



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

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

Destination city & country	Golden, Colorado, USA
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Colorado School of Mines
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)	09/01/2016
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	13/05/2016

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

Very easy. Everything will explain itself. If you don't understand something you can always ask the international office. The only annoying thing is obtaining information about the courses that are available abroad.

Counselling/support at home university:

Very good!

Academic preparation:

There are always courses that don't need any requirements but I advise to choose courses that are useful for your program.

Language preparation:

They speak English so I assume that you will not encounter any problems with it.

Finances:

More expensive than the Netherlands but not unpayable.

### Study/placement abroad period

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

The study program in Colorado School of Mines is good. There are not a lot of distractions in Golden so you will do probably very well on your tests.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

This year 2016 Colorado School of Mines has been ranked as the best engineering university of the United States. The academic quality is good but Utrecht is also quite good for Earth Sciences at least.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:



Good, Kay the head of the international office can help you a lot, but I would recommend a meeting with her in person. She replies very short on emails. Also do not let you get scared out her office by her, after 5 minutes she becomes much friendlier.

Transfer of credits:

Don't know yet, I have not received the results yet.

### **Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

Don't expect anything from the program. You will be placed probably in a house with other international student which will make that you get to know the other international students through other international people.

Accommodation:

Good, but when you ask for accommodation I would recommend you to ask for a place in Mines Park. You will have there you own accommodation that you share with one other person and is definitely the best place to live.

Leisure/culture:

In my opinion American culture is bigger is better. You will experience yourself the differences.

Suggestions/tips:

If you go for 1 year, you must buy a car. Daily life without a car is really tough. Walking or biking is horrible due to all the steep roads.

### **Conclusions**

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

Yes, it is very good for your CV and you will learn a lot. People from mines have one of the best hiring percentages for jobs. Don't go to this place for parties. There is not really a student life at this university. The content of antidepressants is 80 times higher in the sewage of Golden than the national average. This year there were 4 suicides. But still you can have a great time!

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Law
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Non-Degree Undergraduate

Destination city & country	Golden, Colorado, United States Of America
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Colorado School of Mines
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)	9 <sup>th</sup> of August
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	19 <sup>th</sup> of January

**You are requested to write on the following topics.**

Text boxes will expand automatically while typing.

### Preparation

#### Exchange/placement application process:

The application process was nerve wrecking. My first choice was New Hampshire and I read all the information that was available about that university. But then I did not get picked for the place in New Hampshire so they placed me at my second university. One really important tip I want to stress is to investigate your second and third choice also very thoroughly. I did not do this with my second choice, because I thought I would be going to New Hampshire. Incorrect. So now I had to choose courses and too little too late I figured out that this university Colorado School of Mines was not the best choice for me. Because it was an engineering school and I study law. It all worked out at the end, but it was not very convenient.

#### Counselling/support at home university:

You have to do a lot on your own. The counselling from the home office is not that great. I know she is probably very busy with everything, but be prepared to do almost everything on your own. It is a good learning process though. And at the end I was very proud that I had accomplished everything on my own.

#### Academic preparation:

I did not do any academic preparation. Of course I had to choose courses before I was there. But this changes when you get there. This is because everyone checks their classes out and when they do not like the course, they switch to another one. I did this too.

#### Language preparation:

I did not do any language preparation, because I could already speak English very well. I was a little concerned about the writing, but you get used to it pretty quickly. Or at least I did. When your English is not as good, I would recommend a small course. But the professors at the university will



understand your position and are glad to help you out.

**Finances:**

It is important to have enough money when you go to the United States. Not just because it is an expensive country, but also because the US government wants to see that you have enough money to come to their country. I think I spend an overall amount of 10.000 euros. But this is not only on books and accommodation, but also doing fun stuff like a road trip to California.

**Study/placement abroad period**

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

In the Netherlands you make a work plan and that work plan contains the courses you want to take when you are studying abroad. Do not stress out about this work plan, because when you come in Colorado your work plan is not set in stone. You can still change your courses in the first few weeks, a lot of students do this, because they are not satisfied with their course packages. So do your research at home, but think about the fact that you can still change it.

**Academic quality of education/placement activities:**

Colorado School of Mines is one of the top universities when it comes to engineering. So I definitely recommend this university to members of that faculty. For law students it is not a great fit, because there is not much other courses left when you do not know how physics works or computer science works. The academic quality in that kind of courses is high, but the academic quality in the courses that I took was a little bit lower. I did courses from the Liberal Arts and International Studies department and you could see that these courses were not the priority of the school. So it was easy studying for me, but when you major in geology for example it is a difficult university with lots of work.

**Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:**

The International Office was okay. They can do a better job still, but they try. Make sure you check whether or not they give you a full exchange. Because I had a surprise at the end that it was only for 50% covered. The host university solved the problem and I did not have to pay luckily. They did a very good job with that. Our university on the other hand... But the host university helped us where they could and helped us with our courses and time tables. And they organized a lot of picnics.

**Transfer of credits:**

My credits are still not transferred to my home university. This university is new to my faculty, so they needed additional information. I am still awaiting the transfer.

**Student life**

**Welcome/orientation programme:**

The orientation programme was a little bit boring. It was two days of sitting inside and listening about immigration rules and so on. The international office did organise a picnic, so there I met a lot of other internationals. Outside the university there was a lot organised to get to know the other internationals.

**Accommodation:**

The university found me a place to stay. I stayed outside of campus with a lovely lady who became my friend and a cat. I didn't mind staying somewhere else, but it would have been handy if I had a



car, because you had to have a car for the place I lived. A good side of that was that I was very fit there, because of all the hills and the amount of walking. I had my own bathroom and a walk-in closet, but I had a very luxurious accommodation compared to others. I had to pay for that too, 750 dollars a month. It was worth it for me though.

**Leisure/culture:**

Colorado is one of the most beautiful places in the world. I fell in love with this state and there is lots to do. I wasn't all that of an outdoorsy type, but hiking in the mountains there is unbelievable. Golden is a very fun and little town where you can do lots of exercise, but you are 40 minutes away with the lightrail from Denver. So if you like the city, that is close too. I recommend the Great Sand Dunes National Park in the south of Colorado and a road trip through California is also a lot of fun. The locals are really nice and helpful.

**Suggestions/tips:**

A good tip in Golden is the fact that an organization in collaboration with the university gives out free bikes. That is a very nice touch for us Dutchies. And another tip is maybe reserve money for buying a car, because the hills are pretty high and if you don't like walking that much or bicycling uphill, a car might be handy. Especially when doing groceries or going to parties.

**Conclusions**

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

Yes I would definitely recommend this destination to others, but be sure that you fit at this university in line with your study. For example, for geologists this is a great university. And the area is so pretty, everyone should see that!

**Do you have any additional advice or comments?:**

Start on time with your visa application! I know it is a lot of work, but when it is done you feel so much better and less stressed out.

**Contact details Student Services / International Office**

Visitors' address: Bestuursgebouw, Heidelberglaan 6, Utrecht

+31-(0)30-253 7000

[exchange@qdesk.uu.nl](mailto:exchange@qdesk.uu.nl) (information) / [verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl](mailto:verslagen.internationaloffice@uu.nl) (report)

[www.uu.nl/students/exchange](http://www.uu.nl/students/exchange)



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Faculteit Geowetenschappen
Level:	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Earth, Structure and Dynamics

Destination city & country	Golden, Colorado, USA
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Colorado School of Mines
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)	31/07/2014
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	15/01/2015

**You are requested to write on the following topics.**

Text boxes will expand automatically while typing.

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

The application process is fine. It is a lot of paperwork, but it is manageable. Make sure your supervisor and the board of examiners approves of your plan. Then, with the help of the International Office at the UU and the International Office of the host university, the rest is just filling in forms, for housing/finances/visas/medical forms etc. etc.

Counselling/support at home university:

I had the feeling that you really had to be on top of your application all the time. My counsellor at the UU accidently gave me the wrong application deadline, so I was already two weeks late with applying. I contacted the International Office at CSM myself, and it was fine if I still applied, so that was luckily no problem in the end. But keep thinking by yourself, because it just is a lot of paperwork (for you, but also the international office at UU) and things can easily go wrong.

Academic preparation:

I wanted to go to CSM to do some more applied geoscience courses as addition to my masters' degree at the UU. You do have to consult this with your supervisor from your master and he/she has to accept your proposal of courses. So make sure you contact him/her in time and come with a solid story for why you want to go to CSM or any other university to follow courses. I think this would be less of a problem when you are a bachelor student, because then you have a 30 ECTS minor part in which you can basically fill with whatever you prefer.

Language preparation:

If you want to be accepted by CSM you have to pass a TOFL-test (An English test). But for some reason (maybe because the English of most Dutch people is already at high level), the Netherlands is one of the few countries where this test is not required. Overall I had no problem with the classes



being in English, probably also because both my bachelor and master degree at UU are basically all given in English. But I wouldn't worry about having a problem with the English, I think the people from e.g. South America and Asia had way more issues with it and they also passed the TOFL-test.

Finances:

Make a good budget plan. This also needs to be approved and CSM wants to see if you have enough money on your account. I remember this had to be around 10000 dollar or so. So my parents transferred it to me, I made a printscreen and transferred it back. That was sufficient.

### **Study/placement abroad period**

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

You just have to make sure the courses don't fall in the same timeslot. And at the beginning of the semester you can still switch courses if you want.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

The quality of the courses was very good. Different from the UU in a couple of ways. 1) You have way more homework, every week you had to hand in assignments. They keep you busy, but it is also good to keep up with the course and to apply what you learn in class. 2) More practicals and fieldtrips. With the mountains around the corner, CSM likes to do a lot of short (just a day) fieldtrips. For all courses applicable; engineering, mining, hydrology, geology... 3) Projects, every course does a big project at the end where you can apply your knowledge to a case study. Really nice, unfortunately all courses do it, so the workload at the end of the semester is quite high.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

Support at CSM is good. The International Office is a great help as well, when you have any question concerning your courses, housing, life etcetera. Thereby all the professors have office hours, so if you have problems with homework, then is the time for questions. The Americans use it a lot! I really had to get used to it, because it is really different from the UU, but it actually really nice and convenient. And your professors are very friendly.

Transfer of credits:

Transfer of credits was easy. Keep in mind that an A in the US will only become an 8 at the UU. It sucks, but unfortunately that is the rule they apply here at the UU.

### **Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

The orientation at CSM was organized very well. At the beginning of the semester you have two days of orientation with all the foreign students at CSM. It is a lot of talks that you don't really need to hear, but it is obligatory. But in the meantime you have a chance to meet other international students, and make your first friends. ☺

Accommodation:

During my time at CSM I had two locations of housing. I first lived with a host family (a single mom with two kids). They were very sweet and nice, but for a couple of reasons I decided to move to another place. 1) They lived quite far from the university and city centre (and I didn't really have money for a car) 2) They had a very different lifestyle than me, which is logical because they are a family, but therefore I barely say them and that made me feel a little misplaced in their house, like you are really an intruder. And 3) a room in the student housing of a friend of mine was available,



so I had to chance to move. So then, with help from the International Office there I could move to the student housings of CSM. This was really nice, it is next to campus, close to the centre, you have a lot of space (proficient room and a large living and kitchen), and you get to live with friends (most of the housing is for 3). I really liked it and it is a great way to meet more people.

Leisure/culture:

Golden (20-30 minutes from Denver and Boulder) is a really nice old mining town. They have everything; supermarket, some bars, parks and all, but it is nice to have some bigger cities (Denver and Boulder) which are around the corner. Really nice as well and Denver is fun, not very old, but enough to do. Very cool are the sports games; they have a basketball, American Football and Ice hockey team. The surrounding of Golden are also great; you can do outdoor sports everywhere (depending on the season) and they also have an outdoor cinema/theatre/concert hall at Red Rocks. I actually bought a snowboard in the sale (which is before the season starts in the US) and a season pass and went snowboarding in the weekends, or when I didn't have class.

Suggestions/tips:

- Consider buying a car. You need it for everything. I luckily had enough international friends who bought cars, so it was fine, but still think about it. You can also buy it together.
- I bought a snowboard pretty cheap at a sale before the season started. It was so worth it and I brought it home as well. Also a season pass is really "cheap" for what you get. 500 dollars for 5 ski resorts, unrestricted amount of visits.
- It is a little harder to make friends with real Americans, they are really friendly, but it is hard to get to know them. It takes time.
- If you are not an outdoors type, CSM might not be the place for you

### Conclusions

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

Yes, CSM is a great university with a really good study program. Thereby Golden and its surroundings have a lot to offer. Microbreweries and outdoor sports are the two things you will find everywhere in Colorado. Within less than an hour you can go hiking, climbing, mountain biking and a little further and you are already on the slopes of the ski resorts. You will never be bored!

Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Just go abroad, it is an experience of a lifetime!

### Contact details Student Services / International Office

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## UU Study Abroad Report Form

Faculty/college:	Faculty of Geosciences
Level:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
Name degree programme:	Human Geography and Planning

Destination city & country	Golden, Colorado, United States of America
Name host institution and/or company/organisation	Colorado School of Mines
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)	15/07/2014
Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	30/01/2015

**You are requested to write on the following topics.**

Text boxes will expand automatically while typing.

### Preparation

Exchange/placement application process:

Right from the start of my first year I was thinking about studying abroad for a semester. During my second year I made the decision to apply for a semester abroad in the USA or Canada. After the necessary research on the UU Abroad website with all the experiences and descriptions of the possible destinations, Colorado School of Mines was by far my first choice. I filled in all the required forms and sent them to the International Office, hoping for the best. In the end, my application was accepted and I got my first choice! It is quite some work to apply for a study abroad, but if you take the time it's not that hard. Just think ahead and don't try to fill in all the forms in one day.

Counselling/support at home university:

After sending all the forms to the International Office, the staff will take a serious look at your current results, the courses you want to take abroad and whether this is all possible while still finishing your study programme in time. They give you feedback and expect you to make changes to your plans when needed. After doing so, they give you the final green light. Of course, more forms are needed to be filled out. Also: be aware of the fact that moving to the US for six months involves a lot of effort, obtaining a visa, filling out more forms, doing medical check-ups and so forth. It is all spread out in several months' time, but try not to procrastinate. In the end it's all worth the effort off course!

Academic preparation:

I decided to take part in some introduction courses and some more difficult courses at a undergraduate/graduate (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year) skill level. I didn't have any trouble completing these courses with good marks.

Language preparation:



Being a Dutch student, you don't have to pass any language tests. I already had some experience with academic writing in English, so my English writing skills were already in good shape. However, talking in English is different, but after some weeks in the US, I got comfortable with the language and even started thinking in English.

Finances:

I saved some money in advance, because I was already planning to go abroad for some time. During my stay in the US, I maximized the DUO loan and also borrowed some money from my parents. The living costs in Colorado were higher than I expected. I paid \$550 a month for my room, and about \$300 on food. I was still able to buy myself a nice 7<sup>th</sup> hand Subaru which also had its running costs of course. Be sure to have some spare money left to do nice things in the state and across the state border. Colorado is beautiful!

### **Study/placement abroad period**

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

Because of some last minute changes, I didn't had time to get my final study programme approved by the staff of my faculty, but in the end this wasn't an issue. I received a lot of help from Colorado School of Mines making the choices for my study programme. Looking back, I'm very happy with the programme I took.

Academic quality of education/placement activities:

Colorado School of Mines is an award winning school and sometimes regarded as the best engineering schools of the US. This is absolutely reflected by the academic quality of the school. I attained a lot of guest lectures from the USGS which were all very interesting and high quality. I also found that most of the students were very motivated and this contributes to a lot of positive energy and good motivation.

Counselling/support at host institution/organisation:

The professors at Colorado School of Mines are all friendly people and they like to talk with you. I didn't need any counselling or support, but it was nice to meet a professor sometimes and have some additional feedback on your work.

Transfer of credits:

After two or three months I received all the credits for the courses I took. The grades are downgraded a little because it's considered easier to receive an A+ in the US, than it is to receive a 10 in The Netherlands.

### **Student life**

Welcome/orientation programme:

There are a lot of international students at Colorado School of Mines, and the introduction programme consists of a lot of information being thrown at you about what, and what not to do during your stay. This involves information about the possibilities of working while having a visa, buying a car and so on. Happily there was a free BBQ in the end, and plenty of time to meet other internationals.

Accommodation:

The Colorado School of Mines international office offered me a room based on the information they had about me. I told them in advance that I was thinking about buying a car, so they offered me a



room about 3 kilometres away from the school (American thinking: you definitely need a car for covering such distance). I shared a house with one other student and two working adults. The accommodation was just perfect: a big house, big garden, nice kitchen, right on the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. We had a lot of animals in the garden every now and then, like elk, deer, bobcats, rabbits, squirrels and raccoons. Being Dutch, I also got myself a bicycle to get to school.

Leisure/culture:

Studying at Mines can be a handful sometimes, but make sure to have some spare time in the weekends to explore the beautiful state. The Rocky Mountains in Colorado are huge and offer plenty of opportunities for adventures. The international office at Mines, and also the recreational centre organizes hikes to climb "fourteeners" (mountains with an elevation over 14.000 feet, 4300 metres). I climbed four of them, two on foot, one on my bicycle and one by car, all of them are beautiful. I also made some road trips across other states, which is a great way to get a sense of the size and the nature of the country. During the winter time I rented some skis and took a skiing lesson. After that I was able to go skiing on just an hour drive of my house. And by having a car, it is not hard to find friends willing to go on an adventure with you!

Suggestions/tips:

I would say, if you have some spare money and are willing to take the effort, buy a car. It involves another bunch of paperwork of course, but in my opinion it is awesome to own a car in the states. Distances are huge in the US. In my case, going to the nearest grocery store was already a 30 minute bike ride. I was able to plan camping trips, hikes, road trips, skiing days and so on and invite other people to join me. We had about four cars among the group of internationals and that was just enough to get us where we wanted us to go. I managed to sell my car for a good price when I left the country, so in the end it wasn't expensive at all. Oh, and gas costs about 0.40 euros a litre. Maybe needless to say, but there are also examples of cars breaking down, so know what you are doing.

My other suggestion is to leave plenty of time available to explore the country, this is probably the only time that you will spend this much of time in the US, so make it worth!

### **Conclusions**

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

I would recommend Colorado School of Mines as an excellent engineering school. I'm not an engineer myself, but there are still options available as the school offers some non-engineering courses. Most of the people at Mines love the outdoors, if you don't like walking in the mountains, encountering wildlife including bears, this might not be the right place for you. But if you like the outdoors just as I do, it is truly amazing!

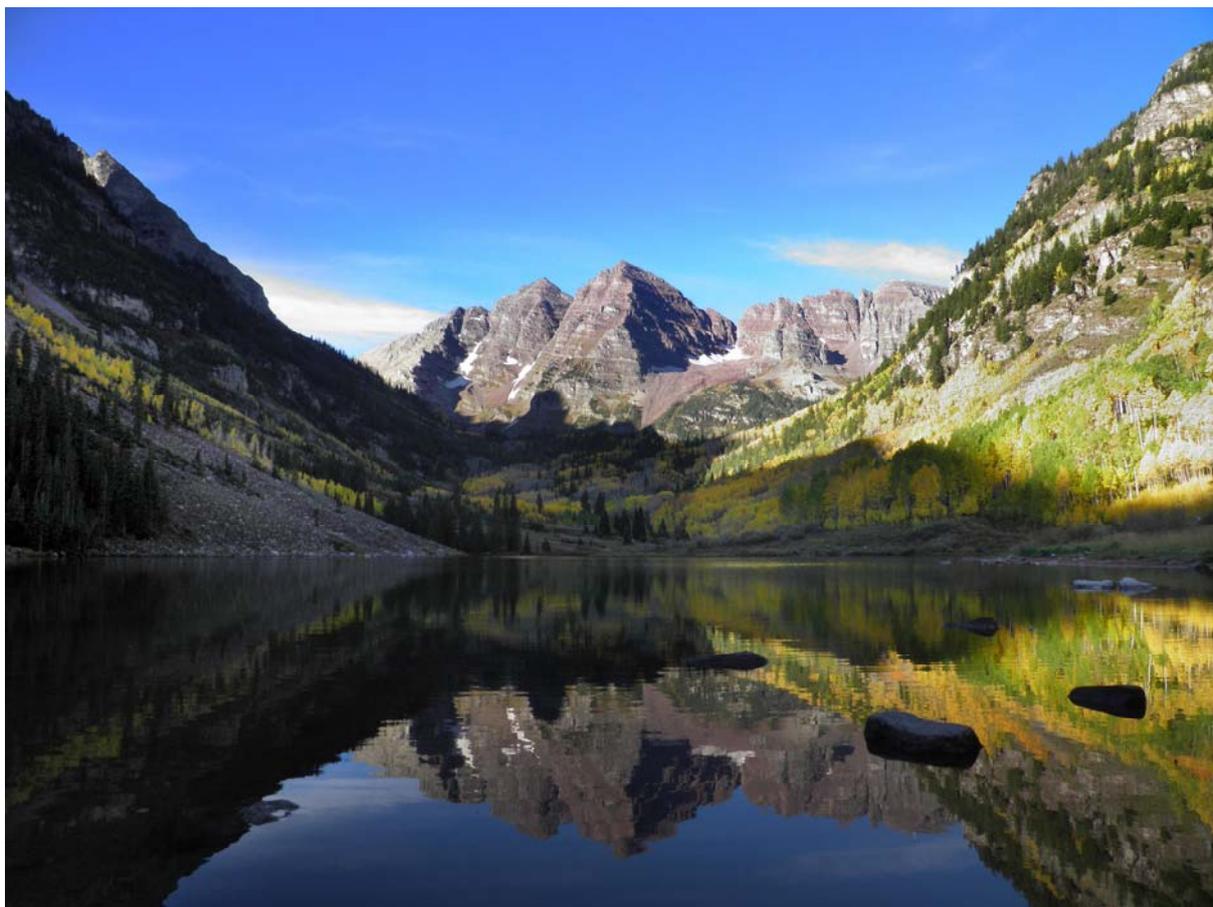
Do you have any additional advice or comments?:

Be sure to go to the Coors brewery and get your three free beers after college. And also be sure not to miss students night at Woody's: unlimited pizza for just 7 bucks ;)

For now, I just miss the abundance of sunshine (300 days of sunshine in a year for Colorado) and want to go back!



Universiteit Utrecht



**Contact details Student Services / International Office**

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**UU Study Abroad Report Form**

level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> other
name degree programme	<a href="#">Human Geography</a>
destination city & country	, <a href="#">United States, Golden</a>
name host institution and/or company/organization	<a href="#">Colorado School of Mines</a>
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)	/ / <a href="#">08/08/2012</a>
return date (dd/mm/yyyy)	/ / <a href="#">10/01/2013</a>

**You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing.**

<b>preparation</b>
exchange/placement application process
I takes some time to prepare everything for your application. I would advise to have a good look at al different universities before you make your choice. Show in your motivation letter why you really want to go to a specific university and why you really fit into the university (also think about academic reasons). I didn't get my first choice so think about second options.
counselling/support at home university
You can always email to international office and expect a quick answer. If you make an appointment you can always drop by, which is really nice.
academic preparation
I didn't do any academic preparation but I looked in advance what course I would fit into my study programme.
language preparation
I didn't prepare myself for the new language and I don't think an average university students needs to. In the beginning I struggled every now and then with a word I couldn't find but you will learn it really fast and, the best way to pick up a language when you hear it around you all the time. The most learning you will do will be at the country of your exchange anyway.
finances
I saved a lot of money. I also needed to borrow money form DUO so that I was absolutely sure I wouldn't get into money problems and so that I had more freedom to do what I wanted.
<b>study/placement abroad period</b>
study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)
The university focuses on technical courses, not a real fit with my human geography study. There were still enough interesting courses to take though. Look very well at the different programmes to see what you find interesting.
academic quality of education/placement activities
The academic quality is quite high. A difference is though that you need to do a lot of work. Prepare yourself for long days in the library. For my courses I needed to read about 150 till 200 pages a week and be aware, they really expect you to read this! You need to discuss the different topics in (the much smaller) classes and often you have to hand in a paper of summary for the readings. You also need to be in class because you will be graded for



<p>this! Good thing is, if you do everything you want you will simply earn an A. The highest grade is much easier giving than in the Netherlands.</p>
<p>counselling/support at host institution/organisation</p> <p>There are not a lot of exchange students and this is way some things aren't working perfectly. They will do everything they can to help you though. There is an office of international programmes and an office for international affairs. The last one is used for more administrative things. They also have a counselling office, a writing centre, health enter and more of those things. Be aware of the fact that you all have to pay for this even if you are not going to use this!! All together with cost of the other facilities as the recreational centre this will cost about 800 euros.</p>
<p>transfer of credits</p> <p>My credits didn't got transferred as hoped, I'm going to inform as soon as possible why.</p>
<p><b>student life</b></p>
<p>welcome/orientation programme</p> <p>There is a student's orientation programme and a programme for freshman, in the last you can also get involved if you wanted. In the student orientation programme a lot of boring, but important, stuff is told. It is also a good moment to get to know more international students. In the first week everybody just hangs out in the sun and is making fun before classes start. Try to meet some American people as well, my experience is that they will immediately invite you to all parties and activities in town.</p>
<p>accommodation</p> <p>I stayed with two Norwegian girls and one Norwegian guy with a landlady. She was a lovely and very caring women but could sometimes stress out completely (about breadcrumbs in the sink for example). She was doing all she could though the make sure we had a good time. It was really nice to live with some other exchange students, we had a lot of fun together and became good friends.</p>
<p>leisure/culture</p> <p>Colorado is absolutely beautiful. I have seen some amazing things and dear and racoons are just walking over the streets of the city. The summers are warm and in Golden everybody goes tubing in the creek or just hangs out in the park. In the weekend there is always a party somewhere. Some culture in Denver is found as nearby as complete wild nature in the mountains. In the winter the ski resorts are at driving distance and even when it's freezing the sun will always shine. There is still some left of the rough wild west culture and you can spot man in cowboy boots wearing cowboy heats everywhere (it is even the official uniform for information desk employees at Denver airport!)</p>
<p>suggestions/tips</p>
<p><b>conclusions</b></p>
<p>would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain</p> <p>All together I think back of my exchange with a smile on my face. Seeing the rainy grey streets of Holland makes me thing of the green mountains, blinking with sunshine. The little towns hidden away with real "honkytonks". You can drive forever without seeing a person, expect maybe for a cowboy, sitting in front of this little wooden house, decorated with antlers of self-shot dear. There is always something to do, always something to see and everybody is open, friendly and willing to help a (very interesting!) exchange student. I would recommend going to Colorado or go on an exchange anyway!</p>
<p>do you have any additional advice or comments?</p>

## Studying abroad at Colorado School of Mines.



Exchange Program Fall 2010  
Graduate



### Preparation:

The process of going abroad starts with the question: where do I want to go to? Luckily University Utrecht has a good section on their website with a list and information of all the universities we are linked to. For me, as an Earth Science student who's interested in mining and environment, the choice was quite easy. Next to the fact that I wanted to follow courses of my interest, I wanted to study at a university that teaches in English. Being enrolled in master courses and at the same time having to learn a total different language didn't seem very wise. My choice then became the Colorado School of Mines. After following the procedure stated in the abroad section of the UU website, which meant filling in many forms, writing a motivation letter, getting recommendation letters etc, I got a letter that I was admitted to the exchange program.

Depending on the region you've chosen to go to you then get a coordinator who helps you with the next steps of getting accepted by the university you want to go to and getting your Visa. As a preparation for going abroad all the students going to the USA came together and other students who just came back from the US shared their experiences and gave us some do's and don'ts.

Academic and language preparations were not really necessary.

Although we don't have to pay tuition to the universities there it still costs a lot of money. Buying an airplane ticket, paying the fees, paying for your Visa, housing etc. makes it quite expensive.

Unfortunately I was too late with applying for sponsoring/funding, but my parents were able to help me out to make sure that I could prove to the US government that I had enough money to study there (Visa). Then the adventure begins!

### Study/ placement abroad period

Choosing courses was not very hard at CSM. Although it takes some time to get used to their website it is in the end very orderly and you should be able to find all the information you need. Descriptions of all the courses are available; however the final schedules are announced quite shortly before the semester starts. It is wise to email them before and ask them if the courses that you're interested in will be given in that semester and if they can give you advise on which courses they think fit best with your interests. This is important because you will need to ask permission to the board of examiners in Utrecht to make sure you get your credits. In the end I subscribed myself through the CSM website for two of the three courses that I wanted to do because the third one didn't work. For the other one I sent an email. When I arrived in the US I heard that for exchange students it was *not* necessary to subscribe through internet but I could have just done it there (I believe they even preferred that). During the CSM introduction I subscribed for a fourth course.

During the introduction days they explain everything you need to know and where you can go to if you have problems. Everybody is very friendly and willing to help you. There is an international office where you can always go to and they will tell you where to go if they can't help you themselves. There is a

counseling office which is free (after paying the mandatory fees everything is 'free'), a health center which is also free and many other facilities that are there to help you. Asking for an advisor at 'your' department is also very convenient. He/she can tell you everything about the courses, nice projects or fieldtrips.

It is hard to say something about the quality of the courses. My courses were very interesting. Some of them were given in the same way as in Utrecht, but most of them were given in a more practical way. They were more focused on the use and applications and less on the background of scientific formulas, although this is probably different in every department. In my case we got a lot of case studies where we would get some data, make your calculations and then give your conclusions in a report as if you were a consultant, also trying to think of new, innovative ways of solving. Personally I think this is a perfect addition to the more scientific way of learning in Utrecht.

### *Transfer of credits*

After returning home CSM sent me a letter with the transcript with my grades. Then you just have to write a letter to your board of examiners and attach this form. A's became 8's and a B+ a 7 etc.; however I think every board of examiners transfers grades differently. As a graduate I got 3 ECTS per Credit Hour, I don't know if that's the same for undergraduates.

### Student life

#### *The orientation program*

The week before classes start there is a three days introduction especially for international students. During this introduction they tell you everything about subscribing for your courses, what you are allowed to do with the visa that you have, the general CSM rules.. Everything! During the lunch and BBQ you get to know other international students and this is the start of getting to know a lot of new people! On the last day of the introduction there is a 'Give Away'. The local church has collected furniture, things for in the kitchen and many more things and you just have to stand in line, eat free cookies and get free things. You have to be there early though, because a lot of people want to have those couches and mattresses and tables.

There were also two other introduction programs, one for all the new undergraduate students and one for new graduate students. I am a graduate so I went to a few of the graduate talks but they were mainly to tell you more about safety etc. The introduction for undergrads looked very nice with all kind of activities including the traditional M-walk (I also joined that and it is an experience you'll never forget!).



#### *Accommodation*

I got my apartment through the Colorado School of Mines housing program. The housing request form is one of the forms you can submit to CSM together with the rest of your application. The earlier you are the more chance you have of getting an apartment in Mines Park. You have apartments, for 1, 2 and 3 persons. However, Mines Park is quite expensive. Sometimes the people at housing know some other locations, or you could try to find something through craigslist. If you know people who are there they might know something, or otherwise you could ask people who just went on exchange there, they could maybe help find you something as well.

### *Leisure/culture*

There are a lot of cool things to do here! If you like outdoor stuff like mountain biking, climbing, hiking, snowboarding/skiing you will love it! There's a climbing wall at the recreation center (on campus) which you can use for free. The recreation center also has a swimming pool, a big gym, many halls for basketball, volleyball, indoor soccer etc. all for free. You can subscribe for all kinds of competitions. Also football, rugby, outdoor soccer etc. can be done here.



It also contains an ORC, outdoor recreation center, which takes you climbing outside, kayaking and gives all kinds of workshops. I went to Utah with them on a canyoneering trip, which was amazing! Furthermore the city of Golden has the mountains in your back yard and the big city of Denver on only 15 minute drive. There are some nice bars in Golden itself and many more bars and clubs in Denver (you have to be 21 though and don't forget your passport).

Golden is also the hometown of two beer breweries: The gigantic Coors and the smaller Golden City Brewery. The last one is kind of a biergarten and because the weather is almost always good it is a lovely place to sit outside!

Another nice experience is to go and see some of the big baseball, ice hockey, basketball and American football games. It is also very nice to visit some music concerts in Red Rocks.

About the culture of Golden; this used to be the real Wild West, the place where the gold rush took place. There are also some old mining towns, in the old western style close by. You can even find a book at the bookstore with locations of ghost towns.

Well this was a short summary, but there are of course many, many more things to do.



### *Conclusions*

I would definitely recommend this host destination to everybody. CSM is a good school, the people there are incredibly kind and they are always ready to help you and last but not least Colorado has a beautiful nature and the sun is always shining!

### *Advise/comments*

If you want to do any fieldtrips I would recommend going in the spring semester.

Faculty: Faculty of Geosciences  
Specialisation/major: Earth sciences

Destination: Colorado, USA  
Name host institution: Colorado School of Mines (CSM)

### **My exchange to Colorado School of Mines (2010-2011)**

From the start of my study I already knew that I wanted to spend some time abroad but I did not have any specific ideas about where and when. In the hall in the Earth Sciences building there is a map of the partner universities around of both the faculty and the university. During a break it caught my eye and I saw that one of the few partner universities of the faculty of geosciences was (the map was old, there is a new update one now) Colorado School of Mines. Well that is cool I thought, an university dedicated to mining and geology and that is how the ball started rolling.

The campus of Mines is situated in the scenic town of Golden just outside of Denver and lies literally on the foot slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Colorado School of Mines or simply Mines is an engineering school comparable to Delft University in the Netherlands. That is a crucial difference from Utrecht since all courses focus on applied science and you will hear the words ‘profit’, ‘money’ and ‘company’ on a regular basis. This is something that you will have to like, but I think that it is a valuable experience, since most university graduates will work for a (big) company during their career.

The administration at mines is somewhat confusing since there is an International Office (for all foreign students, degree and exchange) and the Office of International Programs (exchange students only). As an exchange student you will have most contact with the Office of International Programs and they will help you with most things. They are also the ones that will try to find housing for you. I say trying because in my case they did not succeed. I arrived a little early to see some of the surroundings, but without a car it is almost impossible to travel around. As an example I went to visit an old mining town which was a 45 minute drive from Golden by car but it took me 3 hours to get there by Greyhound bus. But it was an awesome trip. Because I did not had housing when I arrived I had booked a B&B for one night and my first priority to find housing. Eventually I found an apartment with craigslist, the ‘Marktplaats’ of the US. It was a nice two bed room apartment that I shared with an American PhD student. It was located just outside of the town and it took me 30 minutes to get to the campus, but there are some hills to conquer. A rough start for the day since the first classes start at 8:00. I would advise future exchange students to contact the OIP a few weeks before you arrive and tell them that you want to live in ‘Mines Park’, which is part of the campus and where most of the exchange students will live.

As I said before Mines is an engineering school and classes are applied. Being a third year Earth Sciences student I chose for senior level (undergraduate) classes in the geology department. I took two geology classes and two mining engineering classes. My two geology classes were: Petroleum Geology, taught by a great teacher this is an easy class that focuses on the hydrocarbon exploration and Mineral Deposits which is also taught by a great teacher and this class will teach the beginnings of exploration geology for minerals (gold, copper, iron, diamonds etc.). Petroleum Geology was relative easy class with not much homework and a lot of team based lab exercises in which you will have to work together with petroleum engineers to solve real life problems/examples. Most of them were “to invest or not to invest” type. Mineral Deposits is a hard class which requires some dedication. For the first ten weeks you will have to write a 1 page essay every week about various mining geology topics (and ethics) and half of the grade is your grammar, so you will have to patch up your English. Also every week there is lab in which you are mostly describing rocks (mineralogy, metal content, genesis etc.). This requires knowledge about minerals

that is not taught in the curriculum in Utrecht, but because I collect minerals it was not a problem. It is time consuming though, the official time you get for it is 4 hours, but nobody finishes in that time so everybody comes back on other times for another aprox. 4 hours of describing. Sounds hard, but it is well worth it if you want to go into the exploration business, and your fellow geology students are all somewhat cowboy/redneck/hillbilly Americans that are great persons and always fun to talk to. The mining classes I took were Introduction to Mining, a very simple sophomore (that is how the second year in the US is called) class about the mining industry where you will talk about mining techniques and legislation. The other class was Introduction to Rock Mechanics, a typical engineering class with a lot of calculations and where your engineering skills (problem solving thinking) are tested. This was the hardest class for me, but that was partly due to the not so great teacher. But the field trip to the Edgar mine, the mine that is owned by the university for research was a lot of fun.

Now something about Colorado. Colorado is not known for its great cities, Denver is fun, but it is the only city from considerable size in a hundreds of kilometers radius. If you like the outdoors, Colorado is the place to be. On a 1 hour drive there are numerous high quality and large ski resorts and you can climb, hike, mountain bike, raft, canoe literally on walking distance from the campus. Try to make friends as fast as possible with fellow exchange students and buy a car together and do awesome stuff. Americans are harder to make friends with because they will have their lives already established, but sports activities on campus are a great way to meet Americans. When I came to the US I was under age (under 21). Which means that you cannot drink alcohol. They are extremely strict in this rule. For example: under 21 you are not allowed to be in a bar after 9 o'clock and I have seen bars where you cannot even sit at the bar during the afternoon.

One last thing: if you go for one semester, you will regret it! Extension to a full year is impossible during your stay unless you want to pay the full tuition of about 15.000\$. Mind that although you do not pay tuition for your stay as an exchange student you will have to pay various fees (~1000\$) and make sure you got paperwork from your healthcare insurance so you can waive the obliged insurance from the university, which saves you 800\$.