

It is almost a month ago since I left the US, and I still can't believe that I am back in Germany. The second semester at the Central Michigan University was very different from the first one. At first I was very concerned about the tough winter in Michigan, and second, a lot of our friends that we met in the first semester left the school to either go back to their country or they even graduated. However, it turned out that our concerns were unnecessary. We met even more Americans, and we had even a very different second semester.

The winter in Michigan is very cold and the worst is the wind. It makes the temperature even colder, and sometimes you feel like every part of your body freezes into ice. Luckily we didn't have a lot of snow this year, and the Michiganders told us that we probably had the mildest winter for years. If you are in Michigan in December, January or February just make sure, you have proper cloths. Good snow boots are essential! The winter in Michigan was the first real winter for me. I live in the Ruhr and Rheine area in Germany, and we barely experience a lot of snow. Mount Pleasant at this time looked like a winter wonderland, and the campus that was covered by the snow looked marvelous! Lisa and I were even invited by our friend Julie to a cottage an hour north of Mount Pleasant. The weekend was very adventures for us. Not only did we get the chance to see people ice-fishing on the Houghton Lake, we even saw people driving their snow mobiles on the frozen lake.

The classes I took in the second semester were 2 political science classes (Islam and Democracy and political interest groups), one class in communication (gender communication) and the 4<sup>th</sup> class I took was an English linguistics class. I felt very comfortable with all of the courses, and I also can say that I learned a lot during this time. As I already wrote in my first report, I am a huge fan of CMU's political science department. Professor Moataz Fattah was one of the most inspiring professors I have ever met. During my time abroad I figured out how interesting the US and Middle East relationship is. I would never had the chance at my home University in Düsseldorf to go that much into detail in the foreign policy, especially the Middle East. Also, it was quite amazing how structured American universities are. Classes were never packed, and I really enjoyed a very thoughtful intercourse, not only amongst the students, but also amongst the professors and their students. You could always ask you lecturer for help or for further material. Even emails were replied very quickly, and they offered office hours more than just once a week.

Although we had to study a lot during the semester, we also had the chance to travel a little bit. We were lucky to have met such great friends. Most of the Americans are very friendly and incredibly hospitable. Emily, Lisa's and my friend invited us to her cottage up north. Never have I seen such a beautiful area. It was also close to a lake, and the nature was just wonderful.

Exciting was also my first road trip all the way from Michigan down to Florida with Marc, Richmond and Hannah during our spring break. Not even did we see many different states, we also experienced how diverse the country is. The language in the south sounded unusual, but interesting, and the people were also very welcoming and helpful. On our way back to Michigan our car broke down, but shortly after, a policewomen came up to us, and she tried everything to help us getting the car fixed so we could drive back home.

I am very sad that the time is over, but I also know that the friends we met, were friends for life. I am looking forward to see Julie, our American friend who is visiting us in couple of days. Lisa and I are very lucky to host her, and we will try our best to show her our beautiful home. We both know how wonderful it was to have someone showing us around, and who introduced us to many other people. It would be a pleasure for us to give something back.

Thank you VDAC for giving me and the others the chance to study abroad. No one will ever take us our memories and experiences away. And through the federation all of us three (Lisa, Marc and I) became close friends, and what is also important, we made friends for life! What can I say, the cultural exchange was a great success, and I cannot wait to tell everyone what an amazing country the United States is.

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