Annalise’s Majors: Biology, Spanish

Program: UW Ceiba Rainforest Ecology Field Expedition for First Year Students, Winter

Academic Life: Although we had a “classroom” at the Tiputini Biodiversity station, this wasn’t where most of our knowledge was learned. Rather than sitting in a classroom reading about the rainforest, we spent our days and nights hiking and learning about plants, animals, fungi and ecological interactions while in the rainforest. At the end of the day, we were able to congregate in the small classroom at the biodiversity station and discuss what we’d learned throughout our daily activities. The non-traditional education experience was very successful!

First Impressions: “I have absolutely no idea what I’m getting myself into.” Those were my thoughts for the days leading up to the trip, but those thoughts were heightened when I finally touched down in Quito, Ecuador and the Andes surrounded me, as well as hundreds of people that didn’t speak English.

Study Abroad and Annalise’s Future Aspirations: While in Tiputini, we did small-group research projects. [This experience] helped me acquire scientific and reasoning skills that I likely wouldn’t have developed until later in my career/major. By challenging yourself, you’re able to develop skills you may not have developed within your comfort zone. With both research and study abroad under my belt as a freshman, I will stand out against many applicants when applying for the same position.

“Not many other freshmen at UW, or in the world, can say that they’ve done research in the Amazon. I feel so privileged to have had this opportunity.”