

## What a semester-A short look back on my semester abroad at Millsaps College

Jackson, Mississippi; the first thing being in my mind in before my semester abroad was that I don't have any clue about what is expecting me. People saying about this area it's hot, the bible belt, redneck county and they change it with Jacksonville in Florida.

Well, preparing for my stage in the Jackson, I found all of this and people saying that they loved it, but also that others hated. That's why I made my decision going there without big read-in and taking all experience the way, it is coming. That was the best I could have been done in afterwards review.

Let me start with the time before arriving at Millsaps. After being chosen, I took contact with Austin, the director of international office at Saps. With him I managed all necessary points to clarify, as the visa documents, my housing on campus and the meal plan. What time ever, he was there for me and my upcoming questions. As well, he set the first contact with coach Till, the Track Field head coach.

Last days before going into the us got a bunch busy. I had to take three exams, the last one on Friday, the Sunday after, my plane left. Well with all packing and moving, it got a bit stressed, whatever.

Arriving after a 17hour flight I was happy. I got all my luggage and in passport control there wasn't any problem. First thing I saw after passport control was a huge sign saying: "WELCOME TO AMERICA! I finally made it to the US! From that moment I got flashed by realising my semester abroad has started.

After getting picked up by Derrick and Annie (an Austrian girl, can you believe that!) we stopped at Walmart supercentre. I've never ever seen such a big grocery store before and was happy having those two helping me find some goods. After, I arrived at the place I shall stay for the next semester. MILLSAPS COLLEGE, more detailed: southern Campus, Ezelle Dorms Room 127. Inside the room I first met my new roomie Xavier. He was my first person I had to share a room with since age of 10, so that was kind off new for me. After dropping my package, I felt asleep, tired but happy and exited about the coming.



I quickly realised that was the only exchange student this semester, so the staff I responsible for my stay was super helpful and always a help when needed. If I wouldn't had my TrackTeam, it would have been hard getting familiar with the other people because the regular students already found their people and got busy with classes. Here I have to point out Kay Mortimer, who tried to do everything

so that I could get a good start at Millsaps. Selecting the right courses have not been that easy, because I got three different course offerings that all said something different about courses that are offered in current semester. Finally, I found four classes that suit into my Uni Liechtenstein schedule. International economics, entrepreneurial Finance, Innovation and Human Ressource Management. I planned to do two more courses, but they have not been offered or overlaid. The way of studying remembered me a bit on my high school time, because there were classes with size of 20 and the teacher really tried to take care that everybody understands the topic. But there have been some Senior year classes I've been in, that wanted self-development and working in project groups to figure out solutions and content. That was more like we had in our "Übungen" at UniLi. The midterms have been a new one for me too. Following the professor was hard in the beginning, caused by dialect or unknown economical vocabulary, but with googling the words, I had any bigger problems. I first had to convince the profs that I don't use my notebook or smartphone for any other things. They really have been strict about that point in most of the courses. After the first weeks my English developed such good that googling for translations was a rare one. During my studies I could take part on a fieldtrip of the economics department to Atlanta, where we visited big brands as Suntrust, the FED, Lyft Scooters or Homedepot and had good talks with former students working there or being self-made and reporting their experience and networking. Also, it was a good time with the crew we had lots of fun and a great time. By the way, there I went my first (and not the last) to Waffle House.



Going away from the courses and studying itself, I found many similarities as well as differences to UniLi. Both universities are very small Millsaps has round about 1500students, what is only a few compared to other universities I had the chance to visit in the US. By that they pay many attentions on a personal relationship between teachers and students and for a respectful way of behaviour. As well, Millsaps focus on their, for American standards, high academic studying.

Differences are there obviously, too otherwise I wouldn't have to leave UniLi. As common in the US, most of the students >80% live on campus in dorms or the frat-houses. So, there are any dead times where anybody is on college. Even with its small size it has ha huge sports complex. A dome for basketball and volleyball, a new track and field area, a football field, base-&softball fields as well as tennis courts and a gym. Exempt of college practice times all students were able to use them in intramural sports or on themselves.

I was part of the track team, representing the college in sprint events in distances from 100m dash to 4x400m relay. We had daily practice under the iron view of our coaches Till, Huseth or White and had a great team. Especially with the sprint crew we had a good time even with the hard sessions. In case one of my teammates will read this: “even the old man is fast”. Being on the road almost every weekend I had the luck starting on meets at Mississippi State or Ole’Miss, both well known for their football teams. Highlight was the conference final in Arkansas where we messed with 7 other colleges in the region. I got the honour running in both our relays and it was a great feeling racing a last time with the crew.



But even with daily practice I had enough space having a good time on campus. Sharing a room g special. You get close to your roommate with all happy and sad moments and spend a lot of time talking. I would say I know X very well and so does he to me. It developed after smaller problems resulting from old habits at the beginning a wonderful friendship that probably and hopefully will last a lifelong. Everyone who concerns about the food at uni.li I can tell you it is a good one. Americans fry so many things and love a kind of pizza, to which I had to get used to. My main dish were grilled chicken and a lettuce mix. Fun fact, really almost everybody drinks Coke or Powerade all day long.

On weekends campus was livelier, plenty of events or sport matches took place. After, people often gathered in at the frat houses, who always welcomed me warmly and I had a lot of fun playing games throwing some football and spring events. By taking all this together with the fact that I only met round 10 Europeans on campus I really got a good impression of the southeast culture and people. During my travel afterwards I met plenty of other int. students doing their stage abroad at a big college who got a bit jealous about the experience in culture and contacts with the locals I earned at Millsaps.



After time on Campus I took a two-month lasting trip through the nation I spend my last months at. Going with a track team mate to Mississippi coast, doing some gator-watching and enjoying the heat (it got pretty fast pretty hot and humid; already in February it was weather for shorts so that stereotype is right) followed by famous New Orleans and Houston, Going on through San Antonio and Austin to Dallas, I got an impression how big and diverse Texas can be. Continuing to Denver Colorado and Utah, I started visiting and camping in national parks as Rocky Mountain NP, Colorado National Monument; Arches NP. and Canyonlands NP. Going more south through Phoenix and Flagstaff in Arizona I visited Gran Canyon, a real ghost town and fabulous Vegas in Nevada. Last stop has been California with Highway1 San Francisco and San Diego before breaking it down back home from Los Angeles.

I am pretty grateful to Millsaps, UniLi and the people who made the stage possible. That experience, as even more the people I got friends with and the impressions I gained will be a part of mine now and anybody can take them. By the way my English improved a lot, otherwise this report would have been written in German. I am pretty sure I might have some sleepless nights the next two years when I will be watching my people performing their sports in livestream.

Last but not least, it won't be my last time in that region. There is still of things I must do and people to meet- so **I will be back.**

