

Juliet Baidoo

## Marshall Plan Scholarship Summer 2017 Research Experience Report

Being awarded the Marshall Plan Scholarship was a great honor. Although I had been abroad to conduct research at Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm during the summer of 2015, I felt I did not get much from it due to some circumstances beyond my control. I was therefore extremely excited when I was given this opportunity. I was a bit concerned, as the work I had proposed to do was not directly related to my research back in the US. However, I was looking for something slightly related to but different that will enable me to have a different perspective of my work back home, and this was perfect.

I stayed at Milestone throughout the summer. I was in a single room with a well-equipped kitchen and bathroom. I liked this because it was very convenient to use at any time of the day and provided a good sense of security knowing that no one will touch your food. The only down side about this was that it did not provide the socialization that came with using a communal kitchen. The building had a fitness center, which was accessible throughout the day using your key card. Social events such as yoga classes, salsa lessons, and parties were held to offer more avenues for socialization. It was overall a beautiful, clean, and serene environment, which provided a healthy living condition for all who dwelled there.

Upon my arrival in Dr. Bogner-Strauss's lab, I was welcomed by one of the lab technicians who introduced me to everyone in the lab. I was then given a tour around the labs and educated on the lab rules. I was very impressed with the facilities and the lab practices as I am a firm believer of research success being mainly dependent on the resources available to work with and the maintenance of sterility in areas that required it such as cell culture room; this lab did not disappoint at all. After this, I had a meeting with Dr. Bogner-Strauss and she briefed me on what I will be working on for the duration of my research in her lab and provided me with some papers to read in order to help prepare me for the task ahead. It was just what I had hoped for. Interestingly, the lab was having a social day where the entire lab members were going out for dinner together. I was invited to join. This was wonderful as it provided me with a less formal environment to get to know the people I was going to spend the next three months with. We had a wonderful time and by the end of the day, I felt as though I had known my new lab members for more than just a few hours; I already felt at home.

With my acquired research skills, and the assistance from my lab mates, transitioning into the work was a breeze. Although I must confess, I had a few failed experiments. But the truth is, it was expected as I believe that research without a downhill slide is not worth pursuing as it presents no challenges or room for improvement. With our weekly or biweekly group meetings, I was able to learn more about what every student was working on in the lab.

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During my stay in Graz, I visited a few tourist sites and tried the famous Viennese schnitzel as well as, the Styrian schnitzel with pumpkin seed and pumpkin seed oil accompanied with a pumpkin soup, it was delicious! I also took advantage of touring a few places in Europe and visited Budapest and Venice, and a few cities in Austria. The cultural experience was endless, from trying on a traditional Styrian Dindl, tasting food from different countries, and visiting castles. Enjoying a musical concert night in Venice with the orchestra playing Vivaldi's Four Seasons was unbelievably magical!

I had an amazing time this summer and very grateful to the Marshall Plan Scholarship Foundation for making this possible as I enjoyed all these mind-blowing experiences without paying a dime from my pocket. What more could a student want?

I hope students who qualify for this incredible opportunity will take advantage of it and indulge entirely in the experience, as it is priceless.

For future inquiries regarding my stay in Austria, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at [Juliet.Baidoo@gmail.com](mailto:Juliet.Baidoo@gmail.com).