



Marshallplan-Jubiläumsstiftung  
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## **FIELD REPORT**

by

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for

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With the financial support of the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation I had an opportunity to spend 8 months at Department of Pharmacology and Neurosciences at University of California, San Diego, as part of my mandatory internship. I've joined the laboratory whose Principal Investigator is Richard Daneman. The research group is focused on the blood-brain barrier (BBB), mainly on formation, maintenance and mechanism of BBB disruption during disease. I started working on my own project from the start. We had some preliminary data involving genes that are upregulated at BBB during neurological disease. My project is focused on one of those genes, specifically investigating its role in BBB breakdown. In the first two months I worked closely with another PhD student, who taught me all the necessary techniques. My PI was very involved in the project from the start. I had a meeting with him every week where we discussed the progress, data and future experiments. I usually presented him my own ideas and conclusions and then he provided me with some guidance on what was the best next step. His input and trust allowed me to become a better researcher and eventually handling the whole project by myself. Furthermore, every week we had a lab meeting, where each time someone from the lab presented their work. It was a great way to get informed about what my colleagues were doing, and to get some new ideas, since all the work in the lab is somehow connected. I've also learned how important it is the way you present your data and became better at it. I couldn't wish for a better work environment. I am grateful for all the people in the lab, they were always willing to help me with anything and we became very good friends. My PI is wonderful, always making a great vibe in the lab. We also did a lot of fun things as a lab together outside the lab.

UC San Diego is the seventh oldest of the 10 University of California campuses and offers over 200 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, enrolling about 22,700 undergraduate and 6,300 graduate students. UC San Diego is a highly regarded research institution, ranked 14th in the world by the Academic Ranking of World Universities and 15th in U.S. News & World Report's 2017 global university rankings. I am still amazed at how enormous the UCSD is not just the campus area but all the different schools, departments, laboratories, people. It is covering so many research fields that you can really choose what interests you. It also holds a lot of events, conferences, seminars, meetings, where different topics are presented and a lot of opportunities to expand your social network. I had an opportunity to meet and connect

with people working in research for a longer time than me. It is nice to see how far some of them got in terms of developing their project and to get different perspectives on how to achieve that. I can see now, that you need to possess a lot of skills that aren't just practical, which take time and devotion to develop. Looking back to when I started working, I am much better at just thinking and planning experiments, data analysis, making conclusions and time management. I got a glimpse at how invested you have to be in leading your project. I've expanded my knowledge about pharmacology and neuroscience as well, by listening to presentations and by researching on my own.

To all the future Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation fellows; this is an unique opportunity for you that can influence greatly your future career path. Learn as much as possible from your colleagues and be very invested in your project. Join conferences, seminars, meetings and connect with people working in your field. Make the most of it wherever you are and don't forget to have fun.

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