

Erfahrungsbericht

University of Nebraska Lincoln

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When I received the information in December 2014, that I will study one semester in Nebraska, I was really disappointed. Nebraska was not my first choice and I was hoping to go somewhere in the States where it is warm all year round, like California or Louisiana. Additionally, I had only two associations with Nebraska before I got there. The first association was a chapter in my English text book in 8th grade saying "Nebraska-the middle of nowhere". The second thing that came up in my mind was the character Penny from the tv series "Big Bang Theory" who came from Nebraska to California. In this tv series everyone talks about Nebraska as a farming state where nothing ever happens.

I accepted Nebraska because I definitely wanted to study in the United States for one semester and I did not want to take the risk that no other university would respond. I have family in the USA and have been there already three times before my semester abroad. I knew the country quite well and I knew what would expect me. After thinking about it for a while, I figured out that going to Nebraska is a great opportunity. No tourist from outside of the USA would come to Nebraska for vacation. So I would have never gone there, too, probably, if I would not have studied there. And Nebraska is really in the center of this country, the heart of the USA, and one experiences real America and the real Midwest.

First of all, I enjoyed my classes in Lincoln very much. I took undergraduate classes, their level was much easier in comparison to classes at German universities. This is due to a different educational system in the USA in general. From my personal estimation, what the professors at UNL expected from their students was not as specialized as in Germany. Still, as a student in the USA one has to study more frequently because much more tests take place during the semester than in Germany. Mainly these tests were multiple choice questions. But nonetheless, all professors were really motivated in their subjects and the contents of the classes were really interesting. Although I did not have as much to do at UNL in comparison to Hanover, I learned a lot and it was fun for me to read the books for my classes and listen to the professors. Also, when students or myself had any questions, all professors took their time to talk to students and were willing to help them in every way they can. Everyone was very friendly all the time.

I felt very comfortable in my dorm. I did not live in a normal dorm, I lived in a suite style apartment. This means, that I did not share a single room with one roommate, but I lived with three other American girls in an apartment with a living room area, a small kitchen, a bathroom and two double rooms. The suite style buildings are brand new in Lincoln, they are just two years old and the double rooms themselves were bigger than the double rooms in older dorm buildings. Additionally, I enjoyed it very much that we had a shared living room, that I knew the other three girls I shared a bathroom with and that not everyone from the whole floor used the same bathroom I used. It felt more like I lived in a "Wohngemeinschaft" like in Germany rather than in a dorm. The only thing I did not like in the apartment was the kitchen, because it was not a real kitchen. We had a big fridge, a microwave and a sink, but no stove and no oven. There was not really the opportunity to cook. My roommate I shared my room with was amazing, we got along really well. I hope I will stay in touch with her in the future and that we will meet again some time. She contacted me via the housing

portal already in spring 2015 and asked me, whether I would like to share a room with her. She used to have an exchange student in high school from Germany and she wanted to help me with everything she could help me with. She was a big support and I was lucky to have her as my roommate! The two girls who lived in the other room in my suite were not my best friends, but they were friendly and for the time I lived there we came along well and had no problems with each other.

The campus of the UNL was really nice, too. It was not as big as I expected it to be when I saw the campus map for the first time. All ways, to my classes or to the dining halls, were really short. The whole campus area was really clean and there were a lot of green spaces all around. Especially in summer and in fall, it was really nice to sit outside somewhere and especially with the coloured trees the whole atmosphere on campus was so warm and friendly. On campus was a fitness center, or, how they call it in Lincoln, a recreation center, which was very good and had very good offers for students. I have been to the rec center at least four times a week. That was necessary with all the surprisingly good food in the dining halls. I really expected it to be worse, but they had a really big offer and the atmosphere in the dining halls was as friendly as it was all around campus. I always met someone in the dining hall I knew, although I never knew in advance who this will be. Often, I spent two or more hours in the dining hall, just sitting there and talking to friends and people I met there and during the time more and more people joined. The dining hall was the most social place for me all around campus. Last but not least, the campus was located right next to downtown Lincoln. The way to all the bars was really short...

I did a lot of things in my pastime, I wanted to experience as much as possible. There was the New Student Enrollment which organized a trip to Nebraska City to the Apple Jack Festival or the International Student Fellowship Program, which organized e. g. a trip to the Henry Dorley Zoo in Omaha or a visit on a farm relatively close to Lincoln. But I also organized a lot on my own with the other international students I met in Lincoln. We had a really nice group with students from Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Sweden, Great Britain and Australia. We did for example one trip to Des Moines together, the capital of Iowa, to Kansas City, or to Colorado for skiing during Thanksgiving Break. Another student from Hanover came with me to Lincoln, Christina Peschke. We did a lot of travelling together. Before we arrived in Lincoln we spent one week in Chicago and during Fall Break we have been in San Francisco. I enjoyed all the travelling and all the trips a lot, no matter how far they were from Lincoln, and had so much fun! It was a great experience, too, to celebrate a real American Halloween in Lincoln. We all had costumes. I have also been to a Volleyball, a Basketball and of course an American Football game of the Nebraska Cornhuskers in Lincoln. If there is something the people in Nebraska care about, it is American football. They are crazy about this sport. I did not like American Football at all when I came to Lincoln, I thought that this sport is just stupid, but during my time there my attitude towards American Football changed a lot. I really did not expect that! Although I still prefer European Soccer, I enjoy watching American Football now and I was always excited when Nebraska played. I think, that if you spend one semester in Nebraska, you can not get not into American Football, no matter how hard you try. Besides watching all those sports and going to the Rec Center, I also joined the UNL Tango Club to dance Argentine Tango and I enrolled in West Coast Swing classes at a dancing school in Lincoln.

After returning to Germany I can say: I had the time of my life in Nebraska! I was really happy there and although I had classes at university, I did not feel the pressure I feel here in Germany as a student. I felt free, I just lived my life, I did almost everything I wanted whenever I wanted and I enjoyed every day so much. I met so many great people there and had a lot of fun with my new friends. I hope, I will stay in contact with many of them. The five months were running so fast and it felt like I have been in Lincoln for just a few days. If it would have been possible, I would have

extended my stay there, because I did not want to leave. Going to Nebraska was one of the best decisions I made in my life!