



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	Bachelor Food Technology (BFT)
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	03/01/2024 until 26/04/2024
Exchange destination: University	Michigan State University
Faculty	Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics (AFRE)
Country	United States
City	East Lansing

2. Motivation for exchange

a. Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

I really wanted to experience a new culture and meet more people from different countries. Thereby, I wanted to challenge myself to live in a new environment on my own and see how I would handle the challenges while being abroad.

b. What is the reason you chose for this country?

Since I was little I was always watching videos of people at American universities decorating their dorm rooms and showing the campus they were on. This inspired me to one day also live in the dorms, so that's why I wanted to go to the United States.

c. What is the reason you chose for this university?

From the universities that were available in the United States this one had courses that seemed the most interesting to me and when I did some more research on the atmosphere it also looked really fun.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

a. Do you have any advice about reaching your exchange destination?

Prepare well with all the right documents and pay careful attention to the process of applying for a Visa.

4. University and studying

a. 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
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1	Decision-making in the Agri Food System	6	Basic economic principles such as supply and demand applied to the agri-food system	5	The professor of this course, John Mann, is a really nice guy and I really enjoyed his class
2	Data-analysis for the Agri-Food System	6	This was basically a course on how to use excel, which was very easy at the beginning but later on in the semester taught me some helpful skills	2	
3	Food Product Marketing	6	Marketing principles and the whole industry explained	5	This course was super broad and it was very nice to learn about the marketing systems in the United States. The professor used a lot of articles and real-life examples which was really nice
4	Principles of Packaging	6	Everything regarding the packaging industry explained, from materials to labelling to design.	5	This was my favorite course by far, so much in depth explanation because the teacher had worked in the industry for 20 years.
5	Topics in Supply Chain Management	4	Environmental regulations and business decisions explained mostly on the hand of case studies every week	2	Did not really like this course, it was not really about supply chain management but more about regulations and businesses with case studies every week. The professor was very chaotic so I was quite confused most of the time
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b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, all the courses were taught in English.

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, even though quite some were ruled out I still managed to find more than enough possibilities. Thereby, I heard from friends that in the first weeks they talked with a lot of professors and managed to get into courses that were denied at first, so as soon as you arrive they are likely to be more flexible.

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, even though the general level of courses is lower in the United States, I still had enough of a challenge as I chose courses not really in my field of study so the level suited me.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain): Yes, I enjoyed most of them and learned a lot.

f. What is it like to study there?

E.g. Study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material?

For me it was a bit more similar to high school, your classes are only 80 minutes and lecturers often finish early. However, you have multiple assignments due for all your courses every week and because of that your finals count way less than I was used to. Most of my quizzes and exams were online, open-book and without any monitoring.

g. What is the culture of the university?

E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with WU?

The lecturers were super approachable, you can always talk to them after class and they have designated office hours where you can ask them for advice on your classes and the materials. I found that the local students were a bit harder to reach, the most friends I made were also exchange students. You are not in class often and people are not really interested in talking during that time, the best way to meet them is to join clubs and be really active there. All in all my biggest tip is join the clubs and invest time in them, they have over 1000 different clubs so there is something for everyone and it is not obligatory every week but I think if you are really active there it is a good way to make friends. Normally you also have your roommate from the dorms, but I did not have one so I cannot talk about that.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?

Everything you could possibly need is available on campus, if you live in the dorms there are laundry rooms and gyms in most buildings there is also additional separate sports buildings and in every "neighborhood" there is at least one dining hall and every building has a little supermarket where you can get snacks in exchange for combo points you get every week.

5. Housing-traveling-living

a. What are the possibilities for housing?

E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?

I would really recommend to live in the dorms on campus, when you sign up for this you are immediately in a community and have access to a big amount of resources.

b. What is the culture like?

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

The dining halls do not offer the best food of the world, but for the fact that it is a dining hall it was actually quite okay. I did not really experience a culture shock to be honest, everything was quite similar to back home. The only thing is that the campus is super big so I walked a lot every day.

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

On campus there are free buses, but I never took them I walked everywhere. There is also the possibility to rent a bike for a certain amount of time, there was quite a lot of people biking around campus. From the airport I would recommend taking a lyft because American public transport is not great, this is a bit expensive but the only reasonable way to get there except for the Michigan flyer. This is a bus you have to reserve beforehand.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	1000
Visa - if applicable	200
Vaccinations - if applicable	
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	200
Daytrips/sight-seeing	1000
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	800 – dorms
Grocery costs per month	300 – meal plan
Public transport costs per month	0
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	50

b. The price levels were in general [higher; lower; equal] in comparison to in the Netherlands:

it is hard to compare as you pay for housing and groceries at the beginning of the semester, so after everything you eat kind of feels free, but the times I was in an actual grocery store the prices were quite similar a little higher I would say.

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

The upper peninsula is really pretty with a lot of nature, but besides that Michigan is not the most interesting state. The exchange team of MSU always organises some trips so I would recommend those. Besides that I travelled to Toronto and Chicago and for Spring Break I went to Florida.

b. What does not appear in a travel guide, but is definitely worth seeing/doing?

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

a. Any challenges? How did you deal with them?

Sometimes I struggled with the time difference and the loss of contact with my friends back home but just send them a message and schedule a call and it'll be fine.

b. Best memory?

Difficult question, I have a lot of good memories but the best one would probably be the graduation ceremony the exchange team organised where we were together with all the exchange students and had a little party after.

9. Contact details

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