

**Personal account / report by DI Maximilian Platzer, MSc**  
**MPS-scholarship**  
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### **1) Overall impression of the research period**

*Due to the collaboration of the University of applied sciences Salzburg and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, I was given the chance to attend a double masters degree in the field of forestry/forest products technology and management, as well as wood-based products and wood science technology.*

*During the time I spent at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, I had the opportunity not only to study abroad but dealing with a research topic that focuses on a sustainable method of energy production. My thesis, the Simulation Model of the "Bio-depot" Concept in the Context of Components of Variance and the "Taguchi Loss Function" – deals with the introduction of an intermediate step to the supply chain of second-generation biofuels, namely the "Bio-depot". The research topic requested and therefore, enabled me to attend courses concentrating on statistics, econometrics, business analytics, and engineering. The gained knowledge allowed me to combine and apply techniques and theories on my research. The professors I've met throughout my education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville were mostly helpful and encouraging. It seemed to me that the lecturers were not only passionate about their topics but were also highly interested in inspiring students to develop new ideas.*

*My research period at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville was without a doubt highly challenging. Looking back at the time, the challenge helped me to develop my character and knowledge in many fields.*

### **2) Quality of the research institution**

*The University of Tennessee, Knoxville hosts about 28,000 students not only from the United States of America, but from around the globe. Since I've attended several courses in different departments, I had the chance to see most places on UT-campus. The campus itself is a very clean and well-organized area. UT provides excellent infrastructure and on-campus activities. Throughout the time I spent there I saw a tremendous amount of construction arising on campus. UT invests a lot to ensure high quality education, and student's well being. I did my research at*

*the Center for Renewable Carbon (CRC). The CRC is an internationally recognized leader in the development of new and/or improved bioenergy sources, biorefinery processes, bioproducts, and biomaterials that coordinates the science, knowledge transfer, and trains the workforce required to develop a sustainable and economically viable bioeconomy. The institution offered excellent office space areas and state of the art laboratories. I was allowed to access the center on every day of the week, which was especially helpful during exam periods.*

*All in all was the working and studying experience at the CRC and UTK exciting and informative.*

### **3) Integration in the research institution/organization**

*The CRC stands for a very professional and highly productive working environment. The first few days were used to introduce me to the guidelines, regulations, and standards of the center. From that stage on it was highly interesting to adapt to the regulations and work with other researchers from the department. Besides the bureaucracy of the University, research based communication was straightforward. Professors, researchers, and staff were very welcoming, understanding, and helpful.*

### **4) Recommendations for future MPS scholars/fellows**

*Future MPS students should make sure to have a reliable person at their future research location, before they start their trip. This person should have insight on the regulations of the university and country concerning foreign students. Most universities have international houses (departments). However, in my case this option was very unsatisfying. The international house (IH) at UT didn't really seem to provide sufficient information. I always had the problem with insufficient paperwork, which was the fault of the IH.*

*Former students of the future research institution often offer their services to help new students. I talked to former students and they were pleased to help me when I had issues with something.*