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

Rachel’s Major: Zoology

Academic Life: My academic experience in Ecuador was not typical. First, my learning environment was a small classroom at the Tiputini Biodiversity Station deep in the Amazon Rainforest. Our focus was on what research we were doing in the field as well as learning about the ecology and species of the rainforest. My professor from my FIG taught the classes, but we also had some special presenters that were famous researchers doing their work in Tiputini.

Advice For Someone Considering This Program: It is an incredible experience for anyone. Even if you think it’s not for you, it’s definitely something everyone should see and be able to learn about.

Housing: We stayed in the cabins at the Tiputini Biodiversity Station. It was fun sharing with all the girls from my FIG even though it was constantly hot and humid. The food at Tiputini was usually some vegetables, meat, and rice and all of it was incredible. We had access to swimming in the river, volleyball with the staff, hiking the trails, and more.

How Study Abroad Sets Rachel Apart: I have experienced things that people have only seen in pictures and my expectations have been shattered. I now know the Amazon on a personal level and understand so much more about it, as well as the people and culture of Ecuador.

Rachel’s Fieldwork: My fieldwork took place in the Amazon Rainforest. I was studying woolly monkeys. My group had to locate them and take data on their dietary habits. We followed them through the jungle and took as much data as we could in three days.

Rachel in front of the main ecosystem of the Andes Mountains called the Paramo.

“I grew so close to my FIG.”