Application
I choose the Semester in Amsterdam program because I wanted to live and study in Amsterdam. Since my home university doesn’t have exchange agreements with Dutch universities, I applied for the Semester in Amsterdam programme as a free mover.

Dutch culture
Amsterdam is a really cozy, beautiful, and perfectly-sized city. Everything is within biking distance and the different neighbourhoods are fun to explore by bike (one exception is the city center, which I find too touristic and crowded). The Dutch people are some of the most friendly and straightforward people I have ever met. They are very helpful, direct, and honest in the way they communicate. I’m so thankful that the Semester in Amsterdam program gave me the opportunity to discover this lovely city, live among the welcoming Dutch people, and meet a lot of international students.

Campus feel
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam feels more like a community compared to my home university. People spend a lot of time on campus doing group work and studying as well as eating, chilling, and exercising. There is a brand-new fitness center on campus which I used often and the cafeteria offers a lot of different options including organic and vegetarian.

Academic structure
When it comes to the lectures and how the semester is structured, this is also totally different from back home. The semester is divided into three periods and each period is quite packed with lectures, assignments, readings, presentations, and exams. The quality of the teaching is high, and the professors are engaged and committed. I also think professors expect a lot from their students. Some students might find the work load heavy, but the benefit is that you gain in-depth knowledge.

Tips
Don’t leave your bike unlocked and unattended even for just a second! Bike theft is the most common crime in Amsterdam. Besides that, I only have good memories from my time in Amsterdam: a lot of good drinks at local breweries and nice bars, street food at the Foodhallen, Sunday jazz nights and chilling at Pilek, movies at the Eye and Tusinski, art-filled afternoons at Amsterdam’s many museums, picnics in Vondel Park, and much much more.