

Field Report

General impression of the research stay abroad

Research in the USA is conducted very differently compared to European research. There is a constant fight about new grants which very much occupies principal investigators. However, the huge variety of grants enables researchers to explore.

Quality of the host institution

The host institution focuses on applied, translational research on the highest scientific level. The institution is the only NIH (National Institutes of Health) institution in Florida and is connected to a hospital where clinical trials are carried out and patient samples are collected. These samples are subsequently analyzed using novel technology to guarantee the best medical outcome for patients. Additionally, some principal investigators are clinicians, who stay in contact with patients on a daily basis. The image that is conveyed at the Moffitt Cancer Center is that the direct connection to the patients reminds scientists of how impactful their research can be, which ultimately underscores the courage and ambition of those who dedicate their lives to biomedical research. Moreover, an area of focus at Moffitt Cancer Center is the pursuit of high-end method development, which was one reason for me to join such a thriving and interesting research facility.

Contacts within the host institution

Supervisor

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International coordinator

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I mainly performed wet lab work during my stay at Moffitt. Additionally, I acquired advanced skills in bioinformatics analysis and improved data display. Within the first weeks I was trained by one of the PhD students and later I was working on my own project.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

My supervisor at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center conducted his Post Doc at the institution I was working at during my Master's program. He had experience with students from universities of applied science from Germany and when I asked if I could join his lab, he seemed very enthusiastic about having someone to work on a project that had been set aside for some time.

In contrast to my rather simple Master position application process, the visa process proved to be a challenge. Documents that are required for the application were scattered on various homepages, with only little support and guidance by the host institution.

When I first arrived in Tampa, FL, I visited the Moffitt Cancer Center and was introduced to all the lab members. I started working on my project right away, which felt very pleasant for me. The next ten months were then comprised of wet lab work, bio-computational analyses and weekly lab meetings to catch up on the projects of other lab members. Coffee breaks, poster presentations, lab celebrations and other occasions were perfect opportunities for socializing with other lab mates and increasing my occupational network.

Going abroad is always a big decision, however taking the step of moving to the USA for ten months left me with persisting impressions that I never want to miss. You will get to know people with a diverse background, experience your everyday life in a different way and get in touch with other working styles and mentalities.

Contact e-mail after completion of research stay

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