



## University of Washington, Seattle

2022-2023

<b>PREPARATION</b>
Exchange application process at Utrecht University
At first I attended the Exchange Orientation at UU. Then I wrote my motivation letter and study plan to apply for my destination. This was all a fairly easy process.
Counselling & support at Utrecht University
Do not hesitate to contact the International Exchange Offices for any issues or questions. They are very helpful throughout the process, both in helping you organise your study plan and the actual application.
Academic preparation
No actual 'academic' preparation was needed. Please do apply for a VISA at the US consulate in Amsterdam as soon as possible. I was quite late with applying for a VISA which was incredibly stressful.
Language preparation
In order to apply, I had to take an IELTS English exam. Also make sure to register for such an exam as soon as possible as exam dates can fill up pretty quickly. Overall, the exam was fairly easy considering we all have probably taken some English courses
Finances (living costs)
Seattle, in my opinion, is quite expensive. I spent approximately \$1000 alone for rent. Groceries too are more expensive. Also make sure to have some funds for fun activities and travelling!

<b>Study period abroad /About the host university</b>
Study programme (content and organisational issues at partner)
At the UW School of Law I took the courses Family Law, International Human Rights and American Legal System. It's best to contact the academic office or the Dean just before departure to register for courses as courses can fill up quickly.
Academic quality of education activities
At the start, the classes seemed hard to keep up with but in the end I believe the academic quality is slightly lower than in the Netherlands. Meaning that it is a bit easier, but nevertheless super interesting!
Counselling & support at receiving university abroad (before and during your stay)
The counseling, especially from Dean Hotchkiss was very good. They are super helpful, not only at the UW School of Law, but in the US in general.
Transfer of credits
After your period abroad, you will automatically receive a transcript of records from UW which I recommend you forward to the Examencommissie of UU as soon as possible.

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
Welcome/Orientation programme
There were a couple of orientation programmes organised by the University of Washington. These are super helpful for making new friends at the start so do attend these!
Accommodation
There are many FaceBook Groups in which people post rooms/apartments for rent. I used this because I rather



wanted to live off-campus than on campus. Most rooms on campus need to be shared so there is little privacy in my opinion. Monthly rent +/- \$1000

Leisure & culture

There is so much to do in Seattle and at UW. From 'fraternity' parties to amazing city life. Also plenty of beautiful nature around the city.

Suggestions/tips (need to know)

I forgot to submit a waiver of health insurance. UW requires you to pay their insurance unless you submit such a waiver. As a result I had to pay two separate insurances. So unnecessary!

**CONCLUSIONS**

Would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? Please explain why (or not)

Seattle is an amazing city and the University of Washington is an amazing school. Both for academic and leisure reasons. I also did plenty of trips to other cities so it is highly worth going here.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?

Most importantly, don't procrastinate anything. It can be quite stressful having to do everything shortly before departure.



<b>PREPARATION</b>
Exchange application process at Utrecht University
This was fine, nothing too complicated
Counselling & support at Utrecht University
I did not really need support from UU
Academic preparation
I did not prepare anything academically
Language preparation
I did not prepare anything
Finances (living costs)
Worked more over the summer

<b>Study period abroad /About the host university</b>
Study programme (content and organisational issues at partner)
I followed four courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Antitrust law</li> <li>- International human rights</li> <li>- American legal systems and method</li> <li>- Comparative law tutorial</li> </ul>
Academic quality of education activities
The quality of the courses was very good, professors were very eager to help
Counselling & support at receiving university abroad (before and during your stay)
The dean at UW was very supportive, we had to change our courses in the first two weeks and she helped us very much
Transfer of credits
This was also very easy, you just had to fill in some information online and you could get a form

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
Welcome/Orientation programme
There was an orientation morning which was helpful and I met some new people there
Accommodation
I lived in a student house with 10 girls which I got through a facebook group
Leisure & culture
I mostly spent time with my friends I met outside of uni and of course the Dutch I knew. Greek life was big there so I went to some frat party's since my roommates were in sororities
Suggestions/tips (need to know's)
Do little daytrips as well! Explore the city as much as you can!



**CONCLUSIONS**

Would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? Please explain why (or not)

I had a great time in Seattle. However, do keep in mind the states are not as safe as the Netherlands especially as a girl I did feel unsafe sometimes. During the day it is all fine and campus is very safe and beautiful as well! Almost all students live in u district so it's a nice community and all my friends lived a 5 min walk from my house.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?



<b>PREPARATION</b>
Exchange application process at Utrecht University
For the exchange application I had to write down my motivation letter and put in my grades
Counselling & support at Utrecht University
I had contact with Paula from the exchange program
Academic preparation
I did not do any academic preparations for my exchange
Language preparation
I did not do any language preparations because I went to the USA and English isn't really hard to learn
Finances (living costs)
I had a job to save money for my exchange

<b>Study period abroad /About the host university</b>
Study programme (content and organisational issues at partner)
LAW SCHOOL at the university of Washington
Academic quality of education activities
The academic quality is fine and its almost the same as at UU
Counselling & support at receiving university abroad (before and during your stay)
I had good support and counselling during my time at UW, the dean spoke to us once a week and helped us with register for classes at the university
Transfer of credits
I believe you must do too many courses for the credits you get, I did 17 credits in one period which is 22,5 ETC and the university told me to do 22,5 credits which is 30 ETC I don't believe this is possible

<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>
Welcome/Orientation programme
The welcome programme was fine not that exciting, there was one day but you get to know a lot of international people very quick.
Accommodation
I lived off campus in a house with 9 girls' American girls, I lived 5/10 min walking from the university, and I recommend living off campus with American people. I got to know a lot of people in the Greek life and international people because of living off campus in a student house you will get to know a lot of people without trying.
Leisure & culture
The culture is way different in the USA, you have to learn about not being to direct and be very polite to people.
Suggestions/tips (need to knows)
Tips: live off campus (try Facebook to get a room: UW Housing) it's really expensive keep in mind that you need at least 8-10 thousand dollars to live in the US for 4 months, my rent was about 1400 dollars exclusive a month and living in the dorms is even more expensive. Some frats and sorority's are letting people live in their house



try to contact them as well.

## CONCLUSIONS

Would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? Please explain why (or not)

I would recommend this university; I had the time of my life just keep in mind that the USA is an expensive place to live. The school is great, the people living in Seattle are really nice and the city is great. Just keep in mind that sometimes there are shootings or other harmful things going on just like the rest of America.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?

I don't have any other advice or comments

## 2018-2019

## PREPARATION

exchange application process

There are many deadlines so make sure you keep checking your mail and log in into the website of the university abroad to not miss any! Also you have to start well in advance to get your visum ready for the US.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Counselling and support at the university is very good. The International Office really helps you with all of your questions. You can call them or e-mail them.

academic preparation

Start on time for looking which classes you would like to follow at the UW. We have a slight disadvantage because students from UW sign-up before the international students. However, I got into a class which was full by talking with the prof.

language preparation

I didn't prepare for it and I don't think you have to. We follow english courses during our bachelor and it's around the same level. While you are there you will learn quite a few new words but not so much that you really need to prepare for it.

finances

Try to save as much as you can before you go. Most things are expensive in the US, especially Seattle because of all the tech companies. Rent for me was 850 dollar a month including internet.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The program was great and very well organized. I didn't experience any issues.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality is very good. Law is actually a professional field in the US so you will be following graduate courses (similar to master for us). Don't get intimidated by it, it's not too difficult.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling by the UW and by the UU are great. While abroad you have a whole floor dedicated to questions from international students.



transfer of credits

In my opinion this didn't go too well because of the advice of the UW not to take too many courses and with the 2 terms you will be missing because the classes at the UW start kind off late compared to NL. Make sure to calculate how many points you need!

**STUDENT LIFE**

welcome & orientation programme

The program was a lot of fun and a good way to get to know fellow students and the UW. There are a lot of fun activities. One was going into a machine which blows wind and you have to catch as many dollars as you can. You can keep everything afterwards.

accommodation

I stayed off-campus. It was difficult finding a room for 3 months. (year contracts are usual) You have some on-campus housing which are very good. Just make sure it has a kitchen, many students complained about not having one.

leisure & culture

Washington has a lot of national parks. You can rent a car and visit one with friends. You also get a husky-card, you can travel through all of Seattle for free!

suggestions/tips

Don't buy a return ticket! With a visum you don't need one! After I was done with the university I traveled to California and from there to some countries in South-America. Classes in NL start in february and your classes there end in mid-december.

**CONCLUSIONS**

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, the law school is amazing. It is small in size so you get in touch with a lot of fellow students. The professors are very good and also like to get in touch with you. You learn a lot in class and it has amazing facilities. (gym, library, pool, etc. )

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you have a kitchen you don't need a husky-mealplan. A lot of people complained about it. (food wasn't good and expensive).

**2017-2018**

**preparation**

exchange/placement application process

Most of the work is done by the host university. This takes some time. They send you much information and eventually send most of the documents you will need to apply for your visa. Do, however, read the information for applying for your visa very carefully; it is easy to miss something and this will cost you more time.

counselling/support at home university



The support from the international offices at both the UU and UW was really good. You could ask them everything.

academic preparation

The level of classes in Seattle is not too high for Dutch students. It involves a lot of reading. So you could prepare by improving your English reading. But it is not necessary. I did not prepare and had no trouble with the level of classes.

language preparation

As mentioned above maybe reading but not necessary.

finances

Seattle is expensive. Also before leaving you will have to pay for your visa (+- 400eu). Flight tickets are around 800eu. I flew back over New York. Drop by Kilroy if you want to buy combination tickets.

Furthermore, living in Seattle is expensive. Groceries cost, on average, 1.5x more than at the Albert heijn.

I made many trips during my time there (to Vancouver, Portland, San Francisco, and many hikes) this cost money as well.

As for study books, don't be too eager to buy the books. Most books can be rented in the library. This will save you money to do fun stuff.

My rent was 800 dollars a month. This was slightly below average.

**study/placement abroad period**

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

you will not know which courses you'll be taking, until you get to Seattle. Make sure you know which courses you want to take before meeting with the counselor who will subscribe you into those classes.

I especially recommend the course Negotiation. I really enjoyed this small class. It was necessary to email the professor to follow this course because at first there was no spot available for me.

academic quality of education/placement activities

Most courses require active participation and preparation. You will have many papers to write. In class is comparable to the Netherlands. Professors may call upon you to give answers. At first I thought the work load was a lot but when you get used to it 3 days in the library is more than enough to do your assignments. And they give high grades.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

The support is good and have offices that help with all your questions.

transfer of credits

The credits of 1 quarter transfer to 15 credits. It is pass/fail for the UU. But you do get a transcript with your





grades.
<b>student life</b>
welcome/orientation programme
I was in Seattle early to find a room. The University was not yet open and so there weren't any orientations. But at the first orientation I met many people. In the weeks that follow the Fiuts organizes events. Even though some events sound boring I recommend you go to all of them so you meet the other international students.
accommodation
Finding accommodation is difficult. I recommend looking off campus because I heard only bad stories of dorms. The university does offer off-campus residence which are alright but expensive. I spent much time on a facebook page: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/445293202296621/?ref=bookmarks">https://www.facebook.com/groups/445293202296621/?ref=bookmarks</a> . I eventually found my room on this page but only when I was in Seattle. I did want to see a room before signing a contract. It cost me 5 days to find a room in the university district (the best place to live for your exchange). No need to worry when you have trouble finding a place.
leisure/culture
<p>People in Seattle are friendly and there is a liberal vibe. There are many homeless people but they are harmless and you get use to them.</p> <p>People in Seattle love hiking. And you should also do this. Rent a car with some friends and go on a hike. There is amazing nature at an hour drive.</p> <p>The going out culture is different. They start earlier and the night ends at 2 am at the latest. I would recommend you only go to America on exchange when you are 21+ because they are really strict on age.</p>
suggestions/tips
<p>Wednesday night all Students go out at Earls on the Ave. This is fun.</p> <p>Go on a lot of hikes.</p> <p>Go to San Francisco (CA) and Vancouver (Canada). Flying is cheap in the US if you book tickets early.</p>
<b>conclusions</b>
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
Yes I would. Everyone always says the weather is depressing. But I went in the fall quarter and the weather was fine. Very comparable to the Netherlands. I has an amazing experience. Seattle is great and on exchange you meet a lot of cool people and have the possibility to do a lot of cool stuff.
do you have any additional advice or comments?



<b>preparation</b>
exchange/placement application process
<p>The application process was not that difficult, but especially during the months May/June/July/August, you need to keep an eye on your mailbox, because the University of Washington will send you a lot of information and you need to upload a couple of documents (e.g. prove of insurance, prove of sufficient English language skills etc.). Around June the University will also send you a DS-2019 form and this is your prove that you are signed in at the University. You also need this paper to apply for your visa.</p>
counselling/support at home university
<p>The international office is very helpful, but one thing I wished to have known before is that when you study law in the US it is mandatory to first finish another Bachelor program before you can get in Law School. This means that everyone at Law School is at least 21 years or older and when you are enrolled in Master courses the average age of people is 25 or older and some of them are already working in a law firm or in other law-related areas. For this reason I sometimes felt very young and inexperienced. However, at the same time the classes are also very instructive and I learned a lot from the other classmates. Therefore I don't regret my choice for the University of Washington.</p>
academic preparation
<p>Academic preparation is not necessary because the subjects you will take will be very different and also the law system works different. However, maybe it will help you to inform yourself a little bit more about the US law system.</p>
language preparation
<p>If you are insecure about your knowledge of the English language and want to practise a little bit more you can consider to sign up for the LEAP courses (Legal English for Academic Purposes). This is very useful. But at the university they sometimes take into account that English is not your first language, so they don't expect you to write immediately without making a mistake.</p>
finances
<p>Studying in the US is expensive. For housing I payed approximately 700 dollar each month. Also the food is quit expensive. You can buy a 'dining account', this means that you can choose an amount of money to put on your student card. You can use this money to eat in the canteens on campus or to buy your groceries at the University District Market. If you choose to live on campus I would recommend a dining account. In the beginning of the quarter you also need to pay approximately 90 dollars to use the public transport 'for free' during the quarter.</p>
<b>study/placement abroad period</b>
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
<p>When you arrive in Seattle, you need to make an appointment with the counsellor who is going to</p>



recommend you some courses but it is good to read the course descriptions in advance to find out which subjects you want to sign up for. The counsellor will help you to sign up for this courses as well. You should also find out how many credits you need to receive in order to receive enough ECTS for the courses. There is a conversion table on the university webpage that can help you with this.

academic quality of education/placement activities

The academic quality of education is high and the students are very motivated and they study a lot. Also the classes are very small, I think the average is around 20 students per course.

counselling/support at host institution/organisation

The support at the university is good. The people from academic services are very approachable and they help you out with anything. Also the professors are eager to help you, because they really hope you will succeed in their course.

transfer of credits

The credits I received for my courses will not be transferred to my Bachelor diploma.

**student life**

welcome/orientation programme

There are two orientation programs, one for international students (FIUTS) and one for all the students (Dawgdaze). You should attend the FIUTS events because you will meet a lot of people. I didn't go to the Dawgdaze, but I am sure that is fun too.

accommodation

I stayed on campus in Stevens Court. If you can choose, you really should consider Stevens Court because you have your own bedroom and you don't have to share it with other people. The kitchen and bathroom in Stevens Court is shared by three other persons. I also heard that Mercer Court is nice as well. When you apply for the other dorms on campus, there is a big chance that you will have to share a room with several other people and you need to share a kitchen with a whole floor. You can also live off campus, however I heard from a lot of people that it is hard to find a room and it is expensive.

leisure/culture

There are a lot of cultural activities in the neighbourhood. Seattle also has a nice coffee culture and the weather is less rainy than you would probably expect.

suggestions/tips

You should sign up for the FIUTS activities, especially during the introduction weeks. This gives you the opportunity to meet a lot of other exchange students.

**conclusions**



would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend this destination, the University campus is very beautiful and the University is high-ranked compared to other public universities on the west coast, especially for law. I also enjoyed studying there, you are asked to write several papers and this will improve your English a lot. The courses I was enrolled in were very interesting as well. Moreover, I liked the atmosphere in Seattle: the city is democratic, LGBTB-friendly and environmentally conscious. The city also has a nice coffee culture (the first Starbucks is located in Seattle). You can also make some nice road trips in the areas surrounding Seattle because there is a lot of nature and there are some spectacular hikes. If you finished sightseeing Seattle (which is almost impossible) it is also nice to visit Portland or Vancouver.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

## 2016 -2017

<b>preparation</b>
exchange/placement application process
Once I made the decision that I wanted to attend the University of Washington in Seattle (UW), the application process went pretty smooth.
counselling/support at home university
The international office is very helpful and is always willing to help.
academic preparation
Academic preparation was actually not really necessary.
language preparation
When your English isn't bad, you will be perfectly fine. The professors also take into account that not all students have English as a first language.
Finances
Living in Seattle is not cheap. Rent is expensive, as well as groceries. I paid 850 dollars for a room in the University district.
<b>study/placement abroad period</b>
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
You will not know which courses you'll be taking, until you get to Seattle. Make sure you know which courses you want to take before meeting with the counselor who will subscribe you into those classes. I e-mailed in advance and asked if they could hold a spot on the courses that I really wanted to take.



academic quality of education/placement activities
Professors are very involved with there students. Most courses that I took were 'skill-courses', like negotiation and counseling. The academic quality of these courses are very high. The level of other courses is lower than the level of the UU.
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
The support that you get at the University of Washington is great. They are very willing to help you out with whatever problem.
transfer of credits
The grades that I got are not showing on my dilpoma, something I am really disappointed in.
<b>student life</b>
welcome/orientation programme
Perfect. They ask you to arrive a few days in advance/ In those days they give you some presentations to inform you of everything that you have to do. They also give you the oppurtunity to meet other students, which is really nice. Attend FIUTS events, that is how I met all my friends.
Accommodation
Finding accomodation is not easy. I would recommend going on Facebook to find a room. I would not stay in a dorm, since it is too expensive in my opinion. Everybody that I knew lived in the University District.
leisure/culture
People from Seattle are very friendly and helpful. It is a very nice area to live in. I had the best time there and I'm sure that you will too.
suggestions/tips
If you have the choice, don't og in the winter quarter but in the spring. The weather will be much nicer.
<b>Conclusions</b>
would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain
Yes, very much. The University of Washington is an exellent school and the campus is amazing. Seattle is a great environment for those who love nature.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Please feel free to contact me if you want to talk about studying in Seattle.



## 2012-2013

From September 2012 till March 2012, I had the pleasure of studying at the University of Washington School of Law (UW). Although Seattle is infamous for its rain during this season, the city and the people itself definitely make up for it. Also the UW has one of the better law programs on the U.S. West Coast. Furthermore, the University of Washington is one of the few U.S. partner universities offering the opportunity for master degree students to go on a foreign exchange. If you are thinking about studying in the U.S., the University of Washington is definitely worthwhile to look into.

### Before leaving

If you are selected for the University of Washington, make sure that you start early with your preparations. Selection by Utrecht University does not automatically mean that you are enrolled at the UW. You need to apply separately for that. Go to <http://admit.washington.edu/Admission/International> to find the current application deadline. If you encounter any difficulties, you can try to contact, either our international office or Dana Raigrodski, who is the coordinator for the exchange students at the UW. Once you are admitted to the UW, you can go to the website of the International Student Service (<http://iss.washington.edu/>) to see what else needs to be done prior to your arrival. A couple of these are listed below.

### Visa

Before leaving for the U.S., you must obtain a F-1 student Visa at the American Consulate in Amsterdam. The process includes filling out an online form and a visit to the consulate. Personally, I had no trouble filling out these forms, but be sure to start early with your application as you are required to provide a lot of information. Once you have completed the form and sent it, you will be invited to come over at the consulate. Be sure to reserve a whole morning for this, as you will be doing a lot of waiting. However, the consulate staff is, generally, very friendly and helpful, which makes the wait a lot easier.

### Finances

In general, America is slightly more expensive than the Netherlands, especially with regard to groceries and housing. To obtain your visa, you are required to show that you are able to take care of yourself during your stay. For a six-month period you need about \$10,000. This excludes additional expenses such as flight tickets ( $\pm$  €800 – 1000), fees related to your visa application ( $\pm$  €200) and textbooks ( $\pm$  €400).

### TOEFL

Students from the UU, generally, are not required to pass a TOEFL exam. In my case, I had to submit a declaration of English proficiency by the international office. To be sure, check with Dana Raigrodski.

### Insurance

The UW requires all its students to have medical insurance coverage, which is provided by the university. If your current insurance policy covers these expenses for your stay in the U.S., you can apply for an insurance waiver. Be sure to apply in time, otherwise you are automatically enrolled in the UW insurance policy and are required to pay for an expensive premium. Although I have been told that proof of insurance, in English is required, I've never been asked to provide any.

### Measles Immunity

When you apply for the UW, you are required to provide proof of vaccination against measles. Dutch students can obtain this by contacting the RIVM.

### The study

The level of education at the University of Washington is excellent, but challenging. Because the United States does not offer law as an undergraduate degree, all courses are graduate level. Active participation is expected. Like in other U.S. law schools, most big classes credit their students based upon a curve system. This means that only a certain percentage of the students can receive a certain mark. For instance, 10% can receive an A, 20% a B and 30% a C and the rest is divided by the teacher. This means that your work is graded relative to the other students. However, the class teachers are excellent and will provide you with any help you need. They are very approachable and always



willing to receive you into their office in case you need extra help. You can find all courses in the course catalog on the UW Law School website <https://www.law.washington.edu/CourseCatalog/>. You can, again, check with the exchange coordinator, ms. Raigrodski, to see whether the courses you are interested in are suitable for international students.

The University of Washington offers so much more than study alone. All students receive (upon payment of \$87) a public transportation card, comparable with the Dutch OV card, which allows you to freely travel on the Seattle public transportation system. Furthermore, as a student, you are entitled to use the UW's big gym facility, the IMA, where you can participate in a broad variety of sports, and all the other leisure facilities, which you can find in the Husky Union Building (HUB).

#### Welcome and stay

Before arriving in Seattle, you will receive information from the Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS) (<http://fiuts.org/>). This organization helps newly arrived international students with their orientation at the UW. Besides offering an introduction week, the organization offers students the opportunity to participate in the "home stay program." During this program, you will stay the first week of your arrival at the place of an American host. These hosts will guide and support you to settle in the U.S. and often long after that. I can recommend everyone going to the UW, to apply to participate in this program as it has made my life here so much easier and helped me to a whole lot of new friends.

One of the most important things to orienteer for, prior to your arrival, is housing. The University of Washington has a couple of resident halls, which are available for international students. I do, however, not recommend to apply for one of these, as they are far more expensive than off campus housing and all its residents are obliged to vacate their rooms during break periods. I recommend everyone coming here to find a place on the craigslist ([craigslist.org](http://craigslist.org)). Good neighborhoods to look for are the University District, Capitol Hill (best neighborhood to go out); Fremont (also very good) or Ravenna (close to the U-district). If you are accepted to participate in the home stay program, you can also wait looking for a house until your arrival.

#### Leisure/ Culture

Seattle is known in the U.S. as a very liberal city. It has large LGBTQ and hipster community, especially in the area known as Capitol Hill, and offers a large variety of cultural activities, such as art walks and museums. Seattle is also known for its large number of coffeeshops, which, unlike in the Netherlands, are small places that serve a wide variety of coffee. Nightlife is, generally, confined to Capitol Hill, Fremont, Ballard and Belltown. The U-district itself also has a small selection of bars, but most of the parties there are held inside houses. Be aware that the age limit for drinking alcohol and visiting bars in the U.S. is 21, which is strictly enforced. Always carry your ID with you, if you do not have any, you will not be allowed to enter bars and clubs. You can acquire a Washington state ID at the Department for Motor Vehicles. (DMV).

Seattle also offers a lot of cultural activities. Most of these can easily be found at the city's website. A couple of tips are, Gasworks Park and Lake Union, the EMP and Pike Place Market. You will find that every neighborhood in Seattle has its own culture and it is worthwhile to pay a visit to every one of them during your stay. Also people who love outdoor sports will certainly not be disappointed. Students who rather like to watch a game, will find that they receive a big discount on tickets on matches of Seattle's sport teams.

#### Traveling

If you are planning on driving a car in the U.S., make sure to purchase an international drivers license before your departure. People with a Dutch drivers license can purchase one for €15,- at the ANWB. If you are planning on travelling to nearby Canada, or any other country outside the U.S., be sure to get permission from the ISS.

I hope you find this short outline useful, as you are orienteering for your exchange. There is, of course, so much more to say about Seattle and the University of Washington, but most of it you will find out along the way. Go visit the website of the FIUTS ([FIUTS.org](http://fiuts.org)) if you're looking for more information.



## 2010-2011

I had the pleasure and privilege to study at the University of Washington in Seattle for 6 months (Jan-Jun). The best months of the year to experience a city like Seattle in my opinion. Whilst it is gloomy and rainy all the time during the fall, it is great to see the cherry trees blossom in the spring after a chilly but still gentle winter and enjoy the sunny days during summer! Mind you, it is not sunny every day but when the sun does come out, it shines like there is no tomorrow!

### Preparation

If you got selected for the exchange program: congratulations! My advice: start as soon as possible with your preparation. You cannot start early enough for a study abroad, especially one in the U.S.! A checklist helped me tremendously with this.

### Insurance

Request a confirmation of insurance letter from your home insurance company. Make sure the letter is in English and that they state the coverage is against the costs price (if that is the case, of course). With this, you can get a waiver for the mandatory University of Washington's health insurance which is very expensive. Search for the Insurance Waiver Request Form on the University of Washington website. Most insurance companies cover your abroad study for a maximum period of six months. If you are planning to spend some extra time here before or after the exchange (to travel etc.) make sure you have additional coverage for that period too.

### English Proficiency Statement

University of Washington does not require a TOEFL test (at least, it was not mandatory when I applied but check with the International Office just to be sure). You can request an English Proficiency Statement at the International Office and submit this together with your application to the University.

### Finances

Studying in the States is expensive, so you need to prove that you are able to take care of yourself while you are there. Request a solvency statement from your bank in English. You need at least \$10.000 for a period of 6 months. Ask for information at the International Office regarding this. Back pocket some money too for additional expenses such as the flight ticket (varies depending on the season, book early for the best price), visa application ( $\pm$ €130), the SEVIS fee ( $\pm$ €170) and text books during your study in the States.

### Study abroad

The quality of the education provided is excellent. The professors are very passionate and knowledgeable. The course load is much more than in The Netherlands, you will most likely have class every day. You can look into the courses before you go and provide a list of your preference but the final decision will be made with the abroad coordinator at the Law School. She can advise you which courses are more suited to your interests/curriculum and whether the subject matter is relevant for international students, as some of the courses are rather State Law oriented rather than federal or international orientated. If you are planning to transfer credits, plan accordingly as the Master's programme require you to receive permission before you go study abroad.

Public transportation is important if you do not have a driver's license and/or a car at your disposal. You receive a student's card (Husky Card) from the Law School before you start classes. When you receive your Husky card, you can request a U-pass, which is basically a sticker you put on your Husky card that gives you the right to use (most of) the public transit. This is similar to our 'studenten OV kaart', the costs are \$99 per quarter. Last time I checked, they were planning to incorporate a chip





for the U-pass (just like our 'OV chipkaart'), so check the UW website for the most recent developments.

### **Student life**

#### Welcome/orientation

The FIUTS (<http://www.fiuts.washington.edu/>) is an international student's organization that provides a (semi-mandatory) introduction at the beginning of the quarter. Check whether you are able to go or that you have classes at the same time. It is mandatory as far as the coverage fee that you need to pay; there is no penalty if you do not show up due to overlapping classes (as in my case). They also organize a lot of trips as well.

Be aware that the Law School has an attending policy of 80% (so if you miss 3 out of 10 classes, you are forced to drop the course and that might bring your visa in jeopardy because you have to have at least 12 credits per quarter for the F-visa).

#### Accommodation

As this is probably your first visit to Seattle as a student, you do not know which neighbourhoods are nice and which are, well, not so nice. University of Washington has its own district (University District or as they say it in Seattle: the U-district). The University does provide housing options which I recommend you to explore. It is conveniently close to the Law School (within walking distance). If you choose to find housing on your own you should try [craigslist.com](http://craigslist.com) or <http://housing.asuw.org/>.

#### Leisure/culture

Nightlife in the States is not as exciting as it is in The Netherlands, so be prepared for that. This does not mean you are condemned to boring nights as a couch potato. The only bar -besides the house parties, which are fun- I found that was nearly as fun as any random Dutch bar was the Acquabar – yes, it is really spelled this way- in Belltown. For instance, there were moderate drunk people on the dance floor instead of just lounging (means sitting at the bar getting not so moderately drunk)! So there are pretty good places to enjoy yourself but you have to look rather hard and also have a little luck I guess. Nightlife starts very early and ends early as well (around 10 pm to 2 am). One tip: always have your ID with you. If you don't, you are not able to enter the bars and clubs (even when you are not planning on drinking). It is also convenient to have as most of the stores ask for an ID if you purchase something. It happened to me several times in a clothing store. Another thing that could come in handy is to acquire a Washington state ID instead of carrying your passport all the time for day to day activities. Ask the International Students Service how to apply for this.

#### Recommendations

As far as touristy activities, the first place to explore is the UW campus. It's beautiful! Visit Pike Place Market to see the fish throwing and visit the very first Starbucks but get your Frappuccino elsewhere (there is always a ridiculously long line), go to Alki Beach to see the sunset and the amazing postcard worthy skyline of Seattle (well, they actually do use this view on postcards), eat conveyor belt sushi at Marineopolis Sushiland in Queen Anne, go up in the Space Needle at night (but do not eat at the restaurant, overpriced and the food is moderate), for the best view of the city go to the Bank of America tower in downtown on a sunny day, it's the highest building of Seattle and you get to pay the students price of merely \$3! Visit a Mariners Game, eat a hotdog and drink a beer while you are at it. Take a clipper to Victoria (Canada, so get your travel permission from your ISS advisor before you go), visit the Seattle Art Museum (free on a particular weekday), do a ride the ducks tour, visit Green Lake on a summer day, see the Fremont Troll in –how surprising- the Fremont district. Taste the best hot chocolate at Seattle's Best Coffee (never ordered the coffee though but it must be the best as well). Don't forget to visit Discovery Park and Gasworks Park too. As you can see, Seattle is a versatile city. I consider it to be a fractal (if you're not into maths google it). There is always more and more beautiful stuff to see and to discover! Final tip: always tip 15-20% of the total bill when eating out! The last thing you want is for Americans to think Dutch people are stingy!