand my network outside Wageningen

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

- Good academics
- Amazing weather and beautiful landscape
- Different continent
- Teachers make it easy to help them with their research in their lab (outside class)
- Biotech internship opportunities
- Full immersion in a English-speaking environment
- Desire to live in California in the future

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

At the airport there is access to public transportation which takes about an hour and a half to get to the university. Uber/Lift is probably a better idea and takes about 30 minutes

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	BIMM 114 – Virology	6.6	Basic virology and overview of different viral families	4	
2	BIMM 172 – Genome Science	6.6	Each week a different article related to Genome/Transcriptome/Proteome sequencing is discussed. All articles are published less than a year ago.	4	
3	PHIL 32 – Philosophy and the Rise of Modern Science	6.6	The role the scientific movement has played in philosophy. The course consists of readings and discussions of different philosophers and how each have tried to define absolute truths in our world	4	
4	BENG160 Chemical & Molecular BENG Techniques	6.6	Laboratory course covering many molecular biology techniques (PCR, gels, SDS-PAGE, transformations, etc...) and some bioinformatical techniques. Each week students write a report of the experiments carried out.	3	In my opinion, not necessary if you took the course "Practical Biological Chemistry" in parson in Wageningen. I took it because many of my practical courses were online during the early stages of my bachelors.
5	ECE15 Engineering Computation	6.6	Introductory level coding with C. Introduction to variables, pointers, functions, arrays and dynamic memory.	3	
6	BICD140 Immunology	6.6	Lecture based course focusing mostly on	5	Great combined with virology

			the adaptive immune system.		
	<i>BIMM194</i> Adv. Topics – Molecular Bio – CRISPR Gene Editing	3.3	Weekly discussion and presentations made by students covering the recent developments and applications of CRISPR technology. Some include different approaches to genetic editing, transcriptome editing and diagnostics.	5	Very interesting class and the professor, Dr. Wildonger is very kind and open to helping students

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

Students take more courses simultaneously than in Wageningen but spread out over a longer period with one week for finals at the end of each period. The academic level is the same if not lower but studying remains a challenge since you have to balance different courses. The level between courses changes drastically so don't overload yourself with intense courses.

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 don't approach you but they are very easy to approach. Most teachers will stay after hours to answer any questions. It's also relatively easy to help teachers with research outside of class which is something that many students do and that I personally enjoyed. I would highly recommend to live at the International House since the students there are some of the most social. In addition you can also join a fraternity/sorority (only recommendable if you stay for two quarters)

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

The university has many facilities, some of which include:

- About 20 different restaurants
- Courts/fields for almost any sport (soccer, basketball, tennis, baseball etcc...) and a pretty big gym
- Many libraries across campus
- Laundry rooms
- The beach is 30 min away

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?)

International students have a high chance of finding a room at the International Housing complex on campus. This costs about \$5000 every study period (three months) and includes about \$20 of credit for food.

Off campus housing exists too but I don't have information about it

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

Culturally, the U.S. and the Netherlands are more similar than I expected. The biggest difference that I observed is that people are more extrovert.

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

I paid about €400/month for rent in NL while I paid \$1000/month for rent in the U.S. Food is also more expensive if you decide to take one of the university's meal plans from \$300-\$1000 month compared to the €300/month but it is very convenient and you save time cooking.

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

Public transportation within San Diego is free for students which is great but you don't need it if you live on campus. If you live off campus, I would recommend renting a car long term as it will also allow you to travel outside of San Diego.

6. Free time

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

- **Balboa Park**
- **Black's Beach**
- **Sunset Cliff**
- **Scripts Beach**
- **Glider port**
- **Pacific Beach**
- **Tijuana or other cities in Mexico (the border is 1h away)**
- **During spring or winter break I would plan a road trip along the Pacific Highway (covers most of the coast in California)**

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

Encinitas and all the small towns north of San Diego

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

- **There are many restaurants on campus so I would stick with that**
- **There is a movie theatre at 5 minutes by tram**

- **Definitively try surfing. If you are a beginner go to Scripts beach**
- **To go out go to Pacific Beach (people call it PB) but remember that you have to be 21 to enter bars.**

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

- **Adapting to the 9hr time zone difference between California and NL**
- **Working on tasks from UCSD and WUR simultaneously**

What was your best memory abroad?

- **Having a bonfire at night with friends**
- **Going surfing every day of the week**

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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