

Virginia Davis: Field Report

My research stay in Kuchl, Salzburg, Austria was a wonderful experience. I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to travel abroad and explore what lies beyond the borders of the United States. Living and working in Austria allowed me to expand myself culturally in a way that I had not yet experienced.

The faculty and professors at the Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, Kuchl Campus were very knowledgeable within their field of study and were helpful when explaining the surrounding area and the best means of public transportation.

Although everyone at the University was welcoming when I arrived (specifically Ulrike Szigeti), it almost felt as if they were surprised by my arrival. I was not introduced to my faculty advisor, Professor Barbu, until a week after I arrived when we left to go on an excursion with some of the other Forest Products students. Because of Professor Barbu's extremely busy schedule, I had a difficult time setting up a meeting with him when we returned. When we did connect, I did not feel the meeting had a supportive tone.

After the initial meeting with my faculty advisor, I had a followup meeting with the head of the department, Dr. Petutschnigg, and a current masters student, Thomas Kastenhuber. In this meeting we established the local Wood Processing companies that would be contacted for my research and a rough timeline for my research. Unfortunately, I was not provided with a workspace at the University, and as a result, did most of my work from my apartment. From that point moving forward I had minimal contact with my advisor and the University in general. I did not feel like I was an included part of the day-to-day life at the University and felt like I was almost forgotten about. I did not feel supported by the University. While my expectations of support and inclusion in the University may have been off-target, I based my expectations on my personal experience and involvement with the Marshall Plan Students hosted by the University of Tennessee.

For future Marshall Plan Students and Fellows I would recommend scheduling your trip around the semester dates at Salzburg University of Applied Science. Although I greatly enjoyed my experience and time in Austria, I feel it would have been enhanced had I been there at a time when the rest of the students were also there and not on summer break.

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