

Field report

I did my practical training semester at the California Pacific Medical Center Research Institute in San Francisco from July 2016 to January 2017 and the title of my research project was "Determining the role of miRNA-876 in the regulation of melanoma progression".

My overall impression of my research period was very good. Everybody in my research institution was very nice and helpful, also the people of other labs. If I had any questions I could always come to anybody who was around to ask for help. My supervisor was also very nice, he supported me a lot and showed me everything I needed to know. Every day in the morning we sat together to plan the work that needed to be done and every Monday we roughly reviewed the plan for the whole week. I also had nice coworkers who supported me whenever I needed something. Sometimes we split the work to either finish a bit earlier or to start with something else so that we could get a bit more done in one day.

The California Pacific Medical Center is not the biggest research institution but exactly this creates a really familiar atmosphere where it is really nice to work in. Nearly everybody knew each other and as soon as I arrived there I got integrated in the lab community. In the beginning the people wanted to know where I came from and how long I was staying and as soon as we knew each other we talked about everyday stuff. I became friends with some people there quite easily. After work we sometimes went for a drink or a walk through the city as this was my first time in San Francisco and actually my first time in the United States ever.

My work was well organized and everything was at least roughly planned. If something didn't work we had to change our plans either a bit or completely but this happened nearly never.

I didn't only enjoy my time in the laboratory but also my leisure time was very exciting. I explored the city with some friends, made trips to famous places like Alcatraz or the Yosemite National Park, rode the Cable Cars and made bike tours across the Golden Gate Bridge. I had a really good time there and the fact that everything in my project worked out and I got some good results, made my stay in the United States perfect.

I would recommend future Marshall Plan students not to be afraid to take the chance to go to the States. It is a huge opportunity and could maybe open you the door to an international career. In the beginning it might seem really tough, especially if it's the first time for somebody abroad, but I can guarantee that it is worth it.