

## **Vlad Mutuleanu – Hogeschool van Amsterdam – Fall16**

Before I mention anything about my exchange experiences, I will mention a few things about me so that you know what the starting spot is. I do not consider myself a very social person, I do not enjoy drinking and could at times be lazy (in a very chill way). I do however like partying, travelling and taking part in activities. Amsterdam was not my first choice and I am pretty sure I missed out on my first two choices because I did not take part in any organization at SBS that offers extra points for abroad exchange. That being said, let us move forward.

Coming to Amsterdam still got me excited since all new places seemed exciting to me, this being the first time I was away from my parents and living alone. The first thing that had to be dealt with was housing. For the exchange here it was not a problem to get a place to stay, the Hogeschool having different housing organizations that offer housing for all exchange students. Thus, everything should go quite smoothly, you get assigned to an organization and they offer you a place to stay and everyone should be able to get one if staying active and do things as fast as possible. I was assigned to Duwo, which is the worse organization, receiving a room in an apartment for two in which I have my own room and share fairly good sized kitchen and toilet with a Bulgarian guy doing his whole bachelor in Holland. The apartment is good enough to live in having just minor downsides costing about 400 euros. The building in itself does not look great and has shown negative aspects. For instance, the elevators have not always been working and laundry requires a fee of 3.5 euro for a full wash and dry. This might not seem much but in other student buildings belonging to the De Key organization the laundry is free of charge. Location is quite good, 3 biking minutes away from school and having a shopping center with all shops and food places needed. It is true that it is located in an area viewed as a “ghetto”, however there has not been any crazy things happening so it has not bothered any of us. The negative is that it will take you 30 minutes by subway to the city center, this being the same time that it would take by bike (9 kilometer bike ride). And yes you should definitely buy a bike, out of all of my experiences riding the bike has been the most fun in Amsterdam.

Amsterdam is also a cool city to live in, being at the center of Europe with such a big airport allows for quite many travelling opportunities. It is by far the best city in Holland with prices being lower than Sweden, beautiful architecture, and many bars and clubs. Also, many festivals will take place here for those interested in music. Utrecht is another city which I advised to be visited, it being only 20 minutes away by train.

The orientation provided by ISN, the student organization, for Amsterdam exchange students was very cool. There were things to do that were planned well and communicated well. Overall the first week was a great experience. During the semester there were multiple parties and trips arranged at different clubs and around the whole of Europe. There were trips to Prague, Berlin and Paris to name a few. The work of ISN should be praised, them doing a very good job. You will not get bored in Amsterdam, always being something new to do and attend.

Now to the last part, the school in itself. I am not saying that Amsterdam is not a cool city, on the contrary I fell in love with the city and its way of living but everything pales in comparison to all

the issues, problems, and stress caused by this Dutch University. Their organization is the worst I have ever seen, the teachers lack any pedagogical skill, and participation is mandatory for all courses (2.5 hours for each of my 6 courses a week). I studied individual courses mostly related to Finance and Supply Chain. The Supply chain minor is completely irrelevant, the courses being very bad and teachers even worse. For the financial courses there were bad teachers as well since they many times did not reach the core of each course, having weird assignments and being very unclear at times. And if you plan on coming here, you will face an unnecessarily high number of group works that will cause you a bigger amount of stress since Dutch students at this school are generally too laid back and lazy to do things right and in due time. I myself could not possibly have imagined that a university as bad as this could exist. Studying here feels more like studying in a high school than a university.

My advice to any potential exchange students is to stay away from this university, Holland is a cool place, Amsterdam is beautiful city, and activities are planned well and regularly but the school sucks, for a lack of a better term. **DO NOT COME TO THIS UNIVERSITY !**