

# Erfahrungsbericht

## University of Nebraska – Lincoln

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When I told everybody I would spend my semester abroad in Lincoln, Nebraska, I basically received one single response: “Nebraska, in the middle of nowhere.” I had never heard of it before, it is a supposedly a headline from an essay in a school textbook. I have never been worried that my semester abroad would be a nowhere. It was one of the best chances in my entire life and definitely not boring but an exceptional experience. At the UNL, I studied English as I am a student of English and Sports in my 5<sup>th</sup> bachelor semester at the LUH.

Before going abroad, there were a lot of things which had to be organized. Besides the Visa application, booking my flight, doing the Toefl-Test and organizing my learning agreement, there were several things which had to be organized at the UNL. As a freshmen, (first-year student at the university) you can choose between living on campus or off campus. Remember, the UNL is a dry campus which means no alcohol on campus. I decided to live on campus because it is a lot easier to organize. You can choose between different dorms, which also vary in prices but also in standard. I chose a dorm with small apartment which has an own bathroom and is shared by 4 persons. Mine was Eastside Suites, but there are several. There are apartments with single rooms available but I shared a room with another girl from China. This is actually the only experience that I wish would have been spared to me. Living on campus also includes having a meal plan. I would recommend taking the 7 day meal plan as you can eat basically unlimited 7 days a week.

What we are not used to from Germany is that staff from the UNL takes care of you all the time. I arrived due to flight delays in the middle of the night but was still able to move into my room without any problems. From the next day on, a Wednesday, there were activities on campus to welcome the international students which took place until Friday, when activities for all freshmen started. The welcome week was a lot of fun and really nice. There was a lot of staff to take care of

us, show us around and made it easy for all international students to get into contact with each other and make a lot of friends.

Due to some difficulties with my class schedule, I had to change my classes and talk to an advisor, who was extremely helpful. I took four classes to achieve 12 credit points and although, it does not sound a lot, it actually is. This is due to the fact that the daily schedule in America is a lot different from the German one. 3 of my classes took place two times a week and one three times a week. In America, attendance is mandatory, which I was used to from Hanover but I was basically the only one. Also, classes in America require a lot of homework. They do not have only one final exam, there are various exams, papers, reading responses or quizzes throughout the semester, which keeps you busy. My English classes, which were a Short Story, a Poetry, a Digital Humanities and a Rhetoric Writing Class included a lot of reading plus quizzes about it and writing a lot of papers. If you also have to write papers, I can recommend the writing center, which is really helpful and for free.

But, a semester abroad does not only include studying. Lincoln, although it is pretty small, has a lot to offer. There are two shopping centers, a street with a lot of pubs and bars called O-Street, the Haymarket, which has restaurants and coffees but also on Sunday morning until October a farmers market. It is important to notice that bars, pubs, clubs etc. are only opened until 2 a.m. in America which is a bit unusual for us. During the fall break in October, I travelled to Chicago with some friends and during Thanksgiving I got the chance to experience real American Thanksgiving with a Family of a friend. If you have the opportunity to do that, join a family. It is really nice and Americans are always very open-minded, like to host guests and share their traditions.

Nebraska is a state without any professional sports team. Therefore, the College Teams are extremely hyped and supported. The New Student Enrollment organized an event at the beginning called Husker Gameday experience. The Huskers are the football team. This is an experience, you should not miss when going to the UNL. First of all, the stadium is huge and on game days, the whole city turns into red (Husker's Color). Also, the population of Lincoln doubles as so many people drive to Lincoln "only" for a college football game – it is totally crazy and absolutely unique:-) So, you should watch a Husker football game. I also watched a Basketball game and a volleyball game (women), which is also worth watching if you are interested in sports.

However, you can also experience concerts, which are sometimes free. There were speeches of famous people, comedians, poets, musicians etc.

Regarding sports, you can always visit the Rec Center, which is for free and work out, participate in group classes and do Intramural sports. For that you need to pay a bit. Intramural is kind of a university league sport. I played intramural sand volleyball with a mixed team. I would advise you to participate in a club sports if you are good at it. This is a level higher and usually you need to try out for the club. I tried out the volleyball club. It did not work out but therefore, I searched for other girls – international girls – and we joined together as an Intramural team for indoor volleyball. Also, there are various groups to join at the UNL e.g. acapella groups or more random groups like “Watching-squirrels-in-the-park-group.”

All in all, I can only recommend going abroad and although everybody might argue that Lincoln is too small, it actually is not. As opposed to the UNO (University of Nebraska-Omaha), which is only one hour away, a lot of Nebraskans from Omaha prefer Lincoln to Omaha for studying. A semester abroad is plainly an awesome experience. It made me realize people from other countries are not as different as they obviously seem. It let me grow in person and was an unforgettable experience. I made awesome new friends there and look forward to meet them again. Certainly, I am extremely thankful having had this opportunity and will always look back to these 4 months!



*Part of the football stadium at the first game*



*Me and some other international students before the game*