

**Field Report**  
**Marshall Plan Scholarship research stay**

**by Franziska Hübl**

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University: Carinthia University of Applied Science  
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Internal Supervisor: **Gernot Paulus**

Host University: University of Florida – IFAS  
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External Supervisor: **Dr. Hartwig Hochmair**  
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Project title: “Analysis of Migration Patterns of Refugees using Geotagged Tweets”

Project duration: 29.2.2016 – 30.5.2016

### **General impression of the research stay abroad**

Having the possibility to work on a project and my bachelor thesis at the University of Florida was a great honor. The process of getting all formalities done was in fact not difficult for me, because I also got great support from the host University's administration. The University offered me to stay at one of the student houses directly at the campus, including all necessities to live and study. All other things like managing purchase or enjoying free time were managed together with other student at the student houses. To form a car pool was a common thing and I got integrated right away. The people at the campus were in general very nice and open-minded. The country itself is full of extremes, very different from Europe, but I got easily used to Florida's mentality and structures and I would love to visit again.

### **Quality of the host institution**

I am able to rate the quality of the host institution as high, because of its general engagement and its focus on research and actual happenings. The technical status seems to be up-to-date. The University itself also provides especially for PhD candidates and interns two grad student houses to stay for at least one year. The geomatics institute in Fort Lauderdale itself also provides the opportunity to join talks

and lectures. All projects overseen by Mr. Hochmair are basically focusing on doing research in the field of massive data analyses based on spatial volunteered and free data and the use of open source GIS software. In my opinion it is a great research field. The provided office is mostly used by PhD candidates and therefore gives good opportunities to ask for help or discuss problems in matters of the own research. Mr. Hochmair also used to visit at least twice a week to check the research progress and to discuss and answer open questions. So all in all my impression of the host institution is very positive.

### **Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows**

Fort Lauderdale itself is really spaciouly arranged, so going by car is necessary. To go by bike is not recommendable, at least not in the city and the surrounding area, because of the very narrow and sometimes not existent bike lanes and a high frequent traffic. To go by feet requires a good sun blocker and the will to sweat, especially in summer. There is also a possibility to drive per Uber, an inexpensive hailed shared taxi. To explore the country it is the best to rent a car. Springtime in Florida is very pleasant. I would recommend to visit the Everglades, at that time mostly mosquito less, and to get a cultural shock, the annual rodeo around March at Moore Haven. Near Miami there are also a lot of sport and cultural activities to visit, e.g. ice hockey games or music festivals directly at the beach. The nightlife at Downtown Fort Lauderdale and Miami South Beach is also highly enjoyable, because of the great amount of young people, good music and the common approach to dance the whole night. But don't forget to bring an ID with you! For longer stays in the US I also recommend to get a US phone number, because Wi-Fi is outside of the campus not everywhere available. Getting cash always indicates a fee, so the best way to pay is to use a credit card. To have a power socket adapter to follow US standards is also essential.