

University of Zagreb (UNIZG), Zagreb, Croatia

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Through a bilateral exchange program offered by Mississippi State, I was able to spend the entire spring semester at the University of Zagreb. Located in the capital city of Zagreb, Croatia, the university is the country's largest, with a wide range of faculties and opportunities for international students. While there, I was enrolled in four courses - Evolution, Invasive Species, Biological Oceanography, and Ecology of Subterranean Habitats - all within the biology faculty. Three of these courses involved practical components, which was an exciting opportunity for me to participate in field research, and the uniqueness of the subjects allowed me to explore aspects of biology which are not currently covered at MSU. As I was one of only two biology students taught in English, the one-on-two attention we received from our professors provided a novel and individualized way of engaging in the course material. Exploring topics such as biodiversity and global warming from another country's perspective truly shed light on those issues, and I now have more insight into what I would like to accomplish over my veterinary career.

In addition, living in another country for five months allowed me to genuinely immerse myself in the culture. I went to Croatia with no friends or family, and I essentially had to learn how to cope and adapt by myself. I lived with Croatian students in the dorms, and I actively participated in events held by the Erasmus Student Network, an organization designed to help international students connect with one another and their host countries. Over five months, I travelled to eight different countries, and none of the friends that I made were American. I was able to more fully appreciate the different aspects of culture, from the wide diversity of languages to the prevalence of certain ideals and modes of thought throughout the world. I am more confident in my ability to travel, to succeed, and to live on my own, and I am beyond grateful for the connections I made, not only with my professors, but with other students, now my close friends. I am incredibly indebted to the Honors College, and specifically the Provost Scholarship, for the funding I received. I would also like to thank the Office of Study Abroad for their support in this exchange. It was an unforgettable experience, and I view the world very differently as a result.