

## Field Report:

Thanks to the Marshall Plan Foundation and their financial support, I was able to do a six months' internship at the University of California in San Francisco (UCSF). UCSF was founded in 1968, by the surgeon Hugh Toland and consists of more than five different campuses distributed all over San Francisco, whereas the biggest are in Mission Bay and Parnassus Heights. I was working in the lab of Rosemary Akhurst, PhD in the Hellen Diller Family Cancer Comprehensive Centre in Mission Bay. Her lab works on the TGF-beta pathway and its effect in different diseases like cancer and HHT.

Firstly, I am thankful to Mrs. Akhurst and her whole lab team for giving me the opportunity to work in her lab. I learned a lot during the six months and gained a lot of experience in correctly and efficient planning of experiments, trouble-shooting, time-management and different scientific methods. Furthermore, I got the opportunity to make a certificate to be allowed to work with mice, which was a big opportunity for me as I would have been not able to do it over my home University. But most importantly I learned that working 40 hours in a lab with a good team can be funny. My colleagues at UCSF as well as the whole institution were integrating me in every activity and guided and accordingly helped me a lot during my internship. UCSF had also a lot of leisure time activities like social hours, literature club etc. which was a nice opportunity to meet new people and to experience the American culture. Thus, for students who want to do an internship in the scientific field I can just recommend UCSF and Mrs. Akhurst's lab.

Another reason for me to go abroad was to improve my English skills. I already gained a good level of English from studying in English only but I wanted to make it fluent especially in the context of scientific language. I can say that spending six months in an English-speaking country improves one's English skills better than your language course.

Additionally, I learned a lot about the American culture through on the one hand my organisation and on the other hand through my flatmates with whom I celebrated for example: 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Halloween and Christmas which gave me a good insight into the American culture and traditions. Furthermore, I could do a lot of trips like: Yosemite national Parc, Los Angeles, Las Vegas etc. which also gave me a good insight into the American

culture and which was a great experience. Furthermore, the understanding of another culture also helps oneself to understand the own culture better.

The most important value I gained was to gain independence and to find out which opportunities would interest me for my master degree about a later career pathway. I can only recommend doing an internship abroad as not only one improves one's language skills, but also learn self-reliance, gain independence and gain a greater knowledge of different cultures. Furthermore, UCSF is a great host organization, which has research projects not only in the field of cancer but also neuroscience, children's health, immunology etc.

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