Choosing Semester in Amsterdam
I knew I wanted a program that would allow me to take classes that would count toward my major. Vrije University Amsterdam provides a lot of diverse neuroscience courses. Moreover, I was able to take an honor’s class called New Anatomy at Vrije University Medical School. This was a great opportunity to explore my career options. Furthermore, Semester in Amsterdam staff organized many trips around the Netherlands as well as in Amsterdam which helped me to explore the Dutch culture.

Honors College
Being part of the honor’s program at the Vrije Universiteit, I was the only non-Dutch student in the class which forced me to make connections, interact with Dutch students, and, thus, practice my Dutch language skills.

Educational Differences
I think that the biggest difference is the class size. Here at VU Amsterdam my classes usually have anywhere from 50 to 70 students. Furthermore, the grading system in the Netherlands is very different from the system in the US as the final grade is often based only on one final exam.

Got Wheels, Will Travel
Amsterdam is a vibrant and diverse city and I am so pleased I got to live so close to the city center which allowed me to explore all of the perks that the city had to offer. My favorite part of Dutch culture is the love of biking – it is really liberating to be able to go anywhere and not rely on public transport or driving. Plus it is a great exercise!

Go-To Places (Rain Dependent!)
Amsterdam is a really diverse city. Thus every time I wander through the streets I discover a new and exciting place. Nevertheless, over the semester I have found two places where I often go to when I have time. When the weather permits, I like to bike to Amstel Park to see the traditional Dutch windmill surrounded by cows and horses right next to a canal. When it rains, I like to go to Museumplein (museum square) where I can discover all of the wonders that the museums have to offer.