

Boston University School of Law

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BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

Boston University School of Law

Study Abroad Final Reports



Leiden University
Leiden, Netherlands

FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please provide a written assessment of your experience abroad this past term in light of your academic and educational objectives. In particular, please touch on the following: your overall experience at the foreign institution, the quality of the faculty and the quality and availability of courses offered. Please also comment on other topics you feel might be helpful to future students, such as quality of life, financial, housing, social or other considerations that had an impact on your experience. Your report need not be longer than two pages.

1. Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in our study abroad programs.

- a. Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?

YES

- a. Will you share your final study abroad report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?

YES

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

Name:

Semester/Institution: Fall Semester Leiden University

REPORT:

I set out with the objectives of learning in depth alternative approaches to the common law as well as learning the European Union's approach to taxation of multinational enterprises and insolvency proceedings. Because the European Union is comprised of a number of member states, I figured that its approach to such issues as taxation of corporations with business in multiple locations would provide me with a framework for international aspects of commercial and tax law. The courses I took focused primarily on foundations of European Union law as well as efforts by international organizations to draft model laws that would allow states to work

together to fight tax avoidance, and more generally, a lack of harmony in legal proceedings. Specifically, a course I took on international insolvency law focused on how states can harmonize insolvency proceedings in a manner that does not result in diminishing the value of the debtor corporation to the detriment of creditors as a whole. Most of the courses I took focused on efforts by the OECD to provide a framework for states to work together (in issues like tax and insolvency proceedings) via model legislation.

The courses were very broad and procedural mostly, and I found they were somewhat lacking in substantive law in comparison to courses at Boston University. However, the course offerings also provided opportunities to delve into more conceptual issues related to economics, financial policy, and the effects of digitization. I believe the courses generally offered a more theoretical approach to legal studies; furthermore, they allow students to immerse themselves in certain topics that are not strictly legal per se – as in the case of a course I took called Trade and Finance in the Global Economy, which covered in detail economic concepts like comparative advantage as well as a historical analysis of differing trade policies and agreements. While Boston University is extremely adroit at honing students' legal argumentation skills relating to particular substantive legal issues, Leiden University in contrast offered a more multidisciplinary overview of how certain legal policies related to taxation or insolvency are changing to keep up with digitization and increasing globalization of trade and business.

It should be noted that the Dutch approach to teaching law is messier and the trajectory of any given course is not as clear as at Boston University: while the professors provide resources to learn, they expect the students to engage the materials on their own – and much to my surprise – they do not cover in detail the assigned readings in class by raising problems or analyzing cases in depth, but instead simply move on to the next topic. In sum, I would say the learning objectives are less clearly defined and the fundamentals of certain areas of law are not hammered in as fully as at BU; depth in some sense is sacrificed for breadth.

At times, the peculiarly Dutch way of thinking about what the law should accomplish in order to be good law – e.g., for the Dutch I believe concerns about social welfare take precedence over individual autonomy, broadly speaking – could be seen, but such ways of thinking about policy were almost always merely digressions in the courses.

A few more remarks on the courses: some of the courses you state you would like to register for simply disappear and are not offered when you actually arrive. So you might have to add additional courses once you arrive. The examinations can run as late as mid January, which could potentially be problematic. Lastly, the courses BU students take on exchange often are populated by other international students, rarely Dutch students. So you might have to go a little bit out of your way if you are looking to meet Dutch students specifically.

Regarding housing, if it is possible for a student to take student housing, this is beyond a doubt what should be done. Finding housing as an international student in the Netherlands is extremely difficult. Landlords look for at least a one-year lease, most of them do not accept students, and most of them that do accept students have a strong preference for *Dutch* students. Therefore, the expectation if one tries to find one's own housing should be that the cost will approximate the cost of housing in Boston (i.e., it is not cheap), and that it will be very difficult.

The Netherlands itself is a wonderful country. There is no end to museums, music, and festivities in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has been a safe haven for artists and freethinkers for centuries, and it is therefore no surprise that the Dutch are tolerant but also impressively intellectual and opinionated.

One thing I was shocked by was the lack of perceived corruption of politicians that was shared by many of the students. I think politicians are viewed more as public servants than as power-mongers here.

Public transportation is efficient, basically everybody speaks fluent english, and the people are refreshingly direct – there is not much beating around the bush or phrasing things euphemistically. You might get called out by a professor if you arrive late (it is especially not fashionable here!). I once used an adapter to plug into a charger in a coffee shop (a real coffee shop with beans not grass), but because the adapter was too wide it pressed the power button on the edge of the plug extensions, turning off the big screen on which the menu was displayed. I was promptly cursed at by the manager. I take that experience to have been somewhat out of the ordinary, because I found the Dutch people to be incredibly friendly and open for the most part. But I would also say they are not particularly patient when they perceive incompetence. Given the candidness of Dutch people, I have to imagine that it is one of the better places to study if you want to hear new viewpoints and have great conversations.

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YES ☒
NO ☐
 - b) Will you share your final study abroad report (with any identifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?
YES ☒
NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

Name:

Semester/Institution: Fall 2021, Leiden University

REPORT:

My experience at Leiden University exceeded my expectations. Academically, I enjoyed all of the classes that I was enrolled in. Even though Leiden Law is well known for their public international law program, I was still able to enroll in classes in my interests, which concentrated on private international law: Global Trade and Finance, EU and Global Labor Law, International Corporate Insolvency, and International Tax Policy. Structurally, each semester at Leiden is

divided into 2 halves. Some classes are only taught in half of the semesters (about 5-6 weeks), while others are taught in both halves of the semester (10-11 weeks). My schedule was mixed of both, and I felt like I was able to obtain a good grasp of my subject matters regardless of the length of the class. My professors and lecturers at Leiden University demonstrated that they were experts in their field, and the classes were really engaging, even those whose subject matters I was not familiar with (e.g. I took a class on trade and finance, which was more economic than law-related, but thanks to my professor, I was still sufficiently equipped to do well in the class).

The classroom experience was very inclusive. The Netherlands in general and Leiden specifically is a big academic hub in Europe, and most of my classmates came from diverse nationalities and backgrounds. For someone interested in international law, such opportunity to be able to learn from different legal students from so many different countries in the same classroom was frankly the reason why I opted to study abroad – it was something I could not have experienced at BU. Furthermore, my professors were very friendly, responsive to questions, and tentative to the different legal norms and systems from their students' home countries. It truly felt like an environment where I could learn from everyone in the class, not just from the professors.

Administratively, I found it challenging to adjust to life and study in Leiden in the beginning. There were naturally a lot of front-loading paperwork to navigate through (obtaining residence permit, registering at the Town Hall, opening a bank, getting a transportation card, etc.). The processes were not the most straight forward; in fact, they were often confusing and frustrating at times. Aside from the published resources on their website, I felt like I received little help from the Incoming team of Leiden Study Abroad office. With the caveat that I did not attend the Orientation week (which I would recommend to other incoming students), this is because Leiden University in general expects their students to be independent and self-advocating. Thus, learning how to figure things out yourself is a form of learning. I eventually found a lot of helpful social media groups to help me adjust to life in the Netherlands. I would recommend student groups, expat groups, American in the Netherlands groups, because these are great resources to have questions asked and answered, especially for those who do not know what questions to ask yet.

Leiden as a city (or a village, as the Dutch call it), is very cute, peaceful, and safe. The town looks very Dutch but is also bustling with a lively expat scene. I honestly enjoyed Leiden scenery no matter from which angle. Finding housing can be tough (as is with the rest of the Netherlands), but I honestly did not find it much more challenging in comparison to Boston. I think setting expectations is important when apartment hunting. Though Leiden is more expensive compared to other European cities, rent is typically more affordable in Leiden in comparison to Boston (though not as cheap as Leiden University website seems to indicate). It is not always possible to find an apartment in the city center, or even in Leiden city, but the area is concentrated enough that there are many other nearby towns (or even Den Haag) that are very commutable or bikable to the University.

The best part of my experience was the quality of life in Leiden. I met a lot of expats, some of whom became my friends throughout my short stay there. There are many activities to be

enjoyed in Leiden. I went to every Saturday outdoor market by the canal when I was living in Leiden to get groceries, flowers, or just to enjoy the scene. When the weather was nice enough, grabbing a drink on the canal was a must. I was lucky enough to be there during Leidens Ontzet, which was a great immersive cultural experience. Whenever I felt more adventurous, Leiden is very accessible to other large Dutch cities, and the Dutch train system is very good and affordable in my opinion.

The Netherlands is a unique country and it took a bit to get used to. However, once settled and oriented, my study abroad was totally worthwhile. I wish I could have stayed longer, and I already made many friends there that I definitely would come back to visit again.

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YES

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Semester/Institution: Spring 2021/ Leiden University

REPORT:

My name is Joe Dorsey, and I attended Leiden University in the Spring of 2021. My experience was an acutely unique one, but I hope that this report can be helpful in some way. After being accepted to study abroad in the Spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, and my plans were up in the air. In the fall of 2020, Leiden University announced that the study abroad program would be cancelled. Later that semester, the BU Study Abroad Office (SAO) reached out to inform me that Leiden University would be allowing students to take classes *virtually*. My main goal of studying abroad was to get some international experience and to

expand my network, so I still was willing to take the virtual classes. There were still a lot of hurdles to get through though. First, I was in my last year of the J.D. program, meaning that I needed to finish all my requirements to graduate (other than the last 12 credits I would get through Leiden). Second, Leiden needed to have at least 10 people registered in a class for it to be made available for online learning. Third, Leiden University operates on a different timeline than BU Law. Spring Semester at Leiden has two sessions (think like a US quarter system) where classes run from February to the end of March, and then from April to about the end of May, and you can retake a failed exam in June. Each of these on their own was not the end of the world, but it put a lot of uncertainty into planning. I needed 12 credits to graduate but wouldn't know until February if there would be enough virtual classes at Leiden when it would be too late to supplement Leiden classes with BU courses. Also, I needed to be cautious of the classes that ran for the entire semester and the second quarter, because my transcript would need to be available by May to receive credit. In the end, I was able to supplement a Semester in Practice through BU Law with two classes from Leiden University. This took months of planning and emails with the administration, SAO, registrar, and I even wrote a petition to the Academic Standards Committee. It was a lot of work put in, but it was well worth it.

My overall experience at Leiden University was pretty good! I was not able to travel to the Netherlands, and took only two classes, so my experience was limited. I took *Law and Culture* as well as *Technology and Society* and both classes were phenomenal. Both were taught by incredible professors who made themselves available with office hours and plenty of advice, help, and tips for the exam. My educational objectives were to get a different point of view on the law and to expand my network. Obviously, my experience does not hold a candle to a "real"

study abroad session, but I really enjoyed myself. The professors gave great lectures that really let me get a feel for European-style classes, and they both utilized “breakout rooms” on Zoom, putting students in small groups where I could get to know my classmates a little. The breakout rooms were a saving grace for my experience and made it worthwhile for me. It was a way to connect with my classmates and made the courses feel different than a BU Law class.

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NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

Semester/Institution: _____ **Fall 2019, Leiden University** _____

REPORT:

My time at Leiden University has been irreplaceable, and without a doubt helped me grow professionally and personally. The law faculty in Leiden was beautiful and modern, and had resources for any and all projects that I had to complete. Being in the Netherlands was a life-changing experience for me, as it aligned very well with my personality and life goals, and made every day more positive and goal-focused. Courses offered were vast and almost unimaginable, although they are not all very applicable to modern day American law. Faculty were always experts in the fields they were studying, and took the time and care to teach students individually, which was very different from learning in America.

Living in Leiden is not too expensive, it is just difficult to find. You must make plans for living arrangements as soon as possible, or else you will end up in an Airbnb for four months like I did. The social experience is wonderful because half of the population is international, meaning you will meet people from all around the world in this small town, country even.

In Leiden, I was able to grow as an individual and experience the world, while feeling like home in the wonderful country of the Netherlands. I was also fortunate enough to study at a prestigious institution which helped expand my substantive knowledge of many international law subjects. Overall, my experience at Leiden was completely positive, and I cannot wait to return there in my future!

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YES ☒
NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

Name: _____

Semester/Institution: Fall 2016, Leiden University

REPORT:

I participated the study abroad program in Leiden University, Netherlands, in the Fall 2016. Overall, my experience in Leiden University is good and I think the study abroad experience is valuable. I learned substantive EU law in Information Technology and Cyberspace. I also got chance to learn about international relations and organizations, and Trade and Finance in Global Economy. I think these courses are helpful in developing an understanding for international legal practice.

Leiden University School of Law is prestigious in international law study. It also offers exchange students lots of international law courses and EU law courses. One problem that a US law student might have is that the teaching method in Leiden is more consistent with civil law system. Compared to case law system in the US, you need to learn about how to apply laws in the codes or regulations in analysis. EU laws are more like a combination of civil law and case law. So, personally, I think the way you analyze a legal issue is slightly different from what we learned in the US. The faculties in Leiden Law are nice and helpful. Although they are not as close to students as BU professors, they are still reachable and always willing to offer help.

I also like the classroom experience in Leiden University. Leiden University including the law school is very international. About four out of five students in a class are not Dutch students. Most of them come from European counties, but it is quite interesting to learn about laws, regulations and rules in all different countries. It is also worth mentioning that Leiden Law holds lots of lectures regarding EU regulations and lots of other international issues.

Netherlands is a beautiful country. It is small and easy to travel around, although the transportation fees are a little bit expensive. It is also convenient to travel to other European countries from Netherlands as it is adjacent to several countries. I believe study abroad in Netherlands is a wonderful experience for both my academic study and my personal development.

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YES *
NO ☐
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YES ☐
NO *

***I used an asterisk to indicate my answer to the questions mentioned above.**

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

Name:

Semester/Institution: Fall 2016 Leiden University

REPORT:

As an exchange student at Leiden Law School, I was able to meet the goals and objectives I hoped to achieve while studying abroad. In particular, I improved my analytic skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skills. My improvement in the aforementioned skills derived from several

Niya Mack

facets of my study abroad experience—that being my academic courses, foreign language course, my interaction with other exchange students, and my interaction with the Dutch community.

First, I improved my skillset through the academic courses at Leiden Law School. I was enrolled in Corporate Social Responsibility, Protecting Human Rights in Europe, European Union Foundations, and Comparative Tort Law. Because I selected an array of classes, I had a well-rounded experience. More specifically, each course covered a different area of law that introduced me to new concepts. As a result, the differing areas of law have enabled me think pragmatically about legal issues I will face as a practicing attorney. Now that I have completed all my exchange program course work, I am able to pull knowledge from each course, whether it is knowledge regarding a specific body of law or knowledge regarding crafting legal arguments. And, as I mentioned in my Goal and Objectives report, because each course features a comparative law component, I am now able to understand how other countries tackle pressing legal issues. Also, due to the diverse faculty at Leiden, I was able to learn about various issues affecting the Netherlands and other European countries. Moreover, because of those discussion, I am now able to analyze issues from various perspectives. Thus, because of my academic coursework, I have developed my analytic, problem solving, and communication skills.

Second, by simply being a student at a foreign institution such as Leiden, I have gained insight that I would not have received while in the States. Specifically, because my classes at Leiden were taught by professors of various nationalities, I was able to hear various viewpoints on legal issues. Also, the way in which classes were taught was different than my classes at BU. Such difference has allowed me to become more adaptable to different teaching styles. Also, in most of my Boston University School of Law classes, I am surrounded by other American Citizens. While, there may be some diversity in regards to gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, my classroom experience domestically is limited—most of the varying viewpoints center on the American experience and American political thought. While at Leiden, I was exposed other students that had very different perspectives than I. Such

Niya Mack

experience inevitably changed the way I analyze legal and policy issues. Therefore, I achieved my goal of diversifying my perspective.

Lastly, being fully immersed in Dutch culture provided me with insight regarding how the Dutch tackle legal, social, and cultural issues. More specifically, my experience confirmed that European nations such as the Netherlands are progressive in implementing health laws and health policies. Accordingly, by observing the differences between those nations laws and policies and that of the United States I am now able to think creatively about innovative solutions. Therefore, learning from the Dutch community has improved my ability to be analytic and a problem solver.

Overall, my experience abroad has provided me with several benefits. I have increased my substantive knowledge of different bodies of law, and gained different perspectives and insights. And, because I was surrounded by different cultures, I increased my ability to communicate with people who may not share the same background as I. Therefore, I have met the goals and objectives I set out to accomplish during my study abroad experience.

FINAL STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
- a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?
- YES ☒ NO ☐
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- YES ☒ NO ☐

Please write your Final Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER: Leiden University, Spring 2014

I returned from my semester abroad at Leiden University just under a month ago. Looking back, I have to say that it was an incredible experience. I am so glad that I decided to go, and I would do it all again if I had the opportunity.

I enjoyed my courses overall and found the professors to be interesting and thought-provoking. During my semester at Leiden, I took Introduction to Public International Law, Law and Governance in Developing Countries, Basics of International Humanitarian Law, and Economic Policy in the EU. I enjoyed each of my courses at Leiden, with the exception of Economic Policy in the EU. Although the professor was great, the course was much more economics-based and much less policy-based than I expected from the course description. As economics is neither my forte nor my general interest, I struggled to follow the lectures and grasp the content. However, I would say my feelings about the course have more to do with my

knowledge background than the quality of the lecturing. As for the other three courses, I enjoyed them very much. Introduction to Public International Law and Basics of International Humanitarian Law were my favorites. I feel that taking these courses at Leiden provided me with a different view of the laws, and I am not sure that I would have been able to have the same public international law experience had I taken only the courses offered by BU. The professors had impressive resumes, were very kind, and were dedicated to making sure the students understood and stayed interested in the topic. I also enjoyed Law and Governance in Developing Countries, although, as I stated in my mid-semester review, it was not exactly what I expected. It was not very focused on law, but looking back I have realized that I gained a lot of knowledge about post-conflict institution building and where developing countries generally need the most help in terms of institutions and government. Depending on my future career, I think this knowledge could be very useful. In terms of exams and workload, I would say there was slightly less work. However, exams are difficult at Leiden and it is quite nerve-wracking to know that people fail exams fairly regularly. I found that studying much like I do for exams at BU was successful. Overall, I enjoyed my courses at Leiden University very much.

In terms of housing, I chose to live in one of the school's buildings, called Kloosterpoort. I rented a studio, which was just what I needed. Although it was quite small, I had enormous windows with a great view of the courtyard. I was stressed out about finding somebody to take over my lease, as it did not end until August 31, but the school has a program where they will offer your apartment to summer exchange students. Luckily for me, a student found by the school took over my lease. I enjoyed living in the school's building, and found it to be much easier than searching for a place online. The rent was slightly higher in the school's buildings, but it was the most convenient for me and I think it was the right decision.

As I stated in my mid-semester review, money was one of my biggest struggles during the semester. I feel that more money should be available for students studying abroad. I understand that I am there to go to school and study, but I feel strongly that part of the study abroad experience is traveling and learning about other cultures as well. Although I budgeted well enough to be able to take three small trips to other countries, money was incredibly tight. I am not sure that I would have had enough money to thoroughly enjoy Leiden alone, even without traveling. I did make the best of it and feel content with my travels, and luckily my

parents were able to help me when necessary, but I could see this dampening the entire experience for students who may not be as fortunate or budget-conscious.

In terms of social activities and city life, I found Leiden to be the quintessential Dutch city. Although it is quite small, it has its own hustle and bustle and there are plenty of activities available. There is a great jazz bar, a beautiful university botanical garden, plenty of history, and delicious food in quaint restaurants. In addition, the people are friendly and will generally help you and provide recommendations. One of my favorite things about Leiden was the market on Wednesdays and Saturdays. On Wednesdays, the market is fairly small, but you can buy fresh produce, cheese, and baked goods. On Saturdays, the market is about twice the size and it seems as if all of Leiden spends the day enjoying the city and the market. It was great to pick up some groceries, and then grab an outdoor table at a café and enjoy people-watching on the canal. Even if boredom strikes in Leiden, as it occasionally does, it is easy to hop on an inter-city train and spend the day in another city or town. The tickets are cheap and the travel times tend to be short. I took day trips to Amsterdam, Haarlem, Rotterdam, The Hague, Delft, Noordwijk an zee, and Utrecht. I believe all of the train rides were under an hour. During my time in Leiden, I also met plenty of people and made a few life-long friends. It was great to interact and spend time with people from different countries and different parts of the world. I learned so much about our similarities and differences. It was a lot of fun, and truly eye-opening. Overall, I found Leiden to be a beautiful, interesting city and I enjoyed my time there very much.

I had a wonderful semester at Leiden University. It was just what I needed both educationally and personally. It was nice to be away from the stress that seems to accrue at the law tower throughout the semester. I also feel that learning from professors who have studied, worked, and lived in different parts of the world has provided me with a wider understanding of international law and a different perspective on a variety of topics. I found the experience to be a fulfilling one, and I would recommend it to students in the future.

MID-SEMESTER STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

- 2) Please indicate whether we can share your information with current BU Law students interested in participating in study abroad programs.
 - a) Will you share your personal email address with students who request to contact former program participants?
YES ☒ NO ☐
 - b) Will you share your mid-semester report (with any indentifying information redacted) in a binder housed in the OGIP?
YES ☒ NO ☐

Please write your Mid-Semester Study Abroad Report below.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER: Leiden University Spring 2014

I am currently spending the spring semester studying at Leiden University in the Netherlands. I have been here for about a month and a half, and so far I have found the experience to be incredibly satisfying and mostly what I expected.

In terms of courses, professors, and my experience with the university, I have been enjoying the experience so far. Although I have only had two classes up until this point, Introduction to Public International Law and Law and Governance in Developing Countries, I have found the experience to be fairly similar to courses at home. I was surprised to find that the professors teaching these courses not only speak near perfect English, but they also speak with barely any accent. I have not struggled in that sense and everything has been clear and easy to follow in class as taught by the professors. However, I have been slightly disappointed with the substance of my Law and Governance in Developing Countries course. It is not what I expected, as it is not quite focused on the law, and it feels very much like an undergraduate course, which

my other course has avoided. I have been in the course for six weeks and am still struggling a little bit to figure out exactly what the professor expects us to gain. Overall, I would say that my class experience has been pretty great, and because my last two courses should be more law-focused, I am expecting the rest of the semester to go just as well.

I chose to avoid the stress of searching online for housing and dealing with individuals while I was living on another continent, so I am living in a studio apartment that is owned by Leiden University. It has been a good experience overall and I think I made the right decision in this sense. The rent is not too expensive, and utilities and internet are included, which is nice. Further, the apartment came with bedding and cooking utensils, which was a great discovery upon my arrival.

One of my biggest stressors since arriving abroad has been money. I understand that because I have student loans, the budget for studying abroad at Leiden University is a set number. However, I really do not think the provided budget is realistic and it does not provide any additional money at all to experience other parts of the Netherlands and Europe. I have planned very few trips (much fewer than other classmates I have spoken with) and I would not be able to do this without extra money that I had saved previously. While I understand that I am here to study and not necessarily to travel, I feel that traveling and experiencing everything to the fullest is part of studying abroad, and I wish the budget was more supportive of this.

In terms of city life and social activities, I have found Leiden to be what I needed in my semester away from Boston. It is a small, but bustling city and the people are incredibly kind. The market on Saturdays is one of my favorite things I have experienced, as it seems that everyone in Leiden spends the day outside enjoying their city. The school also plans social activities for international students, which I have found helpful in terms of meeting people and making friends. I have really enjoyed making friends from different parts of the world. It is so interesting to experience firsthand how similar we all are, yet how many huge differences there are in our cultures.

Overall, I think spending the semester at Leiden University will fulfill my academic and personal goals. It has given me a chance to get away from the different kind of stress that comes with time spent at the law tower, even though it is stressful in its own way with exams coming up. I think that learning about international law topics from professors who have studied in different countries and have different views about politics and the world will provide me with the

right outlook for the career that I would like to have one day. It has been my favorite part of the experience and it has been truly eye opening. Being able to provide a different perspective on international law could help me in the future should I ever become employed in a related field in Europe or at home, and that is what I was looking for from this experience.

PROGRAM NAME & SEMESTER: Leiden, Netherlands; Spring 2011

I recently returned back to the United States after spending a semester studying law at Leiden University in Leiden, Netherlands. In this report, I will reflect back on my experiences and express my honest opinion about the program. I will begin by saying that in my opinion, students at the Boston University School of Law are very fortunate that our school offers its students a unique and wonderful opportunity of studying abroad in Leiden.

Academics

While in Leiden, I took four courses: European Union Law, Law & Culture, Cyberspace and Cyberlaw, and Information Technology Law in Europe. For me, the most challenging course was European Union Law because the legal system in the European Union is structured much differently than the one in the United States. Unlike most students in the class, especially the ones from the EU, I was completely unfamiliar with the subject. For this reason, I spent many extra hours in the law school library finding and reading supplemental literature so that I could feel comfortable discussing the issues of the EU law with the future European lawyers. My hard work paid off, and now I understand fairly well how the legal system of the EU functions.

Every course that I was enrolled in had a different format. For example, in EU Law, professors assigned lots of reading, which included the EU Treaties, case law, and supplemental literature explaining the Treaties and the case law. Law & Culture course was structured completely differently: we did not study any black letter law or any case law; the course revolved around discussion of articles written by legal scholars on a variety of subjects. Class discussions were always very involved and enlightening.

I am particularly interested in intellectual property law, which is one of the reasons why I chose to participate in the Leiden exchange program. Cyberspace and Cyberlaw was my favorite course in Leiden. Professors who taught the class were practicing attorneys, and for this reason they had lots of fascinating real-world examples of the issues discussed, which made learning the law behind those issues very interesting. The course involved writing three papers on open ended topics, which allowed me to develop and express my personal ideas about the direction in which I believe that Cyberlaw should head in the future.

The amount of time I spent preparing for classes and writing papers was comparable to what I usually spend at BU. I did well in all of my courses, which was very rewarding. Law school library in Leiden is absolutely beautiful and studying there was pleasant.

Life Outside of Law School

My favorite part about living in Leiden was that it is a very international city: students from all over the world come there to study. This diversity facilitated numerous enlightening discussions. I have made many friends with whom I intend to keep in contact. Social life in

Leiden is absolutely amazing because most people are very outgoing and open to expanding their circle of friends.

I rented a room in private house, which was an excellent decision. Renting from private landlords is much cheaper than living in the dorms, and no long-term lease is required. I rented a simple but comfortable room and shared the common areas of the house with four Ph.D. students, who were all from different countries. Everyone was busy with schoolwork so the house was always quiet, and therefore, provided an excellent atmosphere for studying.

Public transportation in Netherlands is convenient and efficient. However, the most preferred way of transportation is by bicycle. Bicycles are everywhere: in fact since everything is only a short bike ride away, most people do not own cars. This took some time to get used to, but once I purchased my own bike and started riding it everywhere, I absolutely loved it because it provided me with an opportunity to constantly exercise and enjoy the picturesque city of Leiden.

In conclusion, I am very happy with my decision to participate in the study abroad program at Leiden University. I learned a lot, both inside and outside of the classroom. I made many good friends, got a chance to travel throughout Europe, and experienced a different approach to education and life in general. I would highly recommend to my peers at BU Law to participate in this program: my experience was absolutely amazing.

MID-SEMESTER STUDY ABROAD REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Write a one page report assessing your experience abroad, in light of your academic and personal goals. Topics to consider:

Courses

Professors

Housing

Social Activities

City Life

Money Matters

Please write your Mid-Semester Study Abroad Report below.

I am taking four courses at Leiden University: European Union Law, Law and Culture, Information Technology Law in Europe, and Cyberspace and Cyberlaw. Courses are interesting and engaging. Professors are very knowledgeable about their subjects and always encourage class discussions. The discussions are absolutely phenomenal because law students from all over the world share their views on various issues. I truly learn a lot from my classmates, and our debates, both in and out of the classroom, are vigorous and enlightening. This is important to me because one of my major goals for spending a semester in Leiden was interacting with future lawyers from different countries and learning in what aspects the U.S. legal systems differs from others. The focus of most lectures is the policy underlining the law and the direction the law should take in the future. Exams are similar to what I am used to at BU Law: a three-hour written exam at the end of each course. Overall, I am very satisfied with the quality of education, and the knowledge and insight that I am getting here is invaluable.

The city of Leiden is gorgeous. Leiden is an old city with many historic buildings and a distinct character. Numerous canals run throughout the city, thus making it even more beautiful. People enjoy spending nice sunny days in outdoor cafes, which offer excellent food and coffee. The preferred mode of transportation is bicycle. At first, it was strange seeing so many people of all ages riding bicycles, but now, I am used to it, and I actually enjoy riding my bike to class instead of waiting for the T.

Leiden is a college town, and therefore, there is a large student population. Many students are international, which makes meeting new friends even more exciting. Everyone speaks excellent English, and I have not run into any language problems. A BU Law student who studied in Leiden last semester, recommended that I stay in the house where she rented a room. I followed her advice, and I am happy about my housing arrangement. I share the house with five international Ph.D. students, and our Dutch landlady. My room is simple, but comfortable and quiet, which completely suits my needs. Prices in Leiden are similar to prices in Boston; the only thing worth mentioning is that food here is slightly more expensive, especially when dining out. Overall, I am happy with my decision to study for a semester in Leiden, and I believe that this experience will be a great asset in my future career.

15 May 2005

End of Year Study Abroad Evaluation: Leiden University

I begin by saying I am extremely satisfied with my decision to study abroad at Leiden University. The classes offered at Leiden University are typically more dynamic in their non-legal areas which allows the student to study the law in its more richer context. The classes I chose did not simply focus on black letter law or case-law but also brought in elements of sociology, development, history, and culture. As one of my goals was to take classes which provided a fuller understanding of the law, this goal was certainly fulfilled.

It was also beneficial to be exposed to stylistically diverse methods of teaching. The classes here have less focus on student/teacher dialogue in the classroom and more focus on following the professor's critical examination of the material. While I was not at first used to this, as BUSL typically engages a more dialogical approach, I was able to switch gears and find myself adapt to this method as well. I still believe, however, that in this way the American system succeeds better in getting the student's highly involved and engaged.

As I mentioned last time, one of my paramount goals was to utilize the surrounding atmosphere outside of the classroom, to supplement my academic ambitions. The Hague was particularly relevant for this goal. It is possible, within a 20 minute train ride, to be in one of the focal points of European judicial matters. Attending trials at the ICTY offers fascinating insight into international criminal law in practice and the student also has ready access to all the resources and experiences at the International Peace Palace [Permanent Court of Arbitration, Peace Palace Library, etc.].

I also was very happy with particular student organizations here. While I was not a full-member of these, I received many of the similar benefits. In particular, this included English language lectures from prominent journalists or government representatives along with a roundtable event which involved diplomats from over 25 state embassies. During this latter event, students had a chance to meet intimately in small groups with various diplomats, discussing issues that are of specific importance to the individual countries. This was particularly appropriate for my interests and goals as I find myself professionally interested in the diplomatic and political world. I know of no other location other than Leiden which has such a unique program to fully utilize the rich international resources in its backyard.

Another important goal was to gain exposure to other international legal systems. The course offerings, such as Chinese Law, Indonesian Law, and African Law, certainly met this goal in the academic sense. This goal was further supported by the student population. Leiden has an extremely strong and established ESN program which brings in student's from all over Europe for the study of law. The English language classes served as the lingua franca of all these students and thus each class was composed of some ambitious Dutch students along with a very high percentage of international students. The professors would often call on particular students, whose background might be relevant for the day's discussions, and in this way all of us were exposed to multiple international legal systems. Then, of course, time spent outside of the classroom is with these same students and the discussions often continued in this way.

I would say that my goals and ambitions for studying at Leiden were fulfilled and I would recommend it for other BUSL students looking to gain serious exposure to diverse international law issues.

I would also note that until Leiden switches to the semester schedule, I believe Fall 2006, BUSL students will likely continue to take their 4 classes only in the second trimester. This trimester runs from about January until mid to late April. Thus, these evaluations would be more timely and less repetitive if the due dates were early to mid-February for the mid-year report and mid-April for the full-year report. Thanks again for providing the opportunity to study at Leiden University, I gained immensely from it.

FINAL Study Abroad Report

Leiden, The Netherlands

Courses

European Migration Law

This was a lecture course and grades were based on three, five-page papers. For each paper, we had to take a position in a hypothetical case as a state, the court, or an applicant for immigration into a European Union country. On the days the papers were due, we had mock trials in which the state and applicant read their opinions and the court issued a ruling. These sessions were entirely moderated by the court (students) and the professor would offer his thoughts on the subject at the end. The topics covered were asylum and family reunification and we dealt primarily with jurisprudence from the Court of Justice for the European Communities (ECJ).

European Protection of Human Rights

This was by far my favorite, despite the hefty reading load that averaged 100 pages per class. The course was co-taught by two lecturers – a legal philosopher and a human rights law practitioner. Each of them brought a different perspective to the course and had distinctly different teaching styles. The course reading was case law from the European Court of Human Rights and each class we read cases interpreting a different article of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Law and Governance in Developing Countries

This class contained students with both law and social science backgrounds and is the least “law-type” course I took. We concentrated mostly on case studies in developing countries written by rule of law practitioners instituting legal reform programs. Coursework included a (incredibly difficult) final exam and a group paper and presentation on different areas of legal reform. My group examined solutions to three core problems identified with legal reform projects in Russia and Eastern Europe. If I had to choose my courses all over again, I would have avoided this one. It was a little too theoretical and unsettled as a field of study for my taste, but others may certainly enjoy it.

Political and Legal Philosophy: The European Tradition

A fantastic professor who peppers his lectures with witty anecdotes teaches this course. Overall, we examine the roots and present status of European identity. The course requires brief weekly response papers to questions he poses at the end of class and a final paper, 15 pages in length, on any topic we addressed in the course. This class was pure enjoyment and I am really happy I took it, if only to hear what the professor had to say every class.

Living arrangements

I lived alone in a studio apartment that cost 650 euro/month. This was ideal for me, but might not work so well for everyone since study abroad can feel really isolating. The building I lived in is 50% student housing, however, so there was no shortage of visitors. While I ended up really enjoying my time in Smaragdlaan, I would avoid living there again at all costs. The building is not well kept – despite the facts that the apartments are

great – and it was located outside of the city center (about a 10-minute bike ride from school).

Finding a place to live is incredibly difficult in Leiden. I found my room through SLS Wonen (the short stay company that works with the school). Roofs is a good option if you can find something. While most people do find something either before they arrive or shortly after, there are stories of people living in hotels or crashing at a different houses for long periods of time. One caveat with SLS Wonen is that their lease periods are typically longer than desired. For example, in the fall semester they require a lease until January 31 of the next year. This might not be a problem for people coming in the spring who will have a place to keep their stuff while they travel. For people returning to the US in December, the longer lease is a bit of a pain (although I was able to get out of paying for January). The longer period is to accommodate the actual length of Leiden's fall semester. While exams are scheduled to take place before Christmas, re-takes are offered in January; so the semester doesn't actually end until January 31. If you do try through SLS Wonen, Hugo de Grootstraat is the location closest to the law school and is located in a really picturesque part of town. The rooms might be more expensive than other places you might find, but nothing is as pricey as Boston.

Travel

In conjunction with my human rights law class, I took a group study trip to visit the European Institutions. The weeklong trip cost 190 euro and started in Strasbourg, France where we visited the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. After two days in France, we went to Luxembourg where we visited the European Court of Justice and sat in on oral arguments for a case. The trip ended with a visit to Brussels, which is the main seat of European Parliament. I believe the trip will take place next fall and will follow a similar itinerary. That trip was by far the best experience of my trip abroad.

I would seriously recommend traveling as much as possible throughout Holland itself. The country is beautiful and even though it is small, there is quite a bit of regional diversity. Utrecht was by far my favorite city.

Other info

There is a very active international student organization that organizes multiple activities every month – from ice-skating to trips to Amsterdam to go to the movies. They also organize a weekly gathering at a pub called Einstein's, so there are plenty of opportunities to meet and hang out with other international students. Leiden is small, but it offers a great opportunity to get to know it well, which I always appreciate. Amsterdam and The Hague are only short trains ride away.

Finally – GET A BIKE!!!! It makes life so much easier and you'll have great legs when you get back. Plus, you can bike to the ocean in about a half an hour from Leiden.

LEIDEN: Overall Experience

My overall experience studying abroad in Leiden was superb. I cannot overstate how the experience there colored my law school career, and I imagine will impact my entire life. My time in Leiden can best be separated into three areas: academic, professional, and personal goals, each of which provided me with unique experiences, challenges, understandings, and appreciation.

Academic goals

My initial reason for choosing to apply to study abroad in Leiden was due to its reputation regarding the study of public international law. Very early on, I realized that I wanted to get the best education possible from Leiden University; for me that meant petitioning to take Masters level classes in L.L.M. programs. This was not an easy task, as prior BU students as well as students from other American law schools were only enrolled in the Bachelors level classes, and that was customary for the registrar there. After a bit of perseverance and a strong BU interest in the study of international law, I was accepted to study abroad in Leiden. The most interesting classes I took to date: (a) European Protection of Human Rights, (b) International Criminal Law, and (c) International Dispute Settlement.

Also unique to this experience was the ability to take Masters Classes from two of the different programs offered in Leiden: class (a) is from the Masters in European Law, and classes (b) and (c) are from the Masters in Public International Law. As for the one non-Masters class, it was entitled Law and Governance in Developing Countries and despite its de-emphasis on traditional legal notions, it was an informative and useful look on how laws shape different types of societies; a truly revealing look at global rule of law. Moreover, some of my classes were taught by professors of unmatched reputation and ability—from a former attorney at the International Court of Justice, to one of the foremost scholars in European Human Rights, to the chair of a global institute, these professors were not only impressive, but had a wealth of knowledge to share, and contagious enthusiasm to infect us with.

One of the most memorable moments of my academic times in Leiden was in late November, a week entitled The RIO Trip; where for 5 days, a school field trip organized a group of students to travel to Strasbourg, Luxembourg, and Brussels, to visit and receive presentations from over a dozen European Institutions. From meeting a judge on the European Court of Human Rights, to witnessing a hearing at the European Court of Justice (which, to note, involved translations into over 14 languages on a headset), to learning about the E.U. Parliament, to visiting a former Nazi concentration camp, to visiting NATO's headquarters, this trip was an unparalleled look at international organizations, institutions, courts, and people. To top it off, every person on the trip wrote a one page report about one of the people or places we visited, and Radhika and I had the distinct pleasure of editing and compiling this "Report," which was later distributed to all participants and presenters from the trip. Not only was this a truly educational and enlightening trip, but it is forever commemorated by this Report.

Professional goals

Despite my fondness for learning, choosing Leiden was not just an educational choice. Law school is a professional school, and my career was a significant factor in this journey. Thus, Leiden's proximity to The Hague and its reputation among scholars and the international community is unmatched and provided for amazing opportunities for those willing to seek them. Luckily, after a summer completing an internship in Geneva, Switzerland, I was more than willing to explore the options that The Hague could present.

Home to the International Court of Justice, the International Court of Arbitration, the International Criminal Court, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, The Hague is the peak of public international law venues. Scholarly talks occurred weekly, research at the ICJ was always an option for Leiden students, and it was especially exciting to see the places where "law in action" occurred.

For me, my professional goals were most influenced by an internship with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. I worked for the Office of the Legal Adviser, and for seven weeks, I participated in drafting legal opinions and speeches, researching penal codes around the world, and having the opportunity to sit and listen to international meetings with members from over 190 countries discussing various matters. My experience at the OPCW was a significant part of my Leiden experience and my professional path. I look forward to taking the lessons, information, skills, and individuals from this experience into my emerging legal career in public international law.

Personal goals

Lastly, Leiden was more than just another law school choice; Leiden ultimately became a statement about life decisions. There, I learned to appreciate the value of personal time, of healthy lifestyles, of helping out fellow students, of exercise, and ultimately, Leiden became a story about balance. I remember law school orientation and the emphasis on balance that BU Law did a great job of pointing out. But in the tower of 765 Comm Ave, I found balance difficult to sustain, and this sentiment was shared by many of my classmates. Conversely, in Leiden, balance was hard to lose sight of. Riding bikes, fresh fruits and vegetables, and the absence of public transportation did wonders for my physical health, while friendships, compelling readings, and support networks enhanced my mental well being and place in the universe.

Being in an international environment, where students shared cultural experiences from India, South Korea, the U.K., Turkey, Lithuania, Germany, and Cyprus (to name a few) helped me understand the difference between cultural chauvinism to interested observation. And Dutch culture and its wonderful people provided insight into dichotomies both familiar and foreign: tolerance vs. acceptance; is immorality really the opposite of morality; do human rights and security have to diverge; are career and life synonymous or forever in tension—these to name a few are some of the social commentaries that formed my experience, not just as a citizen of the United States but as an inhabitant of planet Earth.

To sum up, my experience in Leiden was truly significant. Just to note, negative experiences were small and unremarkable. However, life changing experiences were notable and inspiring.

Study Abroad Final Report
February 3, 2010

This past fall semester I studied at Leiden University in the Netherlands. The program was exactly what I hoped for: it was very international in both student population and course material; it gave me a great perspective on American law and culture; it helped me better understand the practice of international law, and determine whether I would be interested in practicing it myself; and it allowed me to develop relationships with colleagues in a wide variety of legal markets. In short, it was an incredible experience, one that I would recommend to any law student even remotely interested in spending a semester abroad.

The program at Leiden draws students from all over the world, especially Europe. With English as the course language, and English known so well by so much of the world, there was a great variety of nationalities represented in the class. That diversity really affected the atmosphere at the university, especially in our international and comparative law classes. Professors were very conscious of, and interested in, the variety of perspectives of their students. Professors were quick to ask students to compare their own system to the system presented to us. There was a strong focus on Dutch, German, French and British law as our base systems, and comparisons were drawn from there. It surprised me how readily people assumed American law would seamlessly parallel British law—to me there were innumerable differences, but in the scheme of legal systems, I had to admit the differences were small and nuanced. Even in the courses that were not entitled “comparative” law, professors took time to compare to make the concepts relatable for all of their students. I always found that process interesting, and so did my classmates. In comparative tort law, for instance, a German friend of

mine commented to me how silly the French tort system seemed to her, while I had been thinking throughout the same class that the German system seemed a little cumbersome and awkward. In the end, I think this constant exercise in comparative law made me approach international law in a more informed, more analytical way.

The University also makes a great effort to keep this large international group entertained. There were organized events every week, and from time to time there were longer weekend trips to different areas around the Netherlands. This meant that, by the end of the semester, the group had become very tight-knit. One of my goals in spending the semester abroad was to build professional and personal relationships with law students from around the world, and I certainly accomplished that goal.

Through Leiden's proximity to the Hague, I also had an opportunity to meet and speak to attorneys who are already working in international law and hear about their experiences and opinions about practicing law abroad. Another goal of mine for the semester was to determine whether I wanted to commit myself to practicing international law, so those discussions were influential. Once I was in the Netherlands, I felt much more hesitant about living and working abroad for an extended period of time. Though the idea of living in Europe is exciting, there are drawbacks as well. I found it took moving away to realize some of the implications of being so far from home. For example, there were a number of events in my family, including my sister's engagement and a cousin's wedding, that I missed while away. Though my semester was outstanding, it also helped me realize the sacrifices involved in being so many miles away.

Overall, I am incredibly grateful for the experience at Leiden. It gave me a chance to reflect on the type of law I would like to practice, and I had a lot of fun while doing it. I traveled all over Europe: I climbed the Swiss Alps, drank beer by the liter at Oktoberfest in Munich, ate chocolate in Bruges, went clubbing in Budapest, visited a fellow BU Law study abroad student in Paris. It was an amazing semester. I think it also makes me a more attractive, well-traveled, well-informed candidate for any type of job I pursue in the future, and for that I am incredibly grateful as well.