

Marshall Plan Scholarship Field Report

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Home institution: Management Center Innsbruck

Host institution: University of California, Santa Barbara

General impression of the research stay abroad

In general, the research stay abroad was a great experience. Even though it demanded a high degree of self-organization, discipline and responsibility, it greatly expanded my scientific knowledge but also let me grow personally. Doing full-time research at an American institution was completely different compared to my home university and gave me a great insight on the American university system and their culture.

The Americans are generally very nice and friendly people who are always willing to help and it was easy to befriend with them because they are very open and interested. Besides great research institutes, the United States are a beautiful country that offer a wide range of free time activities. Thanks to the help of the Marshall Plan Foundation, my home and host institution I experienced a lot of support and had no problems at all during my entire research stay.

Quality of the host institution

The University of California at Santa Barbara is known as a great research university with a high reputation and research impact. The several laboratories and research centers on campus are equipped with state-of-the-art technologies for every field and enable researchers to conduct research with the use of the best machines and technologies available. My host lab was supplied with all materials and machines I needed and it was therefore great to design and conduct experiments on my own. Also, the experienced researchers in my lab helped me a lot and taught me the most important lab techniques. Generally, the faculty members and researchers were always willing to help and cooperate. All departments have their own employees responsible for all kinds of services and solved every occurring problem such as visa processing, IT-issues, building access and many more quickly. UC affiliates can use all facilities on campus such as the library, the gym, rental services etc. for free or in exchange for a small fee. The campus in general is beautifully maintained and offers a wide range of restaurants, cafes and other shops.

Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization

The University of California, Santa Barbara hosts many international interns, students and scholars every year and organizes many events especially for internationals. In the beginning, they offer various orientation meetings what makes it easy to network and connect with other internationals. During my stay, I attended many festivities and trips organized by the Office of International Scholars, whose employees are highly concerned to integrate all internationals and help them with every issue there might be. Speaking of my lab, I was a lab member from the first day on and participated in lab meetings, lab lunches and field trips just like any other student or scholar of our lab. The department staff members are highly helpful regarding visa processing, housing or financial issues.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

I would recommend every one to dare to go abroad with the help of the Marshall Plan Scholarship. Most importantly, the fellows should be prepared to do a lot of organization. Even though the staff members of the host institution are willing to help, visa processing, housing search etc. takes time, patience and organizational talent. It might be a be difficult to integrate with the American culture and English language at first, but speaking of my experience, it is best to just be open, take every opportunity and be willing to connect not only with internationals but also with Americans. When questions arise, don't ever hesitate to ask, most Americans are very friendly and are always willing to help. Even though it depends on the institution they are in, most labs and research centers have many employees and people to help or give advice are not always available, so future fellows should be self-organized, responsible and know what they are doing. Other than that, the United States are a great country for research but also offer so much regarding leisure, so they should try to enjoy the American way of life and get to know the people and culture in their free time as much as possible.