



FIELD REPORT

By order of the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation

The impact of a personal monitoring device with smart-cueing on progressive postural variation, sedentary time and associated health outcomes

Subtopic:

Implementation of the Application and Human-Machine Interaction

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Date of Submission:

Berkeley, on the 22th of February 2018

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1. General impression of my stay abroad

Here are some impressions which I have collected or experienced during my stay abroad:

Welcoming phrases: Phrases like "How are you today?" Or "How is it going?" are meant for Americans as a kind of welcoming. The actual state of well-being in this context is not relevant for them.

Homelessness: Homelessness is a very big topic in the Bay Area. So you can see homeless people and their „dwellings“ almost everywhere. Unlike in Austria, however, there is no social system in America that can cushion such cases. So you see every day people who have lost everything and have little opportunity to get out of this misery, which was very sad and thoughtful for me.

The public transport system: The public transport system is less developed in America than in Europe. This can be attributed to political as well as industrial interests. The main means of transportation in America is therefore the car or the airplane. Based on this, massive traffic jams and traffic disruptions occur during the rush hour.

Tuition Fees: Tuition fees at UC Berkeley are \$10,000 per semester for US citizens and \$40,000 for those who are not US citizens. If you add up the monthly living costs up to \$ 3,000 per month, it becomes clear that studying in America is a very expensive affair. Unlike in Austria, where it is theoretically possible for anyone to study, studying in America requires very strong financial support from parents. Alternatively, there are so-called student loans, which must be repaid but after the completion of the studies.

Taxes + Tips: It was very unusual that, for example, when paying for food in the supermarket or the food in the restaurant taxes were added. These taxes vary in each state, in California they were about 10%. In addition to the taxes, it a tip is also common in America, which is up to 15-20%. It makes a visit in a restaurant unexpected expensive. However, one is forced to give the waiters sufficient tips, since these are almost exclusively paid by them.

Working day: The average working day in America starts between 9 and 9:30 am and ends at 6 pm in the evening. Employer's holidays are not very common in America, but most public holidays in America fall on a Friday or Monday, that allows extended weekend trips.

American patriotism: Despite all the problems in America, the average American is very proud of his country. This is particularly clear through flags and stickers that adorn the houses, cars and even their clothes.

Sports events: Sports events such as the Superbowl play a very important role in America, some are even seen as unofficial holidays. Especially interesting is that even games of your own university are very supported. At UC Berkeley it's the California Golden Bears, the highlight of the year here is the football game against Stanford, it's also referred to as the so-called "Big Game" and alludes to the rivalry between Berkeley and Stanford.

2. University of California, Berkeley

UC Berkeley is one of the most prestigious universities in the world and has produced many Nobel Prize winners in its nearly 150-year history. Unlike the private competitors (Stanford, Harvard, Yale, etc.) UC Berkeley is a state university. It offers over 35,000 students a very wide range of courses and specializations. The campus of the university includes many impressive buildings, parks and is located in the downtown area of the city. The city of Berkeley has approximately 115,000 inhabitants and is located in northern California, more specifically on the east side of the San Francisco Bay Area. It is within sight of San Francisco and the famous Golden Gate Bridge. San Francisco, 15 km away, is easily accessible by public transport. In addition, California offers with its national parks, beaches and interesting cities numerous excursions.

The UC Berkeley Ergonomics Laboratory is located at Richmond Field Station of the UC Berkeley in Richmond, California. It is located west of Highway 580, approximately four miles north of Berkeley's main campus. The UC Berkeley facility investigates risk factors for chronic upper limb musculoskeletal disorders and evaluates hand tools and other technical solutions to prevent these disorders. A major focus of research is the understanding of the biomechanics of hands and arms during computer use. The laboratory of the program covers 3,000 square meters of research area.

3. Contacts within the host Institution

The care was provided by Carisa Harris Adamson, who is also the board member of the UCSF/UCB Ergonomics Research and Graduate Training Program, and the professor of my home university Martin Zauner.

The cooperation with other employees was very intense, every Monday there was a three-hour meeting about the individual project progress. In addition to the work, we also did private events with our supervisor, for example, we were invited to their birthday and Thanksgiving, where we were allowed to spend a traditional Thanksgiving for the first time.

4. Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellow

There are plenty of things to do in the Bay Area, from exploring the city of San Francisco (such as the Museum of Modern Arts or Alcatraz Prison) to weekend trips to Yosemite National Park or Lake Tahoe. Public holidays in America usually fall on a Friday or Monday, so a 3-day weekend trip is readily available. In addition, San Francisco is the ideal starting point for a road trip along the west coast all the way to Mexico. A trip to Hawaii is also highly recommended, as the flights are relatively cheap with just under \$ 200 per flight.

Another noteworthy point is living in Berkeley. The housing situation in Berkeley is very tense, so it may be that you pay for a room about \$ 1500 a month or even for fake deals. We recommend staying in a hostel or Airbnb for a limited time and looking for a suitable place to stay on the spot. Good sources here are Craigslist or various Facebook Offhousing groups.