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Field Report

To whom it may concern:

I am a fourth year PhD student working in the field of gas phase molecular spectroscopy of cryogenically cooled ionic systems at the Universität Innsbruck. The ionic species our research focuses on are biomolecular systems such as amino acids and van der Waals bound complexes. The support of the Marshall Plan Foundation allowed me to visit the laboratories of Prof. Mark Johnson at Yale University for three months in summer 2017. Prof. Mark Johnson is a pioneer in single photon action spectroscopy.

I consider the time I spent at Yale University and Prof. Johnson's labs upon the most precious experiences in my scientific career. I appreciated, that Yale University offers a countless number of platforms to get in contact with outstanding scientists of different fields and interests. While participating in stimulating discussions, brilliant lectures and informal get-togethers I not only enjoyed the scientific quality and profoundness but also the open and sincere attitude of the people I met. Three month after returning back to Innsbruck, I am still discussing scientific issues with experimental and theoretical chemists and physicists whom I met in Yale.

Besides finding new discussion partners for my scientific problems, working in a cutting-edge laboratory was a huge motivational and scientific push. Prof. Mark Johnson gave me freedom to use his machines and any laboratory equipment without any restrictions. I am deeply grateful for his trust and the opportunities he gave me, to study whatever problem I was interested in. Working together with Prof. Mark Johnson in the laboratory and seeing how he analyzes data and combines knowledge deeply impressed me.

Undoubtedly, the quality of the host institution could not have been better. With the status of a Visiting Assistant in Research (VAR) of the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Science one can make use of the campus infrastructure, e.g. libraries, shuttle buses, and public conferences. The Office of International Students and Scholars not only offers non-scientific events and activities but is also helpful with any kind of administrative related issues. The city of New Haven offers many activities to spend your leisure time. I especially enjoyed the many beautiful parks, the near by Long Island sound with its beaches, and nice road bike tracks into the endless forests of New England.

Besides the fact that I can fully recommend Yale University as a host institution, I would like to emphasize that the necessary administrative procedure to get into the VAR program of the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Science requires a lot of work, also from the side of the host professor. The same is true for the application process and the final report to the Marshall Plan Foundation. Consequently, I can only recommend this scholarship in combination with Yale as a host institution to people who are patient and willing to work hard to make the time abroad a successful time. However, from my experience spending time in a laboratory abroad always broadens the horizon no matter how much administrative hassle comes with the traveling.

I would like to thank the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation for financially support me to spend three months at Yale University. I want to express my deep gratitude to Roland Wester and Mark Johnson for their support and always helpful ideas and suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steffen Spieler', written in a cursive style.

Steffen Spieler.