

Student Report University of Aruba Fall 2018

Study programme

During my stay in Aruba I followed the Master programme Aruban Law at the University of Aruba. The courses were very interesting and doable for a student with a Dutch law degree because the legal systems are very similar. Aruban law is mostly based on Dutch law. The classes were small and all the teachers were very nice and really professional. Due to the fact that the University of Aruba is a small University the contact with the teachers was very personal. The education form was focused on discussion with the peers to learn from each other. I really liked the education form and it taught me a lot. In that way you are very active and learn way more than just passive listening to the teacher. I found it very motivating. The difficulty of the courses and exams are very comparable to the courses in Groningen. A part of my courses was finished with an exam, and a part was finished by writing a paper. I think that's good because writing skills are very important. Some courses also had a presentation. I liked the education at the University of Aruba so much that I decided to complete my full Aruban Master, so I will go back in 2019 to finish the courses that I need to finish for the degree.

Language

The courses that I took were all given in Dutch, because I followed courses from the legal track 'Aruban Law'. The other track is more focused on international law; those courses are given in English. The people of Aruba speak a lot of languages. A big part of the country speaks Dutch, Papiamentu, English and Spanish. It's very easy for Dutch people to integrate because most of the time you can speak Dutch with people.

Finance and other conditions

During my time in Aruba I still had my loan from DUO because I was registered at the University of Groningen, so that was very easy for me and didn't take any extra effort to fix. Life in Aruba is pretty expensive and plain tickets aren't cheap either so that is something to keep in mind. I used the Marco Polo Scholarship to cover most of the expense of the tickets. Especially fresh food is expensive because everything is imported. Bars are expensive too because the island is very touristic. Housing is pretty comparable with the prices in Groningen. I paid around 500 euros monthly, that's more than I do in Groningen but I had more space. My fixed charges were a lot higher than in the Netherlands due to the fact that you need to rent a car when you live in Aruba. You can't rely on public transportation, so a car is a must, otherwise you won't get anywhere. I shared my car with my roommate and that cost me around 250 euros a month.

Preparation and contacts with the faculty before, during and after stay

When I was accepted to go on exchange it took pretty long before I had the confirmation of Aruba. The contact by mail wasn't always fast but everyone was really nice and wanted to help, and in the end everything was fixed properly. When we arrived, they took really good care of us. Rushella from the International Office showed us the island on the first day and took us to the supermarket because we didn't have a car yet. I really liked the people who work at the faculty. Everyone is very nice and always wants to help you and thinks along with you. I have a positive experience with the contact with the faculty.

Housing

I stayed at an apartment at Sebrina's Resort with my peer student. It was really nice, we had a spacious apartment with very good beds, working air-conditioning, a decent kitchen and bathroom and just everything that you need. We also had a swimming pool so that was a big plus. Besides that, we had a cleaning lady that cleaned the apartment every week. The landlord was friendly and everything was always very neat around the resort. There were tourists from time to time but they stayed in an other part of the complex so we didn't have nuisance from them. The only minus was that the apartment wasn't cheap, but you do get a lot for your money.

Culture

I really loved the Aruban culture. The vibe and of course the weather on the island is good and the whole atmosphere is more relaxed than the Netherlands; there is a good reason why Arubans call their county 'One Happy Island'. The Aruban people are super warm, friendly and always helpful. It's a super tolerant county where a lot of different people with different nationalities live together. I think Arubans are more open and social than Dutch people. People take their time and look less stressed, and I think that's very positive. Sometimes things take a bit longer to fix but I didn't experience that as a problem. The country is focused on their tourism because that's the main source of income. The island is always crowded with tourists, especially Americans.

Free Time

In our free time we spend a lot of time cruising the island with our car. The island is super diverse. There are so many beaches to explore, and there is also rough nature because a part of the coast is rocky and a National Park. The National Park is a must see. I really recommend going off-road in the park with a 4x4 car or a buggy. I spend a lot time swimming, snorkelling, touring, doing boat trips, our just going out for drinks in one of the bars. It's so lovely that the weather is always good so you can spend your days outside. I also did two trips to other countries.

Travel

I went on two trips during my stay. We arrived in Aruba in August and school started in September, so we had a lot of free time those weeks. That's why we decided to go and travel. I would really recommend to travel during that time because when school starts it's pretty busy and it's a bit harder to find the time to go, especially when you want to go away for a longer period. On my first trip I went to Miami. The tickets were pretty cheap and our hotel wasn't expensive either. Miami was a nice city to visit. There's a lot to see and to do for tourists. On my second trip I went to Medellin in Colombia. I would really recommend going there. It was such a beautiful country, with a lot of amazing sights, and right now it is totally safe to go there. The people are also very lovely and nice and it's a cheap country so the trip doesn't have to cost you a lot. I went paragliding among other things and that was truly amazing.

Other

I would advise students who want to go to Aruba to really think about the financing because the exchange won't be cheap. Besides that, it's a must to be in the possession of a driver's license, because otherwise you will be pretty dependent of people who do have a driver's

license. And next to that: bring enough warm clothes! It sounds silly, because it's always warm outside, but when your inside, the AC gets pretty cold.