

Jose Van Oosten, MSc International Development

Hear Jose talk about his experiences as an international postgraduate student at the University of Birmingham, including his involvement in the American Football team.

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My name's Jose van Oosten. I'm doing a Master's in International Development and I'm half Dutch, half Colombian.

I chose to study at Birmingham because for me it offered a great balance between being at the heart of a dynamic city, having a really large campus, a really large university with lots of activities, the politics department which I'm involved in is in the top ten of the country and of course, Birmingham is in the top three of the British University sports rankings, which is a big seller for me.

As an international student I find the University of Birmingham very welcoming. It's really easy to integrate here because you have so many different people from many different cultures. You get a lot of support from the academic staff and from services at the Guild and I think one of the best surprises was the campus, we get a really large, very green campus, like really close to the city centre.

I played American Football for a couple of years before I decided that I wanted to be on the committee, so this year I am Vice President and I find that it's a great opportunity to put back into the team everything that I've been taking out of the team. Obviously for me it means a lot so it's just my opportunity to try and lead the team to better things and I just find it very fulfilling.

Obviously American Football takes up a lot of my time but I find that you can always get involved into a lot of other things. So the Guild has many different societies from many different countries, like you have the Polish Society, the Latin American Society, you also have the academic societies, you have the debating society, the UN society, so really if you want to do something there probably is already a group there for you.

I think the best aspect of the city is the multi-cultural aspect, so you have lots of different people from lots of different countries and that is shown in, let's say you've got restaurants from all around the world, you've got a restaurant called Around The World in 80 Dishes, which says everything. You've got great shopping opportunities in the Bullring which is one of the biggest shopping malls in the UK and there's so many different attractions that you can enjoy.

So to an international student I would say take the leap, come and see for yourself what we have in store, I'm sure you won't be disappointed."