When I found out that UQ offered students the opportunity to go on exchange I jumped at the chance to study and live in a foreign country. I chose the University of California, San Diego for many reasons. UCSD is a world renowned university and is always highly ranked. The campus is also situated in beautiful La Jolla which is just a few minutes from the beach. The campus itself is great too (Fun Fact: The Geisel library was featured in the blockbuster “Inception”). UCSD is also host to many great concerts and events like Fall Fest, the Sun God Festival and many more.

UCSD runs on a quarter system (aka a UQ semester on steroids) which meant that I had my first exams in the third week. So try and stay on top of your work from day one!! This is not too difficult to do as lectures are relatively short and I had no tutorials so there is more than enough time to study and also have a social life.

The most rewarding part of my exchange by far was the friendships that I made whilst studying at UCSD. Living in I-House gives you the opportunity to live with both American students as well as other exchange students from around the globe. This experience allowed me to meet the coolest, most down to earth bunch of people that I otherwise wouldn’t have ever had the chance to meet. From road tripping to Vegas, to teaching my friends the art of ‘ghosting’, from seeing Ellen, Leno and high fiving Jimmy Fallon, watching Wicked on Broadway to just plain chilling out with friends there are so many great memories of my semester in America. It was such a wonderful experience and I would highly recommend it to anyone... it was so great that I am actually planning to go on exchange again!!!

Top Five Tips
1) Live in I-House!! The application process is tedious but it is so worth it!! This is the easiest place to make friends and there is always a party on in I-House!! I-Housers use any excuse to throw a party (they love Ugly sweater parties).
2) I received quite a surprise one morning when I was running on the beach closest to UCSD called Blacks Beach. It’s a nudist beach just to let you all know.
3) Take the opportunity to travel with friends around US. I went to Texas, LA, Vegas, Boston, New York, D.C, Florida and Canada. For any HP fan, make sure you go to Harry Potter World in Orlando and try the Butterbeer.
4) Americans and other foreign exchange students love Aussies, so an easy way to make friends is to unleash your inner ocker (They seem to love words like arvo and sheila)!
5) Go to Taco Tuesdays in Pacific Beach for cheap drinks and great Mexican (“World Famous” has the best Shrimp Tacos ever!).

From Top L-R:
In Las Vegas, Santa Monica Pier, Hogwarts aka Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Times Square New York, Museum of Natural History.