

Field Report about my stay aboard

General impression of research period abroad

In the period of the research period, incredibly important life experiences could be taken along. The independent life in a foreign country shaped my personality in the long term. Through the daily use of the English language a completely new language feeling could be developed and possible personal language barriers left behind. Through my 4-month stay I was able to immerse myself in American life. I absorbed everything I noticed or what was different compared to lifestyle. Everyday life in America takes over quickly, from student life on campus to daily grocery shopping. Since I lived in San Luis Obispo, I was able to visit some well-known cities due to my research work. From the northernmost destination Vancouver (Canada) to Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Palm Springs, San Diego to Tijuana (Mexico) which led me to my southernmost point. I was able to practically study all these cities and get a comprehensive picture of the American West. If I hadn't had this experience, my thesis would only be based on theoretical knowledge.

Quality of the host institution

I was allowed to visit Cal Poly University in San Luis Obispo during my research period. It quickly became clear that the American universities had a lot to offer. From huge libraries to sport halls and stadiums. Cal Poly University also has a myriad of courses and departments. I was able to work with an phenomenal supervisor at the famous "City and Regional Planning Department". This gave me not only access to books

and online information but also "inside" information about which cities would be important to visit. The incredible hospitality and helpfulness of my supervisor has strengthened my decisions and helped me a lot. The intensive contact left a lasting positive memory.

Contacts within host institution / integration in the organization

The organizational part was somewhat more extensive than expected. However, the host institutions were always very helpful and endeavored to process them quickly, however, certain bureaucratic processes took a little longer, for example the original DS2019 form had to be submitted to the American embassy. The postal route from the USA to Austria must be observed. However, the International Affairs Office in San Luis Obispo forwarded everything in time, so I got my visa two days before my departure. The part of the J1 visa should not be underestimated, you are on your own, but I was able to ask former students and the Office of International Affairs and the helped me aswell. However, you save yourself a few questions when applying for the J1 visa if you already have a B1 visa.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan Students/ Fellows

In retrospect, I would request early contact with the host university. This means that certain things can be dealt with earlier or faster. It was also fundamental to deal intensively with my thesis topic before I started the semester abroad - so you can concentrate on the main topic "field research" on site. Make

a plan of what you want to achieve while enjoying your stay. Identify important points / meetings as early as possible and be in constant contact with both supervisors (Home University and Host University). Due to the time difference, you can lose touch with Europe here and there.

I advise all prospective students of the Marshall Plan scholarship to exchange socially into the American environment. Be sure to be part of meet-and-greet days, on these days you get to know most of the students / professors.

Manuela Kljajic, 2019

