



faculty/college	Geosciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
name study programme	Global Sustainability Science
destination city & country	Santa Cruz, CA, United States
how did you travel to and from your destination?	Plane
name university abroad	UC Santa Cruz
start date	06 / 01 /2020
end date	10 / 06/ 2020

PREPARATION

It is a lot! You need to get different sorts of information from different sites and people. Be sure to start in time! I felt I should've gotten some kind of reward for finishing everything in time. Be sure to prepare everything and make an appointment with the consulate to get your visa approved, because it is possible that you the first opportunity for an appointment is in two weeks and for me I was able to go on the last day before they closed for Christmas, which was lucky, but gave me a lot of stress. Also be sure to figure out how to apply for your DS2019 at your university. I figured that out very late and they send it to you by mail (physical mail) this takes some time to arrive and you need the code to make an appointment with the consulate. Also, be sure to waive the universities insurance in time, they are very expensive and there are cheap other options. I had ISO student health insurance, they give you all you need to waive the universities insurance and is way cheaper. I first tried to waive it with my Dutch insurance, this was a huge hustle and didn't work out sadly. I didn't have aa good overview of what exactly needed to happen for this university and what documents to get together. These were the most important ones: DS160, DS2019, SEVISI901, picture to American standard (2*2 inch). Concerning housing, I applied for multiple colleges (each college has their own theme), I ended up in an apartment at college Ten, which was fine, but I spent most time during the first month at ILC, the International Living Centre. The second month I moved downtown because living on campus is very expensive (around 1200 dollars a month for a room shared with 2 others), and downtown I found a nice room in a cute Victorian house for 800 dollars a month.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht university was open for all my questions but in the end, there is a lot that needs to be done that is specific to a certain university so I contacted the host university more often.

academic preparation

I have already done my thesis and only needed the credits to finish my bachelor. So, I made sure to have done all the mandatory courses at the UU. Furthermore, I checked the courses at UCSC, there was a very nice woman who emailed me a lot helping me to choose the courses, before leaving.

language preparation

Most people need to take an English proficiency test, however, because my bachelor's degree is completely English, I didn't need to take this exam, which was nice.

finances

I made sure to have around 2000 euros per month available, excluding plane ticket and health insurance. Housing is expensive, food is expensive, health care is expensive. I saved up for a couple of years, because I knew I wanted to study abroad, and I lent money. In the end you can save some money by joining trips organized by the UCSC international office.

(interrupted) STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



welcome & orientation programme

There was none, there was a presentation, but I had a lecture during the same time so couldn't attend. I did go to the international coffee hour and met some really nice people there! In general I found most people are very open to chit chat, it does take a bit of energy to get below the superficial talk.

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I enrolled in the Environmental Studies major at UCSC. I did a few courses that are related to this major but also took courses at other departments which was nice! If anything is unclear keep mailing whoever helps you choosing courses or mail the professors themselves, they usually answer quite quickly.

academic quality of education activities

As I expected it was a bit easier than UU courses, however the workload is higher as it is just a lot more weekly exams, essays and labs.

transfer of credits

I have not received all my grades yet, so the transfer of credits still needs to be processed.

CORONAVIRUS CONSEQUENCES

support guidance of host university

They asked me if I would stay or leave. The actual guidance was minimal but also not really needed. I continued to follow classes at UCSC online.

support guidance of home university

Not much contact with home university other than sending them I would go home but continue my studies.

online offer and quality of digital courses

The online offer was very nice and the quality of the online courses high! I did two GIS (Geographical Information Systems) related courses which taught me how to code and use a computer spatial data analyzation program (GIS) so doing this from home wasn't really a big difference. However, I also followed a Marine Mammal biology class which was super interesting but of course seeing the mammals in a lab would have been a nice addition. They did a really good job at adapting to the online situation.

suggestions/tips on digital exchange

Take courses online and put effort into having digital contact with your peers and professors, go to their office hours. This helped me a lot getting a better grip on the lecture subjects and they are helping me now finding suitable masters/internships in Europe!

CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! I never expected going abroad would be this amazing. The campus on a hill in the middle of a redwood forest. You can go down to the beach where there are sea lions and sea otters chilling in the sea. I met so many wonderful people and there are a lot of activities you can do next to studying! I took swimming lessons and surfing. The campus is wonderful, the courses were super interesting. Walking to class every day was a blast, as was going down the hill on my bike and going for hikes in the forest. Ofcourse going abroad anywhere is not a fairytale, it is weird being so far away from home and hard to not be in your comfort zone with your family and friends closeby. However, I ended up having so many more ups than downs and would recommend anyone to go to UCSC, there are interesting courses and the surroundings breath taking!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I took the intercultural learning course during my stay abroad, for which I did feedback sessions during my stay abroad, this really helped me reflect and work on my development goals whilst I was abroad and reading my reflections back, makes me more aware of what I went through.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	REBO
level	bachelor's
name study programme	Bestuurs- en Organisationswetenschappen

destination city & country	Santa Cruz, California
name university abroad	University of California Santa Cruz
start date	19 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	14 / 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process took quite some time and consisted of lots of paperwork. If you plan well it is this definitely doable. Try to schedule your visa appointment as early as possible.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I did not need a lot of counselling and support from the UU. In my experience the international office was quick with responding.

academic preparation

I did not prepare in an academic way. I thought the courses at UCSC were not that hard so in my opinion no academic preparation is needed.

language preparation

I have an IB certificate so I did not need to take a language test. Other people had to take an English language test in order to come to the University of California.

finances

California is very expensive, especially if you want to travel. Therefore I would advise others to save some money before coming to UCSC. I saved some money myself and my parents supported me. Prepare for very high living expenses as well.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I took politics courses. These were not really related to my program back home.

academic quality of education activities

I thought the courses were very interesting and most professors were good. However, the academic level is lower. I am used to writing long academic papers for example and for some final exams I only had to write a 3-page thought piece. You do have to do more work during the quarter. I think I had to hand in at least 2 papers each week. Also, presence and participation is part of your final grade (sometimes 40% of it). This was new to me.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling and support at UCSC was good in my opinion. They always replied within 1 or 2 days and they have an office you can visit with your questions.



transfer of credits

This is very vague to me. I have received no information about how to do this and have to figure out everything myself. It has been 2 months and still nothing has happened.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

In the first week there were a lot of presentations with all the information you need for your stay abroad. These were informative. Do not expect something like the UIT with a lot of parties. In the second week there was a fair where you could apply to all different kinds of student organizations and fraternities/ sororities. Also, there were activities organised by the ILC. These were focussed more on getting to know the other people that lived in the ILC.

accommodation

I lived on campus in the International Living Centre (ILC). Living on campus is very expensive, but so is living downtown. I paid \$1200 a month for a triple room in an apartment. I liked living in an apartment because you have a kitchen. There was no bedding, pots/ pans, cutlery, plates or whatsoever. Prepare to having to buy all of this in Santa Cruz.

I really enjoyed living in the ILC. You live with Americans and other international students. I thought this mix was perfect since it can be hard to get in touch with Americans when you are just in your international exchange bubble. Also, the ILC organizes nice activities like culture nights where people from a certain culture explain about this and prepare their traditional food.

Also, the campus is a beautiful place to live. The ILC is located nearly in the forest. There were deer, squirrels and raccoons walking around all the time. This was really cool.

leisure & culture

UCSC offers a free gym, Physical Education classes and day trips. I applied for tennis lessons and I went on a kayaking day trip. I would recommend doing some of these things since they are free and they would be really expensive otherwise.

Santa Cruz itself is really small. I thought it was perfect for a quarter but maybe a bit boring for a whole year (when you are used to Utrecht). It takes 30 minutes by public transport to get downtown. I would advise to apply for Zipcar so you can rent a car to go downtown. Keep in mind that the drinking age is 21 and that there is almost no nightlife for people under 21. There are concerts every week. Sometimes there are parties on campus or off campus but you need connections to get there. Parties on campus are often shut down before 00:00 by a sort of campus police.

Santa Cruz is well known for surfing. There are plenty of nice beaches around. You can do a lot of activities outdoors like hiking, mountain biking, sailing etc. The nature around Santa Cruz is beautiful.

suggestions/tips

Live in the ILC to meet other internationals and Americans. Apply for activities/ trips organised by UCSC because this is fun and often free. Take some hikes on campus and explore the beautiful nature. Go on weekend trips to experience the rest of California. Save enough money to go on trips. Apply for Zipcar to get around.

CONCLUSIONS

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

Santa Cruz was not my first choice but I definitely enjoyed my stay here. The campus is beautiful and peaceful and there are a lot of outdoor activities. Additionally a lot of interesting courses are offered. If you really want to party every night during your exchange or if you want to live in a big city I think Santa Cruz is not the best place for you. This does not mean that Santa Cruz is boring, the kind of things you can do there are just



different.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you are only staying for a quarter, be proactive in meeting other people and planning some trips or activities. The quarter only lasts 10 weeks so your exchange will be over before you know it.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

level	Bachelor
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Santa Cruz CA, United States
name university abroad	UCSC
start date	17 / 09 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	13 / 12 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application takes quite some time because you first have to apply for an exchange at UU and afterwards for the actual EAP program. I spent a lot of time on the process and my motivation, while I have the feeling that your motivation and study plan doesn't even matter. UCSC was my third choice, so this was a bit disappointing after the long process.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

It was fine, but I was not able to go to any of the preparation meetings because they were during the day and I had mandatory classes. I recommend doing this meetings after 17:00. Also organising a meeting about the online application of EAP would have been helpful..

academic preparation

It was fine, trust your own abilities and go for the harder courses even if UCSC doesn't advice you to do this.

language preparation

I took the TOEFL which was pretty easy, but I already lived abroad before in Canada so this helped.

finances

Housing is really expensive in Santa Cruz. Food and going out is also extremely expensive in California, so keep this in mind. Other states are different, thus do not compare a previous holiday experience to the living cost in Santa Cruz.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I took only one Psychology course, because they didn't offer a lot of courses that I hadn't taken already. This forced me to take two other random courses.

academic quality of education activities

The upper division courses take up quite a lot of time, I had to do a lot of reading and assignments. While the lower division course (Understanding Media) I took was an easy A, and not that interesting. The teachers are free in deciding how they want to teach and grade, which means that it really depends on your teacher whether or not you will learn a lot from the course. They barely have group assignments, and people do not really talk during classes. This can make it hard to meet people from your class.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad



Not a lot, but if you need help there are people that can help you. When picking courses keep in mind that it is pretty easy to 'crash' a course. This means that if you are somehow not allowed to follow the course, just go to the first lecture and tell the teacher that you want to follow the course.

transfer of credits

I do not have my credits yet, because the TA's at UCSC were striking so it took a while before they uploaded my grades.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation mainly existed of repetitive presentations about organisations and rules at UCSC. Be prepared to pay 100 USD for this day full of presentations, it is mandatory. The orientation of my building (ILC) was a bit better, since we also played some games to get to know each other.

accommodation

I originally wanted to live off campus, but this is really hard to arrange if you are only there for a quarter and are not able to visit the place. I ended up living in the ILC, which was nice because they organised some activities and it is more of a community. The downside of living there are the cost, 1700 USD per month if you have a single and share the rest of the apartment with 5 others and that it is pretty far from the stores etc. Next to that, the 'campus police' can be very strict.

leisure & culture

Santa Cruz is a nice town, but pretty small and not very vibrant. There are some pretty beaches that are good for surfing (surf season starts in December). However the beach is not super close to campus and you have to go there by bus, the water is really cold so if you want to go swimming I recommend the campus pool ;). Next to the bus, a bike is a good way to get around Santa Cruz. Use the Jump Bikes or borrow one from the Bike Library. Partying is pretty hard in Santa Cruz, house parties often stop between 00:00 – 1:00 and bars close around 1:30. There are not a lot of bars/clubs and most of them are really expensive compared to The Netherlands.

suggestions/tips

Live at the ILC or join a club/sports team (this can be hard if you are at UCSC for just 1 quarter), otherwise life at UCSC can be pretty dull. Intra mural teams are a good alternative for the sports teams. I recommend doing groceries at Trader Joe's or the farmer market, overall the price and quality is better. Check out Zipcar before arriving at UCSC, because getting an account can take pretty long. Something to be aware of is that the police is way stricter than in Utrecht, do not drink underage/drink on the streets/throw loud parties etc. because the police will give you a huge fine right away.

CONCLUSIONS

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

UCSC can be cool if you want to live in the forest, visit national parks and are following some courses that you find interesting. However, if you have a busy student life in Utrecht with lots of activities life at UCSC can feel pretty boring and lonely sometimes. They do not have big sports events or an exciting Greek life. Therefore, I do not recommend going to SC if you are underage and like going out. If you are over 21 it can be hard to have half a friend group that is underage, it sometimes felt like being back in high school.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If it is your first exchange experience and want to explore the beauty of California go here, if you are expecting the movie US college experience go to Santa Barbara or Berkeley. Be aware that is very likely that you will not get your first choice in the EAP program.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Law
level	bachelor's
name study programme	Utrecht Law College

destination city & country	Santa Cruz, California
name university abroad	University of California Santa Cruz
start date	04 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	14 / 06 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application did not take an enormous amount of time. If you plan well it does not take up all your time. The American Consulate can be quite stressful and crowded, so I would advise to start with your visa early.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

I did not have that much contact with UU. But I felt like if I had questions that they'll probably help me.

academic preparation

Good. UCSC was easier than UU.

language preparation

I took the TOEFL and I did Cambridge English in high school, so I was fine. But since law is a study programme in Dutch, I can imagine that it can be hard.

finances

UCSC is really, really expensive. Way more expensive than I imagined. I would have liked if UU had prepared me for that.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I took random courses, so I did not follow one specific programme.

academic quality of education activities

The courses were overall good. They were easier than the courses in Utrecht. You always had to do a lot of work, but the content was easy. Some professors were really great and passionate. I definitely learnt some interesting stuff there!

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I would say that the counselling and support was terrible. When you arrive in winter, there is nearly no introduction for new students. You are kind of left on your own devices your first weekend. There were not a lot of activities for international students and the international staff did never bother to check up on you.

transfer of credits

Transferring was okay, but University of California takes a long time to send your grades. I did not receive my grades in time for graduation.



STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	
	There was not a big welcome or orientation. When you go from winter quarter on, you have to arrive on a Friday since the housing office is closed on the weekend. The first weekend there is however no one to pick you up or explain anything, so you are left all on your own to figure things out. It is hard to meet other internationals in the same situation, since they seem to be scattered all over campus. If you arrive in fall I guess you would have a warm welcome, but not in the winter quarter.
accommodation	
	The accommodation was extremely expensive. You pay around 1100 dollars a month for sharing a room in a dorm with 2 other people. There was no heating in the rooms and the showers were kind of cold. You do not get what you pay for!! If you live in an apartment, it is around 15000 dollars a month to share a tiny room with one other person and your flat is shared with 6 persons. I was not aware of the housing crisis and extreme costs of living before I went to UCSC. Living off campus is an option, but also extremely expensive and it can be hard to reach campus with the bus. The busses are overcrowded and not really reliable. The campus is on a hill in the forest, so you can't walk or bike to there.
leisure & culture	
	Santa Cruz itself is a really nice city. There are a lot of cool shops and food places. However, it is quite small, and it is not easy to leave with public transportation. I would advise having a driver's license before going to the US in general. The campus has a lot of clubs, but you have to know about it. The international community is really small, so you have to get along with the people that are there. They have a nice sports center with good and fun group lessons.
suggestions/tips	
	I would suggest having a driver's license before coming into the US.

CONCLUSIONS	
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain	
	I would definitely not. It is extremely expensive, and the international community is really small. It can get quite lonely if you don't get along with the small community that is there. The weather can be cold too, so keep that in mind.
do you have any additional advice or comments?	
	No
Can students contact you for additional info and do you give us permission to put this in the student reports on our website? If yes, please write down how they can get in touch with you (e-mail, Facebook, Instagram etc)	



UU Study Abroad Report Form

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

destination city & country	Santa Cruz, USA
name university abroad	UCSC
start date	19 / 09 / 2018 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	07 / 01 / 2019 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process	A lot of paperwork. Worth it though.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	Fine. E-mailed Astrid a couple of times and she responded promptly.
academic preparation	I went to SC in my fourth year, so I had enough academic preparation.
language preparation	Completed the IELTS test with success.
finances	America is expensive, that means Santa Cruz is expensive. Living on campus is even more expensive but so worth it.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)	A few random courses, nothing related to my major.
academic quality of education activities	My overall academic experience is positive. The quality is sufficient, the professors are driven and well educated and the classes are interesting.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad	There is this organisation that helps you if you are running into any problems. I forget the name.
transfer of credits	Took a while but got them eventually.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme	It was good. I lived at the International Living Centre and they organised some activities.
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accommodation
I lived in an apartment with 5 other guys at the ILC. 4 of my roommates were American and one was Spanish. We hit it off really well and held a lot of parties at our "party" apartment. I slept with 2 other guys in one room but I didn't care, we were all very considerate of each other.
leisure & culture
Santa Cruz means beach. Downtown is pretty far to go to during the week, but during weekends it is really fun to go downtown and to the beach. During the night there are usually some house parties but you need some connections to hear about them. My overall experience with living in Santa Cruz was that it is very peaceful, as the campus is built inside of a forest, but you can turn up during the weekends if you want.
suggestions/tips
Definitely go live at the International Living Centre. You won't regret it. You come into contact with lots of different people from all over the world and gradually learn about their cultures. As half of the people there are also American you can also experience their culture, like going to their house for Thanksgiving and going to functions and get-togethers with them and their friends. Also take some surfing lessons!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Yes I would. I loved my time there and still miss it. I even went back a few months later as all of my roommates stayed for the full year and I found a cheap flight. Living in the forest is healing and the overall vibe is chill. Academic wise there is a lot of choice and a lot of interesting courses.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
If you want to party every day go to Santa Barbara or something. If you want to have a unique, cool, lasting and beautiful experience abroad go to Santa Cruz.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	Science
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Biology

Destination city & country	Santa Cruz, USA
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	University of California, Santa Cruz
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	04/01/2018
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	01/07/2018

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The application process was straightforward but it does take a long time. I started almost 1,5 years in advance. The help from Utrecht University was very good, and from UCSC as well. There are several deadlines for application forms, and from both universities I got help to fill those in.

Counselling/support at home university:

I was very pleased with the whole process. I went to two pre-departure meetings where we discussed everything that was needed. My study abroad advisor at the international office in Utrecht talked us through all the important steps which really helped.

Academic preparation:

I don't think you need any preparation. If you are able to take the courses at Utrecht University, you will be fine. Take the time to look into all the courses you can take at your study abroad university though. There are many courses and you are able to take all of the lower division courses of whichever subject no matter what you are studying in Utrecht.

Language preparation:

I had to take the TOEFL test, it is a long test but if you are used to English you should be fine.

Finances:

I started saving up 2 years in advance. The cost of living in California is much higher than in Holland, so you need to make sure you save some money beforehand. I lived on campus, which is



slightly more expensive, but I do highly recommend it.

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

They were really great at UCSC and I got to enrol in all the courses I wanted to. They told me that because I was not a degree seeking student at their university, I got to choose if I thought I was qualified enough to take the upper division courses. This made it really easy for me to take all these different types of courses. They also offer loads of courses at UCSC, so I would definitely recommend to take some varied courses.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

They give loads of homework, but the level is lower than I am used to from Utrecht University. I was lucky that I had great teachers, so the quality of the courses was really good. You are also able to take on more courses and drop them, so you can choose the courses that seem most interesting after you've taken classes for a week.

I thought the teachers especially were really good in Santa Cruz. They are very open to talking to students after classes, during their office hours, about the class or if you need help or advice in their field. My teacher was great in advising me on which master's degree would suit me best.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Because you first apply to the University of California and later to a specific campus, there are two institutions that help you. I found that UCSC was much clearer and faster than the UC wide organisation which helped me advance the application process quite quickly. Once I was at UCSC they offer lots of help for whatever you might need. As I mentioned earlier, I thought the support of the teachers was very good. Other than that I received help from my major advising office who helped me enrol in classes. They were also very helpful and enrolled me in all the classes I wanted to enrol in. If you need help with enrolment due to your prerequisites, you can always email your major advising office or the teacher of the course. They always helped me enrolling.

Transfer of credits:

I am still abroad so I have not yet tried to transfer my credits.

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

Because I started at winter quarter (January) there was no welcome programme. My American housemate showed me all around campus during the first weekend I was there, and the first day all the new international students went to a small talk by the international office. It was nice to meet all the other students, however it would have been nice to have more of an orientation programme. I lived with most of the other international students in the same building, so it was nice to learn about all the new things at university with other students.

Accommodation:

I lived at the International Living Center. I highly recommend this! Half of the students there are American and the other half are international students. This is a great way to learn more about the country while also meeting other students that are also just here for a semester. Because this is on campus the university organises loads of activities such as culture nights, BBQ's, game nights, kayaking trips, movie nights and loads of other things. Most of these are through the ILC so they



are free if you live there. This is great fun and a good way of meeting new people too!

Leisure/culture:

Santa Cruz is amazing! I took surfing and sailing classes through the university recreation department which was really good! There is loads to do in Santa Cruz and since the bus is free for all students it easy getting around. I was also able to rent a bike for free with the bike library on campus. You do need to write a motivational letter and there is a mandatory 3 hour bike class, which is a bit odd if you are Dutch 😊. I would definitely recommend this though, because the bike path on campus is great with a view of the Monterey Bay and cycling along the coast is really cool. If you like hiking the area is amazing. There are three state parks bordering the university campus so you can just walk into them from campus. They have cool trails and it's really beautiful around. Santa Cruz is a small city, but they do organise a lot. Every first Friday of the month they have an event in downtown Santa Cruz which is nice to go to. Also, it's not far from San Francisco and other amazing places if you have a car.

Suggestions/tips:

The university organises loads, so make use of that! You can go on trips to the surrounding state parks, or even the Grand Canyon on university trips. Also I highly recommend taking surfing classes! If you have the time for it, look into all the different courses UCSC offers. They have many classes that you can follow if you don't follow a certain major. And most of all, enjoy your time there!

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

Yes! I am really happy I went to UC Santa Cruz. It was great for my course (biology) but other than that it just really is a great place to live. The surroundings a beautiful, especially the campus which makes it a really special place to study.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Enjoy! It is an amazing place, so take the time to explore outside of the campus too.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Family name:	xxx
First name:	xxx
Student number:	xxx
Faculty/college:	REBO
Level:	X bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Economics and Business Economics

Destination city & country	Santa Cruz, California
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	UC Santa Cruz
Purpose of exchange	X study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	27/08/2017
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	14/04/2018

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The placement went smoothly. You have to apply for the UC system and then you get placed into one of the 9 UC campuses. I got placed in Santa Cruz, my third choice. In the end I am really happy about this. My advice would be to look closely at the campuses and nearby towns, don't focus only on the reputation of the campuses. Each campus has it's very own sphere and possibilities.

Counselling/support at home university:

Ingrid gives you a good idea of what to expect before you on exchange. However, nothing can really prepare you for what you are about to experience regarding the change in your daily life. Just let it happen and enjoy, the time will fly by. For the practical matters, make sure that you start with the preparations for your visa on time. If you just follow the steps you will be fine and everything will be done in time.

Academic preparation:

I did not do anything for this. You have to send in an overview of the courses that you expect to take. Don't worry too much about this, your overview will probably change. When I arrived at UCSC it turned out that I could not take some of the classes that I wanted. Some of my classes turned out to be very boring, feel free to change this afterwards.

Language preparation:



Since my bachelor program is English-taught I did not have to take any tests.

Finances:

To finance everything I saved up quite some money, don't underestimate this. For any of the UCs, housing, food and travelling is much more expensive than you might expect. For housing and (mandatory) campus food I paid over a thousand dollars per month. Especially if you want to travel, take trips, surfing classes, etc, (believe me, you will want to do this) estimate to have around 1500 dollar per month. This also heavily depends on the housing costs, look at the UC website for the latest amounts. The one thing that you can save on is the mandatory insurance. You can waive the expensive health insurance by taking a private insurance. ISO insurance (isoa.org) has exactly the coverage needed to waive the insurance and it is way cheaper!

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

As explained earlier, I had some difficulties finding the right courses. Go see an advisor, the UC system has plenty of advisors, just a matter of finding the right one that can answer your questions. Furthermore you should try to not be shy, just go to classes that you did not enrol in, talk to the professor. The professor can usually let a few extra people into the class after the enrolment has ended, they are more than happy to include an international student. Talk to people, be kind and very patient and flexible than you can find courses that you like. If you want/need a certain course be more persistent but be prepared to let it go and choose another course.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

In my experience the academic quality of the courses at UCSC really depended on the professor. I took a course in sociology that was challenging and a course in development economics that was extremely hard but the other courses were definitely doable. My grades were quite high, during the week I put in a lot effort into the classes but during the weekends I did not do anything. I think you can compare it to the HBO system in The Netherlands, you probably have to do more work but the works is easier than what you're used to.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

The UC system is very bureaucratic and can seem complicated at first. However, the people are generally really friendly and willing to help. I extended my stay, which caused for a lot of things to be arranged. Be prepared to just go to all the services available, in the end you will find the person that can help you.

Transfer of credits:

My grades were transferred in a way that I was very happy about. It took the board of examiners about 5 weeks which was a bit stressful but the results were amazing. My A's were transferred into 9's, my A+'s were transferred into 10's.

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

The welcome programme was short but nice. The orientation of the university I don't really remember, this was very short. The first week of living in my living community were amazing as I got to meet a lot of new, international and American, people. I suggest you participate in all the orientation possibilities. Just talk to people, after a while you will see more and more familiar faces



around and it will feel more like home. During the first weeks I met a lot of people just because they started talking to me when I was looking lost in the gym/library/café. People are very friendly and curious to get to know you.

Accommodation:

During my exchange I stayed in a shared room in a flat. This was perfect because we had our own kitchen, I lived in an international community but the costs were a bit lower because I shared my room. My roommate and I were not best friends which was fine because you are surrounded by people and you will never have to feel alone. I highly recommend you to go live on campus to have the full American experience. By living in the ILC (International Living Community) you can share experience and it is easier to meet other international students here to plan trips.

Leisure/culture:

Your academic program is only a small part of your exchange, probably the part you will not remember afterwards. For my experience the friends I made within the ILC were most important. We were together a lot, going to the dining hall and gym, partying and going on trips. Make sure to travel a lot when you have the chance, you will not regret it. From Santa Cruz you can easily visit San Fran, Monterey, Berkeley, Yosemite, etc. etc. We took weekend trips to LA, San Diego and Las Vegas, you learn to look at these distances different when you live in Cali.

Suggestions/tips:

I would suggest to go live on the campus. During the first weeks it might seem overwhelming to have all these people around. Make some friends in your living community, in your classes and maybe at some association. The place will start to feel like home before you know it. Sometimes it might be hard to miss people back at home but this is easier when you have good friends to share your feelings with.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

Absolutely! I decided to extend my stay but after 7 months I still did not want to go home. The campus is green and peaceful yet vibrant. There are a ton of possibilities yet it is calm and foremost, I met the most amazing people, friendships for life were created. Going abroad was one of the best decisions of my life and Cali, in particular Santa Cruz, is an amazing place.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Get a zipcar account. Unless you are over 25, it is hard to rent a car. Zipcar is a service that lets you rent cars that are on the campus. The price is a bit more expensive than general car rental but insurance and gas is included and the price is doable when you share the costs.

If you are under 21; it is hard to get into clubs. Definitely not impossible but not as easy as it is to get into a club in The Netherlands when you are underaged. The campus security is quite strict and the Americans are okay with this. Don't question authority, even the authority of the security guys because they take it very seriously. Be careful not to get caught with alcohol/drugs when underaged as this could lead to ending of your housing contract.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Humanities
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	History

Destination city & country	Santa Cruz (CA), USA
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	University of California Santa Cruz
Purpose of exchange	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> study/courses <input type="checkbox"/> work placement <input type="checkbox"/> field work <input type="checkbox"/> other
Departure date (dd/mm/yyyy)	08/01/2017
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	16/06/2017

Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The application process takes a lot of time, just as I already read in the reports from past years. I personally was not originally planning on going to the USA, as I actually applied to go to Belfast. My average grade was not high enough to apply to go one of the American universities that I felt attracted to, and I had been interested in Irish/Northern Irish history for a long time. I did not get to go to Belfast, but when we got to apply for the places that were left in the next round of applying to universities there were still places at University of California, and in the meantime, I had just raised my average grade enough to apply. I got in, and put UC Santa Cruz on top of my list of three universities within the UC system, and I was selected to come to Santa Cruz, which was great!

Counselling/support at home university:

Talking to the people from the International Office really helped me a lot. There are a lot of issues in choosing a place to spend your time abroad, in the process of applying for the universities, in the process of applying for classes, and visa related issues. Ingrid Dijkstra was always ready to help wherever she could, even if it meant just going through the (often horrible) websites of American universities together.

Academic preparation:

I did not do any specific academic preparation for my stay abroad.

Language preparation:

I did not do any language preparation, but it turned out fine. Dutch students are generally good at speaking and writing in English compared to students from other non-English speaking countries.



Finances:

I borrowed as much as I could from DUO and my parents also helped me to pay my bills. Santa Cruz is an expensive place to live... I had also saved some money to spend on making trips in the states.

Study/placement abroad period

Study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues):

I only needed to follow some classes that would fit in the free space of my bachelor's program. The classes that I took were all very different, but all individually interested me a lot. Following classes that would fit in your free space is something I would recommend (if that's possible for your personal situation), because Santa Cruz offers a lot of interesting courses in areas you can't really study in Utrecht.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

The academic quality was not so much lower than in Utrecht (especially not for the upper division courses), but I think that it was easier to get good grades in Santa Cruz, or at least harder to fail classes than in Utrecht. The quality of education was for most classes that I took pretty good, but how much you really learn depends on yourself, as the standard of the teachers seemed a bit lower. I experienced that in writing skills, European students seemed to be a few steps ahead of the American students in Santa Cruz; of course not so much in their use of the English language, but more in their ability to write an academic paper.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

I never really used their services myself, but UCSC made it very clear where students with questions/problems could ask for help.

Transfer of credits:

Because Santa Cruz uses a trimester system, in which students follow three classes each term, the transfer of credits will be a bit more complicated. Although this hasn't been completed yet, I think it worked out fine.

Student life

Welcome/orientation programme:

I arrived at the start of winter quarter, and because most international students (and all other students of course) were there for a full year, they were settled in already. There was not really a big orientation program, which worried me in the beginning. I stayed in the International Living Centre (ILC) on campus, and they organised some small introduction games during a coffee night, but that was it. However, in the end I found it quite easy to find friends and my way around campus, primarily because I was living in the ILC, which really was (like the Americans were eager to say) a "tight community". A cliché, but so true; everyone is looking for friends, so you really



don't need to feel alone.

Accommodation:

As I said, I stayed at the ILC, which is something I would recommend to people who like an easy way to make a lot of friends. ILC is part of College Nine and Ten and houses both international students and American students (50/50 in theory, but I found that there were more internationals). The ILC consists of apartments that feature single, double and triple rooms, every apartments housing six students. I stayed in a double room, in which I slept in a bunk bed, which was fine at first, but towards the end I really began to long for some privacy. The living rooms were quite spacious however, and the campus itself is located in the middle of the forests and really beautiful. There were also some people who moved off campus during the academic year, which is a pretty good idea to save some money and also to escape the sometimes pretty strict regime of shutting down parties after midnight.

Leisure/culture:

UCSC hosts a lot of clubs of all kinds, and great sporting facilities. I often went to play football (soccer) at the field next to OPERS (the sporting organisation) which has an amazing view over the Santa Cruz bay. The city of Santa Cruz is pretty, and has some nice places to go out, shop, or relax (the beach of course), but it's not a very exciting city. I personally did not have any problem with that, as I found ways to keep myself entertained with friends, but there were some people I met at UCSC who sometimes complained about this. The campus is located on a hill next to the city of Santa Cruz, which made walking downtown a long endeavour, but in contrast to a lot of other parts of the USA public transports was pretty good. (Buses are also free for UCSC students.)

Suggestions/tips:

Try to befriend some people with cars... This can make your time in Santa Cruz a lot easier, especially because going for groceries takes ages when you go by public transport, and because you can easily get out of town without any planning when you get sick of being on campus.

Conclusions

Would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? Please explain:

I would, because I had a great time at UCSC. It's a totally different environment than Utrecht, culturally and environmentally, and therefore really interesting. I have had a great time here; I made amazing friends, and I also got the opportunity to follow very interesting classes.

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Santa Cruz is located in California, but it's not always sunny! During my first term it rained almost non-stop, which maybe was pretty unique, but when you want the sun-, sea-, and beach life you see in the movies, you might have to look for a university a bit further south...