

Field Report

General impression of your research stay abroad:

At College for Creative Studies (CCS) in Detroit I spent two semesters in major Interaction Design working on my Master's thesis "Inclusion for Autonomous Transportation". College for Creative Studies created great conditions for me to work on my Master's thesis, do necessary research and develop interaction designs. My supervisor, Paul Pangaro, Chair of Interaction Design at my host University set up weekly thesis reviews, was available anytime on requests and organized advisory meetings with external and independent advisors from Industry, other Department Chairs and Universities three times a semester.

Paul Pangaro provided necessary support in terms of registration for classes recommended or desired from my side for the better thesis research and development. Mr Pangaro and the College Committee provided their Virtual Reality Lab that was available for VR testings under tutor supervision or accompanied by peer students.

The advisors at the monthly advisory meetings gave advice how to improve and where to find necessary sources for the thesis research. In Detroit I was able to find many opportunities to network. I attended automotive conferences, talked to Rehabilitation Center and VA Hospital representatives as well as attended VR meet-ups and other events. That helped me to collect feedbacks on my thesis topic and learn new insights from different stakeholders. Paul Pangaro and the College in Detroit were supportive in finding new contacts and giving enough freedom to be creative and attend events that were beneficial for education.

Quality of the host institution:

College for Creative Studies is known for a high student performance. The College gave me enough sources to be productive and motivated. I improved my individual skills in coding, designing interfaces and using research methods. The College staff is very knowledgeable and supportive. During the first "International orientation week" organized by CCS I was introduced to the College culture, the city itself and safety rules. The peer mentors were always available for any questions and concerns. The school sent out weekly emails about different activities and events. The school provided an on-campus housing on early request and it was very convenient. The CCS shuttle service runs between campuses/on campus housings.

Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization:

At CCS I had no limits to get to know my peer mentors, fellow students, instructors, department chairs, international offices and any other institutions I needed. I was able to participate in classes, events and felt free to give a feedback by the end of the semester end and express my concerns any time to the department chair. I was introduced and fully integrated into the CCS life.

Recommendations for the future Marshall Plan students and fellows:

I am glad that I had a chance to write my Master's thesis at College for Creative Studies and be a Marshall Plan Scholar.

I received a lot of support during that time from my home University FH-Joanneum in Graz, from my host University College for Creative Studies in Detroit and Marshal Foundation.

The stay at CCS was a unique experience for me. The motor-city offers a lot of opportunities to explore and to feel welcomed.

I have some recommendations for the future Marshall Plan students and fellows. Start early enough with the application process. It takes some time to manage the bureaucracy work.

I recommend to live on campus and not off campus. It is very safe and convenient. You won't have to worry about night travels after lectures since the shuttle transportation will bring you to the University and back to your on-campus-housing. The campus safety makes sure you and your fellows will stay safe. Begin your research about the topic you want to work on as early as possible. It might slightly change and you will need some time to adjust the content and find new helpful sources. Be self motivated. Ask for help and advice but explore the opportunities on campus and outside of the campus a lot on your own. The University approved my desire to attend many thesis related events that I found by myself. They will support your engagement.