



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student information

Study programme WU	Soil, Water, Atmosphere
Exchange semester (dd/mm/yyyy)	6 January 2024 until 31 May 2024
Exchange destination: University	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Faculty	Atmospheric Science
Country	USA
City	Urbana-Champaign

2. Motivation for exchange

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

Because I believe it's a unique opportunity for personal and academic growth. It will allow me to experience a new culture firsthand, improve my intercultural communication skills, and open doors to future professional opportunities. It's a chance to step out of my comfort zone and encourage my independence and resilience.

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

I chose the USA because I wanted to be in a country where I speak the native language. I believe this will significantly help me to get to know the local people and fully immerse myself in the culture. This preference limited my options, and because of my positive past experience with an internship in New York City, the USA naturally stood out to me. I enjoyed my previous time there, and the familiarity with the USA made me want to experience studying at a university there.

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

I decided to attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) because it left me with the best impression after visiting several American university websites and viewing photos. Additionally, UIUC caught my attention due to its wide range of atmospheric science courses, which is the field I wanted to pursue during my study exchange.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

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

To get to the campus from Chicago O'Hare, you can take the Greyhound or Peoria buses. Alternatively, you can take the train (Amtrak), which also goes to Champaign. I recommend taking the Peoria buses as they go directly from the airport and make multiple stops on and near campus. If you choose Greyhound or Amtrak, you will have to first go to downtown Chicago before continuing to Champaign. Both of these options only stop at 1 location in Champaign.

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
1	Severe and Hazardous Weather	6	It's about all kinds of severe and hazardous weather. To understand the dynamics behind it and also safety measurements that you need to take.	5	
2	General Physical Meteorology	6	Learning about the fundamental processes in the atmosphere	5	
3	General Physical Climate	6	Learning about all topics related to climate change	3	
4	Weather and Climate Data Science	6	Python skills applied to actual weather and climate datasets	3	
5	Cloud Physics	6	Learning about microphysical processes that occur within the cloud	4	

b. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses that were taught in English (Yes, No - Explain):

Yes, everything was in English

c. I had sufficient possibilities to select suitable courses in my field of interest (Yes, No - Explain):

Yes, there was a wide range of atmospheric science courses

d. I am satisfied with the level of the courses that I followed (Yes, No - Explain):

Yes, some courses were somewhat easier, but I still learned a lot from them since they gave me information that I haven't gotten before.

e. I am satisfied, in the end, with the selection of courses I followed (Yes, No - Explain):

Yes, because I feel like these courses were a good addition to my bachelor degree.

f. What is it like to study there?

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

It's different from WUR. You earn points throughout the whole semester with homework assignments, midterms, exams, and projects. The workload was very doable and had quite a lot of free time. For some courses, you need to buy a book which was really easy through the bookstore that is right on campus.

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 very approachable, kind, and willing to help you with questions. Local students were minding their own business and did not talk that much, but also not with each other.

h. What does the university offer students additionally?

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

All kinds of facilities were available.

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?

You can apply for student housing on campus, but then you're stuck with a meal plan, which is quite expensive. Also, you have to share a bedroom with another student. I lived at an off-campus apartment building, which was still close to campus. It was an apartment for 4 people and we all had our own bedroom and bathroom, which was really nice. The price per month was 899 dollars exclusive electricity. Still expensive, but completely worth it.

b. What is the culture like?

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

The American culture is different, they are very welcoming to other people and it can sometimes feel even fake how nice they are. But they all mean very well, which is nice. They take the car everywhere and everything is huge. The food is also different, it's a lot of take out and to a lot of products in the grocery store there is a lot of added salt.

c. Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?

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

With your student card, the public transportation within Urbana-Champaign are free. You can also take the Uber which is about 6 or 8 dollars per ride, depends on how far you go. Within campus town a lot of is very walkable.

6. Expenses

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

Category	Expenses
Travelling there	1100
Visa - if applicable	500
Vaccinations - if applicable	100
Insurances (extra) - if applicable	1000
Daytrips/sight-seeing	5000
Housing costs per month & type of housing/accommodation	899
Grocery costs per month	100
Public transport costs per month	0
Restaurant/going out for dinner costs per month	200

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

Higher

c. Additional remarks regarding expenses?

Some of these expenses are a very rough indication. Also, I took a lot of trips which of course adds up to all the costs.

7. Free time

a. What are must-sees in the area?

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

Within the area, you should go to Chicago of course! It's a really nice city has lots to offer, and it's not that busy.

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

It would be really nice to rent a car for a weekend to just go out of Urbana-Champaign and enjoy the America road trip vibe.

8. Challenges & best moment abroad

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

To be honest, did not experience really challenging moments. But I had a really nice group of friends around me where I could talk to when I needed.

b. Best memory?

Too many good memories!

9. Contact details

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