



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Study programme WUR</b>	MEE
<b>Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	15/08/2023 until 16/12/2024
<b>Exchange destination: University</b>	Purdue University
<b>Faculty</b>	College of Agriculture/College of Science/Polytechnic Institute
<b>Country</b>	United States of America
<b>City</b>	West Lafayette, IN

## 2. Motivation for exchange

### Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I love to travel and I am quite certain I would like to work and live abroad at some point in my life. Going on exchange was like a 'trial' to me to see if I would actually enjoy living abroad. Furthermore, I wanted to broaden my academic knowledge in some areas that Wageningen or any other Dutch university did not offer, so I decided to look abroad for that.

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

I wanted to focus my studies on aviation and Purdue has a very good school in aviation studies. I also wanted a school in an English speaking country so that the language would not be a barrier to follow classes or make friends.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

Fly to Chicago's O'hare Airport and take either Lafayette Limo or Reindeer Shuttle to Purdue's campus.

## 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	AT100	2	<b>Introduction to Aviation Technology:</b> freshman course to familiarize yourself with the School of Aviation and the aviation industry	3	I did not initially understand this was very much an introductory course for the faculty, and therefore not very useful for me as an exchange student. However, it was still nice to do the assignments and reflect on some different aspects of the aviation industry!
2	AT103	6	<b>Aerospace Vehicle Propulsion and Tracking Systems:</b> the ins and outs of both reciprocating as well as turbine engines.	5	Loved this course, even though it was quite technical, it was very interesting to learn about how engines work and also how this influences operations!
3	AT106	6	<b>Basic Aircraft Science:</b> Anything aircraft related; from 'why does a plane fly' to all laws and regulations associated with building or working with planes.	5	Great course to familiarize yourself with the general structure and physics behind planes and flying. Quite focussed on American laws, which is not surprising, but sometimes not very useful if you are not aiming for a career in the US. Nevertheless very nice course and not too difficult for a higher level student.
4	AT325	6	<b>Advanced Aviation Meteorology:</b> course focussed on all meteorological factors that influence flying (icing, fronts, turbulence, air density, etc.)	5	Even though this course is highly focussed on pilots and not on meteorologists, it was still a very fun and interesting course. Especially to surround yourself with ProFlight students, from who you can also learn a lot!
5	EAPS421	6	<b>Atmospheric Thermodynamics:</b> all the basics in thermodynamics	5	This course may sound boring or difficult, but it is probably the course I would recommend most to anyone slightly interested in meteorology. This was by far the most fun and engaging course I took. The professor is very nice and incredibly dedicated to the students' success and the ungraded format makes this a very

					different course to all others. The way of teaching was great and I probably never learned as efficiently as I did in this course. And it sets you up greatly for any other meteorological course in the future!
6	EAPS539	6	<b>Mesoscale Meteorology:</b> covers all mesoscale features found in the atmosphere.	4	This course was the most challenging one I took and even though it was definitely very interesting it was sometimes quite hard too. The pace is quite high and lots of stuff is covered in short periods of time. Don't recommend taking this course if you don't have experience with vector calculus.

### **What is it like to study there?**

*E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material.*

The teaching methods are the major difference when comparing the WUR to Purdue. In the US, it is very normal to get large amounts of homework in university. My schedule was therefore also very different than at the WUR; I was taking 6 courses at a time, for which I had either 1 or 2 lectures per week. Every week was the same schedule. Therefore there was a lot of 'free time', but the amount of work that had to be done outside of class was much higher. Your grade was also partially based on your homework and sometimes even on attendance. There are also more options to gain extra credit in case you failed an assignment or exam, so failing a course rarely happens. Despite that, the level was quite comparable to that at the WUR, especially when you take courses at the same 'code' level (400/500 is upper bachelor's level). It is much less common to not be in class than it is at the WUR, as sometimes attendance is taken or there can be pop quizzes. People would often form study groups to keep up with material and homework in between classes which was very nice.

### **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?*

Students and lecturers were very approachable. Many are very interested to hear about your experience as an international student too which helps. Like I said people would often form study groups so it is not difficult to engage with local students. The university also has many 'clubs', which can range from sports clubs to professional ones. I definitely recommend joining a couple to meet some new people. Joining a club gave me some very cool opportunities, I met some of my best friends through there and it also helped be build a professional network!

### **What does the university offer students additionally?**

*E.g. catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?*

There is a very large sports centre which is completely free (or included in tuition) for students. Included in the centre are multiple large fitness halls, basketball courts,

volleyball courts, an outside and inside running track, a bouldering and climbing wall, a large swimming pool, sauna's, and there is also an option to follow lessons free of charge. Physical therapy is also located inside the building. Moreover there is a health centre located on campus (which is all walking distance) and there are numerous commercial catering facilities on campus. For students living in the residence halls (which is most common for exchange students), there are laundry rooms in the buildings (not free) and you will be forced to take out a meal plan, which you can use at one of the 5 dining courts on campus.

## 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?*

The university has their own housing called dorms or residence halls. These rooms are often shared with a roommate, some will be single rooms but those are often reserved for returning students. The rooms are equipped with beds, desks, dressers and a closet. The bathroom is usually shared with the rest of the floor which are gender-separated. There's different dorms for everyone's liking, so some will be more apartment style, including a kitchen and private bathroom, while others are like I described above. Some will have AC, others will not. All these factors contribute to the price of the room. Generally rental rates are higher than in Wageningen. I paid about \$2000 for my room for the fall semester (august-december). This is excluding the meal plan that you are forced to take out if you are in the residence buildings, since there are no / very small kitchens. There are multiple options for meal plans which are based on the amount of meals per week. I had the smallest one (8 meals per week) and this cost me \$1499 for the entire semester. This comes down to about \$12 per meal. So quite a bit higher than in the Netherlands.

There are also possibilities to live outside the dorm rooms. There are fraternities/sororities (studentenverenigingen) that provide housing and there's also co-operative housing (more similar to Dutch housing, where you share a house with housemates and all share cleaning/cooking tasks). There's also private companies providing housing (usual rates about \$600-\$1000 a month) both on and outside campus. These rooms are generally more expensive but do come with the luxury of bigger/single rooms including bathrooms or kitchens.

There's basically anything to accommodate your wishes. The dorms are just the easiest option as you are guaranteed a room and the meal plan provides some luxury since you do not have to cook.

### **What is the culture of the country like?**

*E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?*

Purdue is located in the state of Indiana which is (I would say) a very typical American state. People there are extremely nice, but it can sometimes be politeness and a bit 'fake'. They are not as direct as us Dutchies so this can sometimes seem rude to them. However, people are usually always there to help you and it is very easy to make friends! Food is less fresh and generally processed which can provide a bit of a challenge when you are trying to eat healthy. It is also very normal to wear pyjama pants to class... this is still weird to me.

**Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?**

*E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?)*

The campus is large, but generally everything is at walking distance! It depends a bit on where you are, but if you have a room on campus, you should be able to get to class/dining courts/gym just by walking. It would usually take me about 10 minutes to walk to class from my dorm room and most dining courts were about 5 minutes away, as well as the gym. To get somewhere outside of campus, you will need to either use a car (if you make some American friends they will be able to drive you ● ) or take a bus. The bus system towards Lafayette is free for Purdue students and runs reasonably well. Sometimes buses will not show up so take some extra time. Ubers are relatively cheap too, especially when sharing. To get to Chicago or Indianapolis you can for example take a train or Flixbus which would be somewhere between 20 and 50 dollars one way. Generally the public transport system is OK, but not near as dense or good as in the Netherlands. To get somewhere outside of Lafayette – except for big cities like Chicago or Indianapolis – you will need (someone with) a car.

To travel anywhere further you will probably need to fly (there's some trains that run across the country, AmTrak, which is a fun experience but takes long). You can take flights out of Chicago or Indianapolis. International flights will generally only fly from Chicago. There's two shuttle services running from and to Purdue's campus to both Indianapolis and Chicago O'hare airports (NOT Midway!): Reindeer Shuttle and Lafayette Limo. I can recommend them both. There's also general bus services, like Flixbus or Greyhound, running to Indianapolis and Chicago. However these services do not run from the airports and drop you or in Lafayette, which is outside Purdue's campus (which is in WEST Lafayette). So you will still need to Uber/take a train/bus to get to and from these bus services. However, they will be a little cheaper than the shuttles.

## 6. Expenses

**Can you give an indication of your expenses for/during your exchange?**

*E.g. you can also indicate price differences (higher/lower/equal) in comparison to the Netherlands.*

Ticket there: 920 EUR (round trip, direct flight)

Visa if applicable: \$450

Vaccinations if applicable: none

Insurances (extra, if applicable): continuous travel insurance: 6.50 EUR/month, health insurance through university: \$650 for the entire semester

Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation: \$3500 for small double room + 8 meals a week for the entire semester. \$35 a night if you come early/stay late.

Groceries: about \$20-40 a week

Public transport: 0 for buses on campus/to Lafayette

Restaurant/going out for dinner: depends on restaurant, but usually a bit cheaper than in Netherlands. Main course would usually be around \$10-\$15 and drinks around \$3 with free refills.

Daytrips/sight-seeing: there's not many 'day trips' to do around Lafayette, but you can go to some cities for a weekend (Chicago, Indianapolis, Nashville). Big cities are clearly more expensive than rural Indiana. Transport there about \$50 (cheapest option) and I would say accommodation \$100-\$200 a night. But this is a very rough estimate.

**Additional remarks regarding expenses?**

## 7. Free time

### **What are must-sees in the area?**

*E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?*

Like I said there is not very much to see in the neighbouring area to campus. There's a lot of farming so it's mainly corn/soy bean fields you will see outside of campus. The campus itself is very large and full of fun things to do. I 100% recommend going to a football game, a basketball game, and if you are over 21 go to the Neon Cactus for a fun night out. The Neon Cactus is a large bar on the edge of West Lafayette including a piano bar with live music on Thursdays through Saturdays. Purdue's campus is a dry campus, so there are not many bars or clubs, but there's definitely ways to make it fun.

### **What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth a visit?**

Around Lafayette you will find some historical battle grounds from when the settlers first came to America and fought the natives. If you are interested in a little bit of history, this is definitely worth a visit. You will need a car for this, so ask some of your American friends to drive you and show you around abit. The nature here is also a lot prettier, with old riverbeds meandering through the forests and hills it is a lot different than the endless plains of corn.

### **Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?**

*E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?*

The PMU is a great place to pick up a quick-to-go meal for a mealswipe. The Hillenbrand dining court does great brunches every Sunday. If you are into weightlifting, the co-rec will be heaven to you. It is a massive gym. Do not miss out on going to some sports games as the whole campus turns into chaos on those days. It is absolutely fun to experience full American college culture. If you are into aviation, the university has its own airport located just outside of campus. Take a discovery flight and see campus from above!

## 8. Challenges & best moment abroad

### **What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?**

I was never homesick or anything like that, I love travelling so I did not really have many challenges. It was a little bit difficult to make friends in courses where people already have their own friend groups, but the course I felt most alone in my first lecture was actually the one I made the most friends in in the end. It definitely helps to join a club. Living with a roommate can also be a little bit of a challenge, especially if your sleeping schedules are very different. Be sure to talk about it with your roommate or resident assistant if something is bothering you to avoid conflict. Living with a roommate was not as bad as I thought it would be as you will still have your own space inside the shared room. Even though I did not, I know many exchange students that became very close with their roommate. If you struggle with staying motivated to study, it can be sometimes be a little bit difficult to keep up because of the amount of (what seems to be) free time. For me this system works great, but it can be challenging to motivate yourself to do all of the homework. If you are struggling with anything, homesickness, motivation or mental issues, the university has some great resources you can reach out to (CAPS).

**What is your best memory of your time abroad?**

All of the things I did just because I said "I'm only here for 4 months so yes, let's just do it". I got to go look behind the scenes of two international airlines, I got to go flying twice, I showed horses as a real cowgirl because I joined the western team, and still managed to get the highest grades I've ever received in my academic career. Most importantly, I got to meet friends for life, from all over the world!

**9. Contact details (optional)**

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Name/e-mail</b>	Vera.buis@wur.nl	