

Super student' fell in love with Utrecht

Jessica Dorsey is the first *EuroScholar* in Utrecht. *EuroScholars* is a unique programme which offers excellent students from the USA and Canada the opportunity to do research at a leading European university for six months.

At the University of Kansas, USA, Jessica (27) was one of the best international law students. With an average mark of 3.4 out of 4, she qualified for the *EuroScholars programme*. In September 2008, Jessica started her research semester and was supervised by Professor Ian Curry-Sumner of the Law Faculty. She participated in the International Child Maintenance Project and studied European legislation on child support after divorce. "In America, every state has the same child support rules, which means that if the father is going to live in another state than the mother and child, he still has to obey the same rules," says Jessica. Although the European Union is made up of countries instead of states, the American system could also be implemented here, believes Jessica. "I made an analysis as part of the research of Professor Curry-Sumner, which could eventually become a proposal to the European Union."

Jessica has finished her research semester and is now taking a Public International Law Master, also at Utrecht University. Surprisingly, this is not a research master: "A research master would take me another two years and it is about time I enter the 'real world'," explains the American student with a smile. "*EuroScholars* gave me a fantastic preview of academic research, but I prefer doing research for an NGO or an international tribunal."

Jessica feels 'very proud' to have been the first *EuroScholar* in Utrecht. "It is a chance not many students get. If this will give a real boost to my career will only become apparent after I have finished my studies. At least it is an addition to my CV," says Jessica modestly. With Jessica being the first 'super student', Utrecht University is a novice when it comes to the *EuroScholars programme*, says UU Programme Coordinator Caspar de Bok. "We deliberately decided to gradually take part in this programme in order to develop a well-organised structure before recruiting *EuroScholars* on a large scale."

Jessica will stay in Utrecht for the time being. She fell in love with the city. With a subtle American accent, she orders a hot chocolate and tells about her little dog, a terrier from the US, with which she is now sharing her new flat near the Wilhelminapark. "It is great to cycle through Utrecht in summer and to pass the busy outdoor cafes along the canal," she says with a twinkle in her eyes. "In the US, people are very focused on their work, here people enjoy life." She finds this a very pleasant attitude, which is peculiar for a top student who studies very hard, attends Dutch classes and trains with a Utrecht football club twice a week. "Utrecht is just so *gezellig*."

Mitra Nazar

The *EuroScholars Programme* offers students from universities in the USA and Canada the opportunity to do research at a leading European university for six months. "It is a customised programme," explains Utrecht University Coordinator Caspar de

Bok. “The student and his or her coach discuss the exact focus of the research.” Apart from international experience, *EuroScholars* also offers the chance to study at a top university. Participation costs €9,975 per semester; this includes accommodation and has to be paid by the students themselves.

More information: www.euroscholars.eu

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