

# Exchange Report

## University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

### Fall 2016



I am studying International Business Administration at Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences and I spent my 3<sup>rd</sup> semester in the United States.

Before I start telling you about my experience I would like to mention a quote by Dr. Roopleen:

***“If you have a dream, don’t just sit there. Gather courage to believe that you can succeed and leave no stone unturned to make it a reality.”***

Organizing a semester abroad can be tough and nerve-racking – but I can promise you that it will be worth it and that you will have the time of your life.

## **Making preparations**

If you decide to study abroad in the US, you have to apply one year in advance by signing on Mobility Online and uploading several documents:

- Resume and Letter of Motivation
- Certificate of Enrollment and Academic Transcript of Records
- Academic Letter of Recommendation
- TOEFL test or IELTS test

In terms of the TOEFL test it is necessary to plan ahead of time as there are only limited seats and it takes about 2 weeks to receive the score reports.

You can apply for three different universities, but as America is a popular country in terms of studying abroad, there will be a lot of applicants. I applied for California State University Monterey Bay and Ryerson University Toronto.

The selection process takes a while and I recommend being patient. If you're lucky, you get invited to an interview with the International Office.

Unfortunately, I got a letter of refusal a few weeks after my interview. Therefore, I started to think about studying abroad in Europe – but it didn't take long until I received another message from the International Office saying that they unexpectedly got a spot at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. I didn't hesitate and accepted the offer of studying in Wisconsin.

After the paperwork was done, I made an appointment at the US Consulate for my J-1 Visa. Next, I had to book my plane tickets. There is an airport in La Crosse, but I decided to fly in Minneapolis as it gave me the chance to see another city before my semester started.

Furthermore, I contracted foreign travel insurance with AXA. It is not mandatory to do so as UWL has its own insurance, but it is always good to be on the safe side.

Even if there is free Wi-Fi on campus, I decided to purchase an American SIM card via SimlyStore to be able to make calls and have data when I was not on campus. It even allowed me to make free calls to Germany.

## **The first days at UW-La Crosse**

Before classes started, international students had to attend an orientation week. We went on a campus tour, a Mississippi boat cruise and a shopping trip to the mall in Onalaska (15 minutes from La Crosse). It gave us the chance to make friends and get to know all the important places on and off campus. Everything was well organized and it was the perfect way to start the semester with a positive mind.



## **Campus life**

As an international student at UWL you have two different choices of where you want to live on campus: Reuter hall or Eagle hall.

In Reuter hall you share an apartment with 3 roommates. You have your own bedroom and shared common spaces such as a kitchen, living room and bathroom. Reuter hall is located close to the football field and the bluffs. In comparison, in Eagle hall you share a room with 2 roommates and a bathroom with another room. The hall is located close to the dining center as well as the recreational center.

I chose to live in Reuter hall, as I preferred to have my own room and kitchen to cook and bake whenever I wanted to. Nevertheless, most of the international students stayed in Eagle hall where a lot of social events took place. So I spent most of my time in Eagle hall, but I was always happy to go back to my own room to enjoy the privacy.



Throughout the semester the university organized several events for their students: We watched a movie in the football stadium, went to a T-Pain concert on campus, spent a day in Madison, visited the Mall of America in Minneapolis, ... the list goes on and on.

### **Classes at UW-La Crosse**

Before you start studying at UWL you have to create your individual schedule. There is an online system you have to use and it gives you various suggestions you can choose from. I decided to take classes from Tuesdays to Thursdays in order to have Fridays to Mondays off. I preferred having long days of classes because it gave me the opportunity to travel during the weekend.

My schedule consisted of 5 different business classes summing up to 16 credit points:



Course title at FRA-UAS	Course title at UWL
Marketing, Logistics and Production	Principles of Marketing
Financial Management III	Accounting Principles I
Macroeconomics	Global Macroeconomics
Business Information Systems II	Information Systems for Business Management
Business Ethics	The Legal & Ethical Environment of Business

In each class I had to take 3-5 exams. Moreover, I had to take online quizzes and do homework. Attendance is required and gives you extra points.

### **The city of La Crosse**

La Crosse is located on Wisconsin's western border and has about 50,000 inhabitants. The city has a lot to offer: walking along the Mississippi river, hiking the bluffs or going for a run on the marsh. Various events in La Crosse such as the Oktoberfest or the Rotary Lights Display will make you love the city even more.



## Expenses

Here is an overview of my expenses before and while studying abroad to give you an insight of what to expect:

TOEFL		\$245
Visa and fees	310€	
Plane tickets	1.160€	
Travel insurance AXA	162€	
SIM card	40€ a month	
Housing Reuter hall		\$2,755
Meal plan		\$408
International student insurance UWL		\$645
Fees for Stadium, Transit, Text Rent, Rec Center, ...		≈ \$400
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.792€</b>	<b>\$4,453</b>

(FRA-UAS bears the expenses for UWL tuition)

## Conclusion

Studying abroad is a once in a lifetime opportunity giving you a chance to experience a different culture and grow not only academically, but also personally.

The University of Wisconsin – La Crosse was the perfect choice and I absolutely fell in love with the city. Going abroad allowed me to meet amazing people from all over the world and it was the best decision I have ever made. I will always cherish my memories and consider my time in La Crosse as a positively life-changing experience.