



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Information Science

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, United States
name university abroad	University of California, Santa Barbara
start date	12/ 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	10/ 12/ 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Applying for studying abroad is pretty simple; it is the paperwork that can get messy. I sent in my top 3, UC was my third choice. I sent another top 3 of UC schools and got into UCSB (my 2nd choice). In this process you have to write a motivation letter and send same papers to the UC portal. They will decide your UC. This was the easy part.

My biggest obstacle was getting a VISA appointment. Start with this process AS SOON AS you get your SEVIS number from UC. So did I, but because of the pandemic the consulate in Amsterdam was full. I heard they opened up space so I made an appointment four months later, hoping I could squeeze in if a time slot opened. This never happened and I wasted 120 euros. Next try was the consulate in Frankfurt. I made an appointment, 5 days before my appointment they cancelled my appointment, no refund. My flight was planned in two weeks so I was stressing hard. Paris had plenty of spots so I went there. Whenever you apply for a VISA abroad, they cannot send your passport back so you have to go back to the place of the appointment (Paris in my case). In total, I spent 360 euros + the transportation costs to Paris to get a visa, ridiculous.

My advice, start with the VISA as soon as you have your SEVIS ID. There is a website where you can see every consulate's first available appointment, use that.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The international office helped us a lot. I felt like they could guide us more regarding the VISA process, but because of the pandemic they had to improvise too.

academic preparation

Through UCSB Gold you can choose courses, however EAP students have a delayed registration period, so a lot of courses are full. Read carefully if you actually can apply for the course, some courses have prerequisites. Luckily, I had the freedom to choose any course I wanted because I had enough ECTS at UU. If you are in this position too, make sure you look at the time slots of the course. If you want to have a lot of free time, be smart in choosing a schedule. I was free on Fridays and my lectures times were relaxed too. I made a small list of courses that I wanted to follow, from best to worse. I highly recommend this. I will explain why in the part of *study programme*. After making this list I simply chose the courses that were available and the highest on my list. If I had a question about the course I emailed the professor.

language preparation

During high school I did bilingual education. My IB score was good enough as a proof English proficiency.



finances

This depends on your financial situation. I knew I was going to study abroad during my bachelor, so I started saving and working early on. I also used DUO to save more. Make sure you temporarily disable your student OV for your period abroad to get something like 93 euros a month. I had saved about 10000 euros before I left. Don't worry, I know people who spent way less. It just depends on travel and how much you are willing to spend. I wanted to enjoy myself as much as possible (travel, luxury etc.) so I spent money like I was Jeff Bezos. At the end of the trip, I think I spent 12-13k euros. However, I travelled with my friends after the quarter so that makes a big difference.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

At UCSB you have something that is called "crashing courses". This is not something we have at UU. The first few weeks are a mess. If a course is full, you can try getting into the course by showing up the first few lessons. The professor will take notes and (hopefully) give you an access code. I crashed the courses that were on top of my list. Luckily, I was able to get into three new courses and I dropped my previous courses. I chose to follow the minimum of 12 units so I had a lot of free time.

academic quality of education activities

My lectures were amazing, I did two sports courses and one business course (ESS 130 & 160, TMP 122). The sports courses were focused on the NFL, which was like a dream to me. The Entrepreneurship course was a lot group work, the professor was really helpful and he made the course very entertaining. The biggest difference at UCSB was the interactivity of the lectures. Students were encouraged to speak up and everybody contributes to the class discussion. The level was not harder than UU. Every school day I spent like 1 to 2 hours at the library, so when I came home I was completely free. UCSB gives you low-level weekly assignments, at UU you can sit back more but the exam is harder in my opinion.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not have any contact with UU while I was abroad.

transfer of credits

Not done yet.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was no real welcome or orientation programme. In the first few weeks there were some social activities like the Rec fest where you find out about clubs and sports. There was an EAP facebook group made by UCSB that held some events. These events were very simple, they made sure there was food and invited all EAP students. I went to one event and met some new internationals. It is really easy to make friends at UCSB, you talk and exchange Instagram or whatever. Everybody is very chill so don't be afraid to talk to people.

accommodation

In my opinion, you will get the most out of your experience if you manage to find a room in Isla Vista (IV). This is a small town literally right next to campus where everything happens. The main way to find a room in IV is through FB groups like UCSB housing



I did everything I could but due to the housing crisis I could not find a room in IV. I signed up for university housing as a backup, luckily they placed me in an beautiful apartment. The university apartments are very nice too, the only con is the distance to campus. It was like 8 min bike ride to campus, which is nothing compared to Utrecht. I lived in Sierra Madre, I had amazing roommates and the apartment was very new. In my opinion, the people who live in the university apartments are more laid-back while the people in IV like to party more etc. Again, make sure you start looking early. If you are into partying, try to get a room close to Del Playa (DP). Try to live on DP if you really like parties, every weekend it is a chaos there.

Also, it is rare to have a room to yourself at UCSB. I lived in a triple, so I shared my room with two other boys. This was really not bad at all. We went out to eat and talked about our personal preferences regarding the room. Just make sure you communicate about everything.

leisure & culture

I was never bored. The thing I absolutely love about the US is the huge involvement of sports. UCSB offers every type of sports, so make sure you check it out. Try out new things while you are there, go surfing, hiking, partying, make trips etc. Group up with other international students to make trips, SB is surrounded by amazing places. I tried planning trips with Americans but I had way more success with internationals. Rent a car and go plan a trip. I went to LA, SF, Yosemite, Vegas, San Diego, SLO, Denver and some other small places. I know students who went on trips every weekend. It is just a matter of preference. Personally, I went to the US to get the American college experience, so I did not travel a lot during my time at UCSB. If you have other goals like exploring the US, go find a group and travel. Most of the internationals are down to go somewhere. If you are into partying, Thursdays a lot of students go downtown for clubs. There is party bus that goes from IV to downtown SB every Thursday night. Fridays and Saturdays DP is crowded with crazy house parties. As a guy you might have some difficulties getting in but that is the way the game is played there. After a while your social circle will provide you plenty of parties. Americans are very friendly and social people. Although it might seem a little fake sometimes, small talk is everywhere. After a while you will get used to talking to random people.

suggestions/tips

Go out there and make the most out of your experience. Try out new things, meet new people, travel to big cities etc. Time will FLY by and UCSB is very special place.

Also,

Get an American bank account. The only reason you get this card is for Venmo (tikkie). This made it easy to send and receive money from my American friends.

Get a room in IV

Get ISO instead of UCSB insurance to save some money.

Join a club or sports team.

If you are into sports, go in the fall semester. This allows you to go to a NFL or big college game. These games are insane. If you are into basketball, this does not matter.

Rent a car and go on trips.

Buy a used bike and make sure you U-lock it everywhere

Use YouTube to learn more about universities you are interested in. The internet is full of information about college experiences.

CONCLUSIONS

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



1000%. I never thought I would go to UCSB, it was never on my radar because they have no football program (very important to me). Looking back, I honestly think this might be the best school I could have chosen. I had the best time of my life. UCSB is very social school where people know how to enjoy life. They study hard but know how to have fun. It felt like I was on a resort with beautiful weather all the time. UCSB's location is ideal for traveling too.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Go Gauchos!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Artificial Intelligence

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, USA
name university abroad	University of California, Santa Barbara
start date	15 / 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

This actually was a lot more work than expected. Make sure you have all the paperwork and visa preparations fixed in time, otherwise you're gonna make it harder on yourself. Please don't underestimate the preparation work for the application! Also, I communicated with other students going to UCSB during that period who also had to arrange all the things. This really helped cause there was always someone who knew how to fix something.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Cathelijne really helped us in our preparation. We received a lot of emails explaining how to arrange everything, but at some point it was a little too much for me and I didn't know where to start anymore. At that point don't panic and just make a list of everything you have to get done and just fix them on at a time. This really helped me getting an overview of everything I had to get done.

academic preparation

Academic-wise there wasn't a lot I had to do. I picked some random courses at UCSB for which I didn't really need any academic preparation.

language preparation

You have to prove that your English is at some level. If you haven't done the TOEFL or IELTS then you should do them or another one. I did the Duolingo test because it is way cheaper than the ones above. I think most people should be fine with their English level, so don't worry too much about that! As soon as you're in the US, you start transforming to speaking English and even thinking in English and your English will improve pretty fast.

finances

I saved a lot of money before going to the US, cause you don't want to do a job or anything while you're there. I think, in total with travelling after the academic quarter, I spend around \$9000. You can definitely spend less than that though!

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I did three random courses which all seemed really interesting to me; Health & Wellbeing, Business & Environment and Math 2A. The content of the courses was really interesting! Only math was a little too easy,



since in the Netherlands we already discuss the topics they taught in this course in fourth grade of high school. The other two courses were so diverse and I could definitely recommend both to everyone who is interested in mental health and in business&environment.
academic quality of education activities
UCSB is one of the best public universities in the US. The first day of school I saw why. The teachers were so enthusiast about their subjects and really got you listening to them. During the quarter, I learned a lot in all three of my courses, which were very different. Just pick a subject you're interested in and you will probably love the course and learn a lot.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The counselling and support from the UU was really good! They made sure everyone could go on exchange to their preferred option. Even if you don't get your first or second option (UCSB was mv third), please give the other university a chance and you will still have the best time.
transfer of credits
I'm currently still in the process of transferring my credits.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
Due to covid, the orientation program was a little shorter than usual. Still there were some activities (especially for first year students and exchange/international students). I think this could be a really good way to get to know other international students, but personally I didn't go there myself. I already had a group of Dutch friends and this group kept expanding with German, Swedish and other Dutch people. In addition, I had my housemates who have become really good friends. In the first days I really wanted to invest in them so those are the main reasons I didn't attend the activities organized my UCSB.
accommodation
I had the perfect house, it was located on the east side of IV on DP, which means I had a house with sea-view, on the party street of IV and it was super close to campus. One big tip (cause I had no idea before I got to UCSB) everyone wants to live in IV (Isla Vista, the student town next to campus)!!!! It doesn't reaaally matter where, as soon as you have a spot in IV, then you're good. In the end everyone owns a bike and you can bike anywhere in IV. The best spots in IV are definitely on DP (Del Playa Drive), which is the street next to the beach. Every weekend all the parties are at houses on this street, so if you like partying, go here! I got my house through facebook (UCSB HOUSING or IV Housing for UCSB Students). Make sure you join the group and look on it way before you go, I got my house a couple of months before I went on exchange. When you're reading this, and already know you will be going to UCSB, just join right away!! Also, some of my friends posted about themselves looking for housing and a lot of them actually got responses and found housing through this, so don't hesitate and just post yourself. One last tip, there are some scams on facebook, so please be careful before paying anything. For example, call with the person renting the room before, ask for the location, for pictures and that kind of stuff. Good luck!
leisure & culture
UCSB has a lot of sport teams you can join. I joined the field hockey team the first week, but quickly decided that I wanted to quit. As an exchange student you want to make to most of your time there, and I didn't want to spend a minute doing something I could do in the Netherlands (like field hockey). Most teams train 4/5 days a week and have a game on the weekend, so it takes some time and effort, but some of my friends made a lot of friends in sport teams! I decided to join the excursion club and I can recommend everyone to join it!! It is



only 30\$ per quarter and you can rent almost anything for outside sports (surfboards, sups, camping gear, canoes etc etc etc). They are located really close to the beach and always open. Adventure program, on the other hand, is twice as expensive, closed really often, and they are located on a beach on campus that is less pretty, way smaller and has almost no waves. So join excursion club and NOT adventure program! (I made the same mistake and ended up joining excursion club anyway, so trust me do not join adventure program). Also, please do trips! We did one every other weekend and they were so much fun. We did San Francisco, Los Angeles, Yosemite, San Diego and Las Vegas. After finals, I did an RV tour to the national parks (death valley, zion national park, Bryce canyon and grand canyon) and it was amazing! After that we went to Hawaii as closing of our exchange. I did the trips with other exchange students since they all want to make the best of their time in the US, you will notice that you automatically hang out and do trips with other exchange students. Lastly, but maybe most importantly, UCSB is known for their partying life and they definitely live up to that name. The weekends at UCSB were crazy and even during the week there is a party almost every night if you want one. On Thursdays we always went downtown (to Santa Barbara, which is half an hour drive from IV) to the club Wildcat. Every Thursday all exchange students would be there, and we would have the best (drama-filled) nights. There are other really cool clubs downtown such as backstage and sharkeez. For downtown you do have to be 21+, but I was 20 the first two months and managed to get in with my friends' passport, who used her own ID. But please be careful, cops in the US are not the most tolerant. On Fridays and Saturdays everyone would go out in IV, where no one cares about your age. I've had the craziest houseparties there and people there get so so drunk. Do not prepare for drinking wine or beer, cause it is only shots and mix drinks at UCSB. There are also a lot of daygers (parties during the day), which are the most fun. They are at houses with big decks over the ocean and people are so happy and crazy, I miss these parties already. There is a lot more to say about UCSB, you're gonna have the best time and I'm jealous that you are still going there.

suggestions/tips

Get a bike! Everything is easier on a bike and a lot of people have one. There is a bike shop in IV but students also sell their bikes on facebook often (Free & For Sale (UCSB)).
Go watch sunset at sands beach (5/10 minutes by bike and 20/30 minutes walk, depending on where in IV you live).
Join excursion club and not adventure program!
Scan facebook groups for housing on time!! A couple months before you go preferably.
Bring converter plugs, cause the US has other outlets and the converters are hard to get over there.

CONCLUSIONS

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

YES, for all the reasons above. It is a good academic school and the party/social life is amazing. The best of both worlds! + it is located next to the ocean and the weather is really good.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

GO TO UCSB.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	USE
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Economics

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, United States
name university abroad	University of California, Santa Barbara
start date	01 / 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	This was particularly difficult due to covid regulations. I needed to get a visa and for that I needed to go to an American consulate or embassy. Consulates and embassies in several European countries accepted then cancelled their appointments with me. The waiting times varied wildly and it took me months until I finally got my visa 2 days before my flight to Los Angeles. It was pretty stressful so I recommend you start as early as possible.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	We had several meetings which were helpful and we also made a groupchat which was very helpful.
academic preparation	I recommend taking an extra course or 2 before you leave because it's hard to know how many credits you will get transferred from your exchange.
language preparation	N/A
finances	Definitely save some money beforehand. Santa Barbara is expensive.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	Choosing courses was quite confusing and I was juggling advice from my study advisors at UU and the one at UCSB. I recommend asking American friends and roommates for help. They've been doing this for years so they know best how to sign up for classes.
academic quality of education activities	The academic level is the same as at UU in my experience. There are courses that are difficult and some that are easier.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	Find the information for your study advisor at UCSB and contact them. They are very helpful and accommodating.
transfer of credits	



I thought I understood the credit transfer system but then I got more credits than I expected. Look it up on the UU website (it's pretty hard to find) and speak to your UU study advisor.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There were some welcome and orientation programs I think but I didn't go to any. Since I arrived weeks before classes started I had already made plans with friends.

accommodation

Finding housing is one of the biggest struggles. I almost signed a 1-year lease on a house which would have made me and a bunch of students I met on Facebook responsible for paying 60 thousand dollars over the whole year. I decided not to but I'm lucky I found a better option a few months later. Go on Facebook, join all the housing groups for UCSB and Isla Vista and contact as many people as possible. I knew European students who never found proper housing and were living in hotels paid for by the university. Another good option if you get it early enough is university housing, but start really early with your research.

leisure & culture

Tons of activities with the university and in the surroundings. Join all the clubs you might be interested in. There's an excursion club, astronomy club, finance club etc. In Isla Vista you can go surfing. I recommend buying a wetsuit and maybe even a board. There's plenty of cinemas and restaurants. Even an ice skating rink not too far.

suggestions/tips

Buy a bike first thing on Facebook marketplace. Very useful to get around and you can sell it when you leave. Also open a US bank account on your first day. You will need your form certifying that you are a legal resident in the US. Another good thing was using the mint mobile sim card they send you with your DS-2019. I activated it before leaving and switched sims over the Atlantic so I immediately had mobile data and calling when I landed in the US.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, it's a good destination. Santa Barbara is a beautiful place. Palm trees and sunsets on the pacific never get old. You'll meet great people and make great friends. It's very easy to live a happy and relaxed lifestyle by the beach. You can take interesting classes and the sporting opportunities at the rec center are limitless.

do you have any additional advice or comments?



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	History

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, USA
name university abroad	University of California Santa Barbara
start date	17 / 9 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	10 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	<p>The exchange application process was pretty straightforward. It does take some time to complete because it consists of so many components, so keep that in mind when applying. The EAP program, especially, takes quite some time because the application at UC requires you to make a top 3 list (or more if you want) of the campuses you would like to go to with a study plan for each.</p> <p>The UCSHIP health insurance is pretty expensive, so if you can you should get a waiver for UCSHIP and get the cheaper ISO insurance. However, if you're an American citizen like I am, you're not eligible for any of the cheaper insurances that are meant for international students.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>The university was very helpful in the application process and guided it well. The support slacked a lot, however, when the exchange was canceled due to COVID. This was just days before the quarter was supposed to start because of a negative travel advice. I was already in the US, as were several others, and there was a lot of uncertainty around what this would mean for us. The university did not do a good job of keeping us informed and giving clarity. There was even an instance where a meeting was held about the cancelation of the exchange, but it took place at a time that was super early in the morning for the people already in the US...</p> <p>There was no second meeting held so that we could attend as well. I understand that it was probably hectic for the university, but this was something that definitely could have been handled better. Especially because they already knew that such a scenario could happen, so it was very strange that they did not seem prepared and still had to figure out a bunch of stuff.</p>
academic preparation	I didn't do anything to prepare for the exchange academically.
language preparation	I did not have to do any language preparation for the exchange.
Finances	<p>I saved up years in advance for the exchange. Besides this, I also borrowed the maximum amount that I could get from DUO for the duration of my exchange.</p> <p>You can get compensated by the government because you don't use your OV-chipkaart during your stay abroad. Make sure you apply for this because it's an extra €100 a month! Public transit in Santa Barbara is free for students. You just have to scan your student ID (access card), which you can already get before the quarter starts, so request yours as soon as you can! I did not know this was possible and ended up having to wait weeks</p>



until I got it.

I got a credit card to pay for my expenses. I can definitely recommend you get one too, especially if you want to travel during or after your exchange. I also opened a US bank account at the Chase bank in IV (the neighborhood where all the students live). If you decide to do so, make an appointment as early as possible. The bank gets booked up in the first weeks of class with all the students wanting to open an account.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I registered for three history courses with a total of 12 units. I got lucky and could register for these through GOLD, UCSB's course registration website, and did not have to shop for classes in the first week of the quarter. Many of the classes will already be completely full by the time exchange students can register because UCSB students have first choice. I would recommend that you register for courses as soon as your pass time starts because classes fill up quickly on a first come first served basis. It's possible to look for courses beforehand and add them to your schedule. That way you can already figure out which classes you want to take and when so that they're all lined up when your pass time starts and you'll only have to click enroll.

academic quality of education activities

I took 2 lower division courses and 1 upper division course. In Utrecht history courses usually require you to read a lot of articles, but at UCSB the bulk of the reading consisted of primary sources, which was nice. The lower division courses were very easy. The subject matter was not very hard and the examinations weren't either. For one course I had 2 exams and an essay. For the other I only needed to write three essays and did not have any exams. UU had let us know at the beginning of the exchange that our grades would be converted to pass/fail, so I put in minimum effort and got an A and A- in the classes. The upper division course was a bit harder and required more work. I had weekly reading questions, 2 essays and a final exam. I got a B in this class with minimum effort.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not make use of the international office at UCSB because it seemed to be focused on helping out with immigration related issues.

transfer of credits

My exchange ended mid-December and UCSB let me know that an official transcript would arrive at UU around mid-February.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The university had many activities and arranged lots of chances to get to know people. There was the welcome week of the university that was intended for all UCSB students. They had some fun activities, but for several of them it was obvious that they had not accounted for the amount of students who wanted to participate (they had a puppy therapy event, where they had like 4 dogs for literally hundreds of students...).

I was in university housing so the university housing association also organized some welcome activities and my RA organized several events to get to know the other residents.

The EAP program also organized many activities throughout the quarter during which you could meet other exchange students and internationals.

I tried to go to as many events as possible, because it really is a great way to meet people (both Americans and internationals)!

accommodation



Housing in IV is very tight at the moment, so start looking for housing early! It's possible to find housing through the housing Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/364409110289576>). If you're only going on exchange for one quarter you will need to find a sublease, which was hard when I was looking because less UCSB students went abroad due to COVID.

Instead, I decided to sign up for university housing and got an apartment. The contract was for the entire year and there was a cancellation fee of a few \$100, but because of the housing crisis they offered to wave the fee if I canceled the contract before a certain date (there were many students still on the waitlist for housing). I ended up in a triple (so with 2 roommates) and we were with a total of 8 housemates. It sounds like a lot, but it was actually very doable and I automatically knew 7 people before school even started! Being in a triple also meant that my rent was cheaper (it was about \$690). I lived at San Joaquin, which is the newest of the apartment complexes. The apartments were pretty spacious, came with good appliances, several laundry facilities, pool access and Tenaya market/the dining commons were close by.

leisure & culture

The weather in Santa Barbara is pretty nice year round, so I went to the beach a lot, both during the day and at sunset. There's also many hiking trails in the area with beautiful views.

On the weekends many students go party on DP (Del Playa Drive). The parties are very different from the Netherlands. Many will have a whole line-up of bands performing or a DJ booth in their garden (which is usually jam-packed with people). It's a lot of fun and I would definitely recommend you go at least once, even if partying is not really your thing! However, there is police walking around and they are very strict about the alcohol laws. This means that you cannot have an open container when you're walking down the street. Be extra careful with this if you're under 21 because they will enforce these rules and you do not want to get caught drinking as a minor. Also, do not sit on the curb. You will draw the police's attention because they see it as a sign of drunkenness. Parties stop around 12 or 1.

If you're 21+ you can also go out to a club. In my opinion this is less fun though, because you can do this anywhere. I went to one club which had a lot of students and younger people, but another club I went to was pretty boring and had a lot of older people.

UCSB does not have a football team, but does offer several other sports. Definitely go to a soccer game if you have the chance (the game vs. Cal Poly is best as that's their rival school). I also went to a basketball game, which was great!

Also try to get out and see other places in California. I took trips to San Francisco, LA and Sequoia National Park. Around Thanksgiving the International Student Association organized a trip to Yosemite National Park, which I can recommend! Other people also took trips to San Diego, Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon.

suggestions/tips

I did not get a meal plan with the university because I was in an apartment and could cook. However, I feel like it may have been worth it to get one because doing groceries always took a lot of time. The stores are located just a bit away from IV and are accessible by bike and public transit, but if you don't have access to a car it can quickly get annoying to do groceries.

Biking is a very common mode of transportation in IV and on campus, so definitely get a bike! I bought mine second hand at the Bike Boutique, where they'll take the bike back at the end of the quarter for a certain percentage of the original price.

Santa Barbara is only about 60 miles from the Vandenberg air force base where rockets are launched. I can recommend you keep an eye on when the rocket launches are, because it's super cool to see!

It's good to know that around Halloween the university and police take measures to prevent big parties.

Halloween parties usually take place 1 week before and after October 31st and Halloween itself is pretty quiet, so you may want to go elsewhere to celebrate.

CONCLUSIONS



would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes! I had a lot of fun during my exchange. I definitely feel like I got the American college experience. Santa Barbara is beautiful and it was great being able to go to the beach literally every day. Besides this, UCSB is worthwhile academically as well. The school offers lots of cool classes that aren't available at UU and it's known as one of the best colleges in the US.
do you have any additional advice or comments?



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	FSW
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Interdisciplinary Social Sciences

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, California, USA
name university abroad	University California, Santa Barbara
start date	23 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	13 / 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was pretty easy. I began early, so I had enough time to make a selection and write my motivation. I would definitely recommend to start on time. That gives you more hours to review your decisions and letters. After I knew I got into Education Abroad Program in California, things got a little harder. You had to make a second selection out of 10 universities (which was a pretty hard decision as well, because every university has it's own benefits). I also had to pick courses that fitted into my bachelor. This might seem early, but no worries, there was enough room to change these courses at the beginning of the Exchange. The thing I thought was not perfectly clear, was the information about the English test we had to make. First we got an email that this year there was a change that we didn't had to do the test (TOEFL-test). So, I was super relieved about that, but in the end we still had to make the test to get fully accepted. Besides the selection and English test, we also had to apply for a Visa. This information was really clear, but the process was still long and intense (and expensive). Keep in mind that by the time you apply you also need to have a passport (I didn't had one at the time and needed to get one last minute). Once you're accepted by the university, you can sign in on the website of the Education Abroad program, where everything you need to prepare is summed up. Other preparations, wherefore you're responsible yourself are: getting a travel insurance, a health insurance (this is mandatory, look for ISO: <https://www.isoa.org/>, and than you have to check which one is applicable for USCSB). Also make sure you have an American sim card. I got one from mint sim, the university send it together with your DS-2020. So it's easy to use that one (and pretty cheap). Make sure to activate it on time, the date of expiry is on the back of the card. Something that is also really convenient to have is a credit card. I had one that only allowed me to spend 1000 euro's a month, but with rent and groceries I sometimes had to spend more. So make sure that you have a credit card that allows more. Saves you a lot of struggles and stress. Every students in the Netherlands has a OV-chipcard, you cannot use this during your Exchange, but you're allowed to request a compensation for studying abroad (so you get 95 euro's a month to travel with public transport during your travels). Definitely do this, it's basically free money. In Santa Barbara you live on or next to the campus and the bus is free, so u can use this money to buy yourself a bike or do groceries! (make sure you stop your student OV before you leave).

counselling & support at Utrecht University

In my opinion the counselling from the UU was pretty messy. A new lady just started supervising this department, so everything was new for her as well. She didn't knew everything (totally understandable), sometimes this made it a little harder, because she wasn't sure about the answers she gave. For example, I was confused about to which Visa we had to apply, because the forms used two different names. So I emailed her to make sure which one to get, but she didn't knew either.

academic preparation



The academic preparation existed of choosing which courses to follow and the TOEFL-test I guess. There was not really something you can do to prepare more for studying there, because you already study at an university which has a pretty high level of education. So don't worry too much about that.

language preparation

The only preparation I did was before the TOEFL-test. I started one week before with listening to American Podcasts and reading an American book. This really helped me to get into the language again. Furthermore, I did some investigation on YouTube about how to prepare for the test and I found a lot of video's which explained what kind of strategy to use for the different parts of the test. So, I would definitely recommend you to (drill) that into your head and to be prepared for a really intense four hours of test making.

finances

I already knew two years before my Exchange that I really wanted to go abroad and opened a savings account. Every month I put some money aside. The last six months before I left, I had a lot of spare time so I decided to make more hours at work. Eventually I saved around 4500 euro's. We had to make a budget, so I knew this was not enough (you need to have around 7000 euro's on your account to get accepted). I applied for a scholarship and used money of my student loan from DUO to fill up the gap. In the end, I spend around 7500/8000 dollar, but it was TOTALLY worth it. No regrets.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

Before the exchange I signed up for three courses, but when I arrived I switched all of them. In the first week of uni you can follow courses you like and then chose the one that fit you the most. I found some really nice courses, but it was pretty hard to make my schedule work (which is your own responsibility). Fortunately my roommates were both American and they could explain everything. In the end I chose three regular courses and an extra sports course. Two of the regular courses were super interesting and the professors both had so much knowledge of the subject that I had way more fun following these courses, than following courses at the UU. This made it studying for the exams also way less stressful. The third course I followed was really interesting as well, but the organization of the course was one big mess. The little texts you had to write were literally only your own opinion, so you did not even needed to do the readings (although they wanted you to do that). The lectures felt as one big joke. The professor just started talking about things that happened that week or about events that were planned on campus related to the course. Nothing about the articles. So, after a while I lost my motivation for this course. Overall everything was super was super well organised and everyone was willing to help when you got stuck.

academic quality of educational activities

I followed two Psychology and one Sociology course. I think the quality these courses were pretty much the same as the quality of the courses I followed at UU. The duration of the block was about the same, so it felt like the same amount of information. USCB also works with midterms. I really preferred this system in the end. You already learned 2/3 of the information before your final, which made studying less work. If you there was something you didn't understood or you had question, there was the possibility to go to the office hours of the professors of the course. The professors were really driven to make sure you understand everything.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I didn't need a lot of counselling or support. But I felt like I was supported 100%. For example, I have dyslexia so I signed up for extra time for my exams. They immediately invited me for a little chat to get to know me and suggested that I could also try Kurzweil (a program that reads texts out loud) and a smart pen (which records the lecture while you're taking notes). I didn't need it, but it felt like they really care about you performing the best you can.



transfer of credits

Haven't done this yet.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

Before uni started, there was a one day orientation or welcome programme. It was called the CALI-training or something and you had to pay 50 dollars (it included free lunch..?) They told you about all the general rules on and around the campus. I thought that was really useful. After that, we got a campus tour and lunch. The lunch was a good opportunity to meet people, because there were not a lot other moments for that. Through the first week there were a lot of other activities, such as a brunch or a hike, but I didn't attend any of them.

accommodation

I subleased a room in Isla Vista, the little students town literally right next to campus. It was a little bit cheaper to sublease a room there, than living in university owned housing. I found my room through the Facebook group, which I think is pretty reliable. My rent was around 700 dollar a month, don't freak out about the prices, because living in California is just expensive. So this was about the cheapest it could get.

leisure & culture

Next to studying, I had so much free time. I always did my homework super-fast, so I could go surfing or tanning in the sun. There is so much to do around the area, so I'd never get bored. We did hikes or road trips during the weekends. I also joined the excursion club and they organized super cool, super cheap trips. Personally, I really loved the American culture. People are positive, open and helpful. They always ask you if they can help you when you look lost or chat with you on the bus. I know some people think that's annoying, but it made me feel super welcome.

suggestions/tips

Don't hold back. Plan something fun every day, enjoy the beautiful nature and do things you'll usually never do. It is a great opportunity to challenge yourself going outside your comfort zone and learn to be more independent.

CONCLUSIONS

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

YES. It's like living in a dream. Besides the super interesting and valuable courses the university has to offer, it is so much more. There are people from all around the world, so you learn about other cultures too. The nature and the weather is beautiful, which gives you the opportunity to go outside and see all of it!



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Utrecht University School of Economics
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Economics

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, California
name university abroad	University of California, Santa Barbara
start date	21 / 9 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	13 / 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I started looking for destinations in summer before my second year. I knew I wanted to go outside of EU since UU pays the difference of the tuition fee. My first choice actually was not California, but it turned out great and I am very happy I ended up going there. I remember going to a few meetings that UU organised for all students from UU that were going to California and they were very helpful, I highly recommend attending those. The application process is a hassle, UC requires a lot of forms and papers but it is absolutely worth it and I would do it all over again if I had to. It is a lot but it is very easy to acquire these forms and fill them in, so no worries. I would say this is the hardest part of the whole exchange, so once you get through this, it will only get easier. I do not remember exact details about this process, I only remember it took quite long, but the staff at the international office was very helpful, so if you have any questions just give them a call.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Like I said, the staff at the international office at UU was really helpful and provided the much-needed guidance. The meetings are very helpful also, so definitely go.

academic preparation

There was not much academic preparation needed for me, I had the required average so I did not have to worry about that. I did take some extra courses from year 3 in my second year in order to have a more relaxed exchange and I do recommend doing it because I did all my required courses prior to going on exchange and therefore I could just take some interesting courses in California that were not linked to my major.

language preparation

My major at UU is English-taught so I did not need any language preparation.

finances

California is EXPENSIVE. Prepare yourself in advance. It of course depends on your living style, but exchange students usually want to travel, which is expensive. My friends and I went on trips almost every weekend, we went to LA a couple of times (a night usually cost me \$50 ish, but I think you can do lower if you stay in hostels, but not much, you can maybe do \$40/night. That is just for a place to sleep at, you need to add expenses such as food (which is incredibly expensive in California) and drinks and fun stuff). The train from SB to LA costs around \$30, however there were also Flixbuses going for sometimes as cheap as \$5. We went to Yosemite a couple of times also, which is not that expensive if you either go with a big group or camp there (it gets cold though, bring some extra layers). It is very easy and relatively cheap to rent cars, there are car rentals everywhere, but keep in mind that there are extra costs if someone who is under 25 rents it (I think it is \$20/day extra). We also went to Mammoth Lakes during Thanksgiving, which is incredible but really expensive.



The skipass and accomm prices are hefty but it is a very nice experience to ski in California so I highly recommend it. Overall, living costs are high in California if you are planning on eating (lol) and going on trips, so be prepared. I needed around \$2500 more than the required amount needed by UC (you can find it on their website, you need to provide a financial statement from your bank that you have enough finances to support yourself during your exchange), but like I said, I did travel a lot. If you travel less, your expenses will decrease tremendously. Also, make use of the Food Bank at UCSB, you will get food for free! That is a lifesaver. Also #2, join Excursion Club! It is run by students, it costs only \$30/quarter and you can rent surfboards, wetsuits, kayaks, paddle boards, tents, sleeping bags, ski and snowboarding gear and I don't know else. It is absolutely amazing.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I took courses from many faculties at ucsb and they were all very interesting. I do not have much to say about them, other than the workload is very different to the workload at UU. I had to do a lot more homework but it was a bit easier relative to the homework I have at UU.

academic quality of education activities

Like I said, I found the courses at UCSB different to the courses at UU, but it was a nice and fresh change. The approach is different, there are more contact hours which makes studying for the finals easier.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not need any help from any official while I was at UCSB, so cannot really talk about this.

transfer of credits

This haven't been done yet.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There is only one day of orientation at UCSB, it is called Cali training and honestly it was not very helpful. It did not matter much though, because prior to the exchange, the staff at the international office at UCSB started sending out emails to all incoming exchange students and we formed a FB group where we all texted each other and people who came earlier posted in there and met up with other people who were already there. So I met plenty of people even before the start of uni, which was great. I would not worry about meeting people, it is very easy there as long as you put yourself out there and you are willing to socialise.

accommodation

This is an interesting one. Accommodation can get expensive but I expected worse. Almost everyone lives in the neighbourhood called Isla Vista which is right next to the campus. I have never experienced anything similar. It is such a strong community of students, all your friends live a close walking distance from you, it is great. Prepare yourself for sharing a room, it is not common to have a single and it is extremely overpriced. There is this thing called Tropicana Gardens, which I do not recommend, unless you enjoy getting ripped off. It is very overpriced and it is the furthest away from the beach. Join FB group called UCSB Housing, you can get a place through there.

leisure & culture

I mentioned most of the stuff in the "finances" part already. Americans do not really go on trips but literally every exchange student does. Do not worry about not having people to travel with. California and West Coast is



absolutely beautiful, please see it while you are there, you won't regret it. Excursion club organises weekly trips and hikes as well and they are very cheap/free, so make use of that ☺.

suggestions/tips

Do everything you can. Do not waste any time, it will fly by super quickly. Go and try surfing! I absolutely fell in love with it and ended up going at least 2/3 times a week. The beach is a walking distance from anywhere you'll live so make the most out of it. Use Food Bank as well, you can get food for free there. Travel to LA by Flixbus, it is the cheapest. Join FB groups like UCSB Housing and UCSB Free & For sale. Get a Costco card, it costs \$60 but u can return it when you leave and they will give u all the money back. It is a very cheap store where you can get pretty much everything (furniture, food etc) in massive packs for cheap. And enjoy every day!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Absolutely! It is very relaxed and the weather is incredible the whole time. You practically live on the beach. There is always something fun and interesting to do. The UCSB offers very interesting courses as well, and many more than UU, so you have a lot to choose from. Overall, it was the most amazing experience of my life, so do not hesitate to go!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No



faculty/college	Faculty of Medicine
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Biomedical Sciences

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, United States of America
how did you travel to and from your destination?	<p>I booked through Cheaptickets with a layover (Deltairlines), which was cheapest. For departure I had a 1.5h layover in Houston. To me this seemed like a short time, especially since I needed to pick up my luggage again and drop it off again (this didn't happen automatically, but they say this to you when you check-in at Schiphol). But Houston was not that big of an airport and I arrived just in time!</p> <p>For the flight back I also booked a layover in Chicago, but I never made use of this ticket because of corona. I didn't get any money back from cheaptickets, sadly. Instead I had a direct flight from KLM.</p>
name university abroad	University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB, through UCEAP Reciprocity)
start date	06 / 01 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy), I flew in on the 4 th . I would not recommend this, most International students already meet up the weekend before.
end date	18 / 03 / 2020 (dd/mm/yyyy) original end date would've been 15/06/2020

PREPARATION

exchange application process

Honestly I hated this part. A lot of things were unclear for me, especially from my own faculty. I experienced a lot of miscommunication (not everyone had this) and at first it was not clear from which universities I could choose. There's this whole list online, remember that you can only choose from university-wide and from your own faculty. I made the mistake of looking at a lot of universities I was not allowed to go to. My first top-3 were all in Europe, but I was not picked for any of those 3. Then I had to wait a couple of weeks before I could choose again from the spots that were left. In the end this was actually a good thing. I was afraid to pick places outside of Europe, but the spots that were left in Europe didn't interest me. Australia is said to be very expensive, so I choose America. And what better place than California, the Golden State?

After I got placed for UCEAP Reciprocity, I had to choose my top 3 universities of 9 within California. UCEAP is very clear in what you have to hand in and what is expected when, so this all went very smoothly. I had Santa Barbara as #1, Berkeley as #2 and Davis as #3.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Both the International Office of BMW and North-America reply very fast to emails, which I could really appreciate. The only thing is that you have to do a lot of things by yourself and figure a lot of things out by yourself as well. I had more actual help from fellow students who had already figured it out than from faculty/office staff. Especially when it came to choosing Universities, VISA application and deadlines.

X from the Board of Examiners from Biomedical Sciences was a great help in choosing courses and getting them approved. He was very clear in what he wanted to know from the courses I was interested in (description, books, hours etc) and then we talked them through. Also when I was away and I needed to get approval for new courses, he was very clear and fast in correspondence.

academic preparation

I didn't really do a lot of academic preparation. It was not necessary.

language preparation



For UCEAP you had to take a TOEFL test or another one which name I cannot remember (but they say this very clearly in the UCEAP application process and also which score you need to get). I took the TOEFL test, which for me was not hard at all. It was quite expensive though, I think around the 250\$. The day before the test I took a couple free online tests and read what I could expect. I thought I would fail because of my lack of preparation and I read that people had difficulty with the test.

The test itself exists of 4 parts if I remember correctly. Reading, listening, writing and speaking. Reading and listening did in no way compare to VWO final exams, it was way easier. Writing was relatively easy as well, especially because the examples online are very accurate (for listening too). Speaking was a bit weird, the TOEFL test is all online on location, so I was in a room with maybe 15 other people who all started the test at different times (2-5 minutes after each other), so some people started speaking earlier than you and ended later which could mess with your concentration.

finances

I have the BMW scholarship for 500 euros for travel expenses and 100 euros every month (max of 5) for rent. I have not received this yet, and I don't know how much I will receive now due to corona.

Immediately when I knew I wanted to do an exchange year I started a loan from DUO with 'terugwerkende kracht'. I started the loan in December and I received the money from Sep-Dec as well. So I had a year's worth of DUO loan that I had set aside and some savings. For your VISA application you need to prove that you have enough funds to stay in America. I think this was around 10.000. You can also show your parent's funds as prove.

Keep in mind that the whole VISA process will cost a lot of money. You will need to request a document from your host university, which will cost you around 60\$. I think it was called a SEVIS fee, and for some reason you need to pay this and this was around 100-200\$. Then comes the application and the VISA itself.

(interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

welcome & orientation programme

This was very stupid. It was already 2 weeks or 4 weeks in, so it was not relevant anymore. We had to sit in a theatre and listen to university staff talk about consent, funfacts about the university and some programs for activities. It would have been handier if it had been earlier.

study programme (content and organisational issues)

As I said X was great in communication in what BMW would accept or not. I do not remember any difficulties for me. UCEAP was very clear and once you set up your UCSB email, you will get a lot of emails and reminders of deadlines. Class registration goes through GOLD, which shows a very clear schedule of the courses per quarter and per faculty at UCSB. For a lot of classes you need to get permission from the student advisor from that specific faculty or from the professor itself. This is very easy, just email them (UCSB will also sent you a prerequisite form) and tell them your motivation and that you fulfil the prerequisites.

academic quality of education activities

I took a lot of freshman courses because I didn't know yet what I wanted to do after my bachelors, so I thought to take courses in a few of my interests. Freshman courses are not difficult at all. Interesting still, but not very hard. You will get a lot of homework in some freshman courses, which sucks because I was not used to it anymore. In the spring quarter I had all upperclassman courses which were a lot nicer, also in how they taught the classes. Still, the overall quality is lower than Utrecht in my opinion.

transfer of credits

One UCSB credit is 1.33 ECT (if I remember correctly). The minimum credits for UCSB was 12 units, which is ~16 ECT. I needed 15 per quarter so that's good.

I'm currently working on getting my transcript to Utrecht.



CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES

support guidance of host university

We were kept up to date with all the happenings in the Santa Barbara County through mail. I lived in University Housing and they also sent a lot of emails with information. When the university closed down and UCSB requested students to go home, they met us students halfway in that we could cancel our housing contract without a cancelling fee.

support guidance of home university

I think I got a couple emails requesting to come home once the USA closed the border to Europe. I remember that I greatly appreciated the contact with BMW once I decided to come home. I had to email a lot of people that I came home, and one staff member wanted to know when I would fly and actually sent me a separate email wishing me a safe flight and requesting to know when I was home safe. The emails from UU for support were actually quite late in my opinion. I was already home for some time, having to struggle with the consequences of having to go home so suddenly (living with my parents again because I had a sublesser) before I got an email for some kind of support.

online offer and quality of digital courses

All the courses I choose were offered online. In the first two weeks of the quarter you can switch courses, so I looked for courses that didn't have mandatory attendance for lectures (the 9 hour time difference was already hard enough) or had sections at a fortunate Dutch time. In the end I had all courses with lectures that were recorded in advance and put online, so I could watch them when I wanted to. One course with a section that was on Fri 10 AM so 19.00 Dutch time. One course had quizzes that were available for a day, so I usually made them at 18.00, the same for the other course which had exams through Zoom. One course was a bit more difficult and didn't want to schedule separate exams for exchange students, so I had two exams at 02.00 and one at 04.30. They all went fine though and this it was only these three times that sucked, it wasn't that annoying.

suggestions/tips on digital exchange

If possible, choose courses with people that you know/fellow exchange students, so there are some people you can talk to about the course. That's what I missed to most – having some kind of contact with fellow students during the online courses. I just watched lectures, went to that section and had no conversation with anyone that also followed the course. The study load was less than I was used to, so sometimes it was possible to do all three courses in 2/3 days instead of a week. Especially since two courses put everything online on Monday, so Tuesday was one whole course and Wednesday the other. If this is possible, do it! You will have more time to do fun things, especially if you remain in your exchange country.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! Santa Barbara is honestly great. It is so beautiful, it doesn't matter where you live in IV, the beach is within 5 minutes by bike or 10 minutes walking. The Uni is also max 30 minutes walking or 10/15 minutes by bike. There are a lot of parties every Friday and Saturday on the street that is located at the edge of the beach (called DP, Del Playa). You just walk down the street and there will be parties every few houses you can just walk into. I know UCSB is known as a party school, but UCSB, Isla Vista and Santa Barbara have so much more to offer than just parties.

IV itself also has a lot of food choices, the recreation centre is also great – you can swim, do fitness, do all kind of sports (for ½ credits 😊) for free! The beach and nature around IV is amazing. In the Winter quarter the ocean was still cold, but there are a lot of surfers still. Whale watching is also possible in March/April. The Excursion club (which is 30 dollar for quarter) is something I would definitely recommend. They lent out surf and sub equipment for free to members, they have weekly surfing sessions in which they can teach you how to surf. They plan weekly hikes in the surrounding area and they plan a few big trips each quarter.



San Fran is relatively close and LA is very close, only 2 hours with Flexbus. (You get used to American distance standards). The airport of SB is within biking distance so renting a car is easy. UCSB is also a good university quality wise according to those university rankings.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

When I flew in I didn't have housing yet, which would stress people out but I had read a lot of these reports saying it will happen in the first week when you meet people. It is indeed handy to be on location so you can meet up with the people leasing rooms, but I didn't have any luck finding housing in IV. I lived in a hotel for a week before I signed a Campus contract. At first a Campus contract didn't sound compelling to me because most are located at the edge of IV, but as I said before, everything is still very close by and a lot of international students also rent here. So don't be discouraged to sign a contract here! The houses/rooms are very clean, and they are all furnished.

Get a bike! A must have in IV, also for getting groceries.

Go party! (Even if you are not that much of a partier, it is a whole experience. Cops coming at 12 to close things down, the whole party/drinking culture is so different you have to experience it once).

Go to the activities from the Office of International Students, especially in the first few weeks. This is how you meet fellow internationals and make friends!

Don't be afraid to talk to people in your sections, all the American I met were very interested when I told them I was an exchange student. All the American I met were very kind. I even had a lady in the Airbus shuttle (LAX-Santa Barbara) drive me to the hotel because it was dark and she didn't want me to take an Uber alone. But as you will quickly find out, Uber and Lyft are going to be your go-to apps when you want to get around. They are very cheap and fast.

As soon as you have a long weekend, plan a trip! You never know what's going to happen (aka corona).

Be quick with your VISA application. I had to request expedite application because it was fully booked and I could otherwise only get an appointment after Uni in America started. And to apply for a VISA, you need to get your DS-2019 from your host university. This is something you need to request yourself, so do this as soon as possible. They will ship this you, so a week to two weeks will go by before you get this.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Recht Economie Bestuur en Organisatie
level	x bachelor's
name study programme	Bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschappen

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, United States
name university abroad	University of California Santa Barbara
start date	23/ 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	14/ 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process was long and took a lot of time. Make sure you try to start as early as possible with certain documents that you need to upload. The whole process will take about 5/6 months from the start of your application until your visa appointment at the US consulate in Amsterdam. The process is not difficult just read everything carefully and try to finish everything as soon as possible, that saves you a lot of stress.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The UU gives you enough support and their counselling has definitely helped me. You can always contact the international students desk for questions. Don't worry about the process too much, it's all worth it in the end!

academic preparation

I did not prepare myself in any specific way for the courses that I was going to follow while I was studying at UCSB. There wasn't anything you needed to do.

language preparation

I needed to take the TOEFL test in order to prove to the University of California that my English was sufficient enough to study there. In all honesty, the test is very easy if your English was decent in high school. It was definitely easier than the exam for English on VWO. Besides, if I compare my English and that from other Dutch students to some of the other international students, our English is way more fluent. It takes you a few weeks in the beginning to get used to speaking English on a day to day basis but after that period you will feel very comfortable speaking it.

finances

When I knew that I wanted to study in California I started to increase my student loan to the maximum. In addition, I worked the whole summer to save extra money. Everything is more expensive in the USA, and California is one of the most expensive states in the country so keep that in mind when you go there. I recommend that you save everything that you can because there is so much to see and to do. I said to my friends "California is amazing, but you need money in order to really enjoy it". You still have some influence on how expensive you will make it. For example, a lot of Americans don't cook dinner but have meal plans, which are way more expensive then cooking your own food. I spend around €9.000 on everything.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

At the beginning of the quarter I was enrolled in 4 classes for 16 points (22,5 ECTS), but after 2 weeks I dropped one course because I wanted to have more time off to fully enjoy my time there. It is definitely possible to enrol in 22,5 ECTS but with the quarter system where you just have 10 weeks to study it can be very stressful. Do not



worry about the fact that a lot of courses are already full when you as an international student can register for classes before the quarter. It is very normal at UCSB that students crash classes that are already full and ask the professor if it is possible to join it anyways. It really depends on the professor and the capacity of the classroom if you can join. I switched classes during the first week of the quarter.
academic quality of education activities
The academic quality of the education activities were not higher than I'm used to at the Utrecht University. I think my classes were easier because of the fact that all my exams were multiple choice. Besides, students in the USA aim a lot of times to get an A for a class. This is also very plausible to happen if you do what you have to do. So in my opinion it is easier to achieve higher grades compared to the UU. You just have to pick your classes carefully, some classes can be more difficult.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I did not use the support offered by UCSB because I did not need it. But the international office gives you enough information through mail during your time there.
transfer of credits
You do not have to do anything in order to transfer your credits from UCSB to UU. UCSB will do this for you, so don't worry about this too much.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme
There was one morning from 9 am till 13 pm that was kind of an orientation programme. But it was very easy to meet new people, all the other international students are in the same situation as you. From the beginning there was a WhatsApp group with all the EAP students, from there on people started giving parties or organizing socials on the beach or at someone's house. In addition, Americans are also very helpful and open to meet new people. So you will have the opportunity to meet a lot of new people.
accommodation
I lived in a house with 15 Americans. I shared my room with two others. I was kind of worried in the beginning to share a room because I'm not used to it, but after all it wasn't too bad. My roommates became two of my best friends while I was there, and I did not know them at all before. Single rooms are just way too expensive, and I'm glad that I had two roommates because you develop a special bond with them because of it. I got my room through the Facebook page of UCSB housing. There are two pages: IV housing for UCSB students and UCSB housing. I lived in Isla Vista, every student from UCSB lives here. It is next to campus and it is a special place to live because there are only students living there. Finally, I lived on Del Playa drive, the street next to the ocean. From my backyard I had an amazing view over the ocean. If you can live there I highly recommend it.
leisure & culture
The culture is very chill. Isla Vista is known for its party culture. I have been to a few crazy house parties, which were very cool to experience. But the parties are most of the time only during the weekends. You have college night on Thursdays. Party busses go all night from Isla Vista to Santa Barbara downtown. Besides when there are mid terms and finals, no one parties. So you have enough time to study without big distractions. I loved the campus culture, you had a big gym, nice swimming pool, tennis and squash courts, a track and soccer fields that were all free for students to use. If you like to workout, and American campus is the best thing that can happen to you.
suggestions/tips
Save enough money, try to figure out which destinations you want to see while you are in California. There is so much to see and you are only there for 4 months. I joined the club soccer team for a quarter which was one of the best choices I made. If you like a certain sport and you want to join a team that have a decent level and like



to compete, you should checkout the club teams. You have them almost for every sport. Also try to open an American bank account in order to use Venmo (the American version of Tikkie), that made my life a lot easier, especially because I lived with all Americans. I used the app transferwise to transfer money from my Dutch account to my American one.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend this University to study abroad. UCSB is next to the beach and the mountains. The nature is beautiful, the weather is amazing. There was always sun and even in December, the lowest temperature was 16 degrees Celsius. UCSB itself is one of the best public universities in the country, so for your CV it is also very valuable. I could not have wished for a better destination, this may sound cheesy but I firmly believe that UCSB is the most fun location of all the UC's to study abroad.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Just go for it. Studying abroad at UCSB was one of the best choices I made. It feels like a big vacation of 4 months where in get some study points for your bachelors, what else do you want?



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Liberal Arts and Sciences
destination city & country	Santa Barbara, United States
name university abroad	UCSB
start date	01 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	11 / 07 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I was late with applying to the exchange program since I missed the December deadline. I applied in February and was super happy to see that there were still a few spots left for the California program. The process is a bit stressful and there are a lot of documents, but in the end, I think everyone managed. The university misspelled my name on my Visa documents, which was a bit hectic since it seemed like I wasn't able to get an appointment at the consulate in time. However, in the end it turned out alright.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Ingrid Dijkstra helped me a lot with my application. If I had any questions, she would be of great help. It's also your own responsibility to hand in documents in time and to carefully read what you must hand in and when. Make sure you have all documents needed when you're going to the consulate.

academic preparation

I choose courses at UCSB that I could use for my master's in journalism. I already passed all my classes needed for my bachelor's in Utrecht. This gave me a lot of freedom, since I didn't have to communicate with Utrecht which courses I needed to choose.

language preparation

I did an IELTS test since I preferred talking to an actual person over talking to a computer. I got a 8/9 and I did prepare a few days in advance. I heard that some people did not prepare and managed as well, but I would not recommend that. There is a lot of free practice material online which is super helpful.

finances

The housing at UCSB is pretty expensive. I did take out the maximum loan at DUO a few months in advance, worked a lot at my job and my parents helped me out as well. I was thinking about getting a job in the States, but that was not necessary in the end, which I was happy about, since that would have restricted me a lot in my freedom abroad.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I was very happy with my courses. They had a lot of interesting courses like screenwriting, writing about documentaries, multimedia journalism and astronomy that UU does not offer. A lot of courses fill up easily so sign up in time. Also, I emailed a bunch of my professors if I could get into a certain course. A lot of the film and writing courses, I was not allowed to get in, but I was able to take that course in the end.

academic quality of education activities



If you work hard and show up to class, you can definitely get an A or B in a course. The professors are super open and most of the time they know you by name. I should have really taken more advantage of the office hours, since they will help you a lot with improving your grade.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not need a lot of support while I was away. The IOSS was always open and prepared to answer any questions I had with my Visa. The University also has CAPPS, which will help you with any stress/mental issues or if you just want to have a quiet place to study.

transfer of credits

My grades have not transferred yet, so I can not really say anything about that. However, half of my classes were given a level 1 score and the other half a level 2. Which I think was fair.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

I met most of my international friends at the orientation programme. We were in the same group and decided to have dinner together. I would really recommend going to the other orientation activities as well. It is super easy to meet the international kids first, since they are all new and want to make friends. In my second trimester, I started hanging out more with the American kids.

accommodation

I had a house on 67 Trigo, which was super nice. It was a two-minute walk from the beach and 7-minute bike ride to uni. I added myself to the UCSB housing Facebook group and found a place easily. If you're social, I would recommend getting a place at Del Playa. A lot of my friends lived there and the ocean views are amazing. The San Joaquin and Santa Inez villages were also really nice. I would not Santa Catalina dorms. I believe you don't really have a kitchen or have to share it with a lot of people.

leisure & culture

UCSB is a super social school. There is something to do for everyone and it is super easy to make friends. You can join a club, do sports, go to the local film theatre or hang out at the beach. During exam weeks, everyone studies a lot, since school is also super important.

suggestions/tips

I was part of the Excursion club. They let you rent surfboards and wetsuits and they organise a lot of trips that are super affordable. The Snow club organises a lot of day parties. I also went to the super nice gym at the Recce a lot, even though I really was not a fan of gyms before.

CONCLUSIONS

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

I loved UCSB and I would recommend everyone to go. The school really is the best of both worlds. The academics are super good, the people are really nice and social and you live in such a beautiful area. You also live super central in California. I went on trips to LA, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Las Vegas, San Diego, Yosemite, Joshua Tree Park and Grand Canyon.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you're with a big group, maybe think about buying a car. We didn't do it and we always had to rent cars, which was quite expensive. Take advantage of your time in California, there is so much to do and it'll be over before you know it.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Humanities
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's
name study programme	Language and Cultures Studies

destination city & country	Santa Barbara, California, United States
name university abroad	University of California, Santa Barbara
start date	02 / 01 / 2019
end date	05 / 07 / 2019

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I applied for the exchange program with all the other students who wanted to go abroad, but I already heard in 1 week that I was able to go to the University of California. Then came the second application where I had to give a top 3 of the universities in California where I wanted to go to. I gave arguments for why certain universities would be a good fit, what kind of courses I wanted to take and how I was able to pay for the exchange. In September, I heard that I was allowed to go to the University of California, Santa Barbara.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

After I heard that I was allowed to go to Santa Barbara, we had a meeting of all the people that were going to the universities in California and they gave us tips about getting our visa etc.

academic preparation

Not very specific preparations.

language preparation

I did an English test and passed that test. I was already very good at speaking English, so that was not a problem.

finances

Savings from my job and heritage.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

History

academic quality of education activities

The quality of the courses is quite good. The professor are very demanding and you have to hand in a lot of papers and make a lot of quizzes, that is how they keep you on top of the materials.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Professor were very involved with the students and were eager to help you gain a high grade.

transfer of credits

The university in California sends the grades to the University of Utrecht.



STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
We had one day with all the international exchange students where they gave us a lot of information how the university works.
accommodation
I stayed in the university houses that I applied for through the website of the university. My friends were able to live in houses they found through facebook.
leisure & culture
You are free to go to the gym and I was part of a couple of volleyball teams.
suggestions/tips
Try to find a way to a car. California is a big state and you want to explore. Otherwise, rent cars at the airport of Santa Barbara.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes, the University of California, Santa Barbara is an incredible school that gives a lot of opportunities to gain high grades and become a better student. Professors are involved with their students and the material is all very interesting. The student life is very lively and you feel that you are part of that community.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
No.