Alyssa’s Major: Biological Aspects of Conservation, Spanish

Program: UW Ceiba Rainforest Ecology Field Expedition, Winter

Academic Life: We spent most of our time out in the field in the Amazon rainforest at Tiputini Biodiversity Station. My FIG and I designed mini research projects throughout the semester to carry out in Ecuador. The program was led by our UW professor, Catherine Woodward, who also taught our overarching seminar for the FIG.

Most Memorable Moment: Swimming in the Tiputini river with a few FIG girls when suddenly two pink river dolphins swam right next to us. It was amazing.

Housing: For the first couple of days, we stayed in a hotel in rural Tababela outside of Quito. We then spent the majority of the program at Tiputini Biodiversity Station in the Amazon rainforest. The station uses almost all biodegradable substances and even filters their own water. We stayed in cabin-type bunks.

Advice for Someone Considering Ecuador: Without a doubt do it! Quito was a blast and such a vibrant city. Tiputini was absolutely spectacular. How often do you get the opportunity to do a mini research project in the Amazon rainforest?

Impact on Career Plans: I have always been an environmentalist but since the program, I have been even more conscious about how I am impacting the environment. It helped me realize with certainty that I want to go into environmental research, and this has given me a little bit of experience.

“This program has made me more aware of the world. Let yourself experience everything that you can.”