

To: **Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation**

Marshall Plan fellow: **Aleksandar Jovanovic**

Title: **Field Report-** Stay at Cornell University, Energy Institute, July 11th, 2016-January 10th, 2017

General impression of the research stay abroad

Since the arrival at Cornell, my stay was dynamic and challenging, but at the same time fruitful and enriching. The whole working environment at Cornell is perfect for dedicated PhD students and undergraduates who want to get to know the different aspects of campus life which Cornell has to offer. Student life at the location is vibrant: campus is located on a hill, above the city of Ithaca, which has a variety of amusing locations. The surrounding of Ithaca is interesting and one can enjoy walking, biking, hiking and kayaking. Meeting different academics within the campus, coming from all nations in the world, is a unique experience. Cornell library and loan system is fantastic, there are several departments (Olin, Uris and Mann library and a Rare Collection library, not counting the institutes' separate libraries). One can get valuable and rare books for PhD writing, like for example from Harvard or John Hopkins 'University within their inter-library borrow system in just a few days. Different institutes offer a variety of lectures on all sorts of topics: Economy, Asian studies, humanities, arts and engineering, among other. These lectures are free for PhD students and they benefit the thesis as they help in extending the spectrum of the research.

Quality of the institution

Cornell University is an Ivy-league University, which has privately owned institutions and publicly owned ones. I was working at the Energy Institute, which was located at Snee Hall, in the central College Town. The institute is led by a CROLL Professor J.W. Tester, a leading expert in geothermal research. Apart from the institute and its employees, the whole environment of Cornell is one of the best educational environments in the U.S. when it comes to the quality of studies. Regular PhD students at Cornell are employed and receive salary and medical insurance coverage by successfully working and writing their thesis at the end. Publications are appreciated, as well as quality of the research, however most important aspect is the relation Supervisor-Ph.D. student and support of the student's own independent research as a premise for successful completion. Professors are therefore highly selective in choosing candidates with whom they want to work for four or more years. Generally, acceptance rate at Cornell is less than 10 %, at the undergraduate level. Only the highly qualified undergraduates get a chance to study further. International students are welcome. Accepting exchange students is made by even more

rigorous selection criteria than regular PhD student, due to limited resources and is based purely on the quality, references and publication and research work of the candidate. I was honoured by being chosen by the Energy Institute to be part of their PhD students team for the period of six months.

Inclusion in the institution and contacts within

I was working in a team of some seven people, on a project of sustainable redevelopment of post-industrial cities in New York State. The team consisted of several professors and PhDs and a couple of graduate students like myself. It was a multidisciplinary team, that consisted of architects, engineers, natural science professors and students. Each week during the six months of my stay, we used to have meetings, where we would discuss the issues of renewable energy use in the city of Utica, NY and then we would have conference calls with other institutions and companies that are involved with the project. It was very beneficial for me coming from the architectural field, to be able to be integrated in the team, share my own views about sustainability and learn a lot from the other fields related to redevelopment with geothermal and other renewable sources. I had at least one of the professors working with me on my papers and reports all the time during the stay. We also had conducted a small presentation at the city hall and a conference poster presentation at the ARIT 2016. While writing the findings of my expert interviews in the U.S. I had the complete support of the professors' team at Cornell and beyond. I also received encouragement to attend webinars, other conferences at Cornell and to be part of the academic life at Cornell through different social engagements. This definitely contributed to my integration at the University and to the success of my results until after the end of my stay and beyond. I had a computer desk at my institute and was fully integrated with other PhD students from different fields. The institute was supportive of social integration of us all and sponsored some trips on the weekends. All people at Cornell are dedicated to what they do within their research however this is not a burden to them, as they act like any other casual office.

Recommendation for other Marshall Plan fellows and candidates

MC Grill tower is worth visiting as well as Johnson's Art Museum. As to social integration, Big Red Barn on Fridays is the gathering for graduate students all year round. Many music activities and lectures, as well as social events are enrichment to the study. Cornell fitness programs for students and staff offer a variety of courses and gyms function perfectly throughout the campus. Medical insurance coverage functions different than in Europe. Buying a better medical plan pays-off, in case needed.

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