

Field report

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Quality of the host institution

I have spent three months to do research in the group of Prof. Vuletic at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Founded in the 19th century as an alternative to more standard education provided by other US universities, MIT has always been an exquisite teaching institution with a focus on practical knowledge, hence their motto “Mens et Manus” (Mind and Hand). I found it particularly interesting that graduate students are a majority of all students, which shows that MIT is mainly a research oriented institution.

Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization

I became an integrated member of the Center for Ultracold Atoms (CUA), a joint venture of MIT's and Harvard's groups focusing on atomic physics research. With a single MIT ID card, I got access to the laboratories and to numerous benefits, such as lunch canteen, museum discounts and various MIT events. This included participation in weekly lunch seminars organized by MIT postdocs and PhD students, where I was also given an opportunity of presenting my research at the University of Vienna. I have attended seminars organized by MIT's Department of Physics and Harvard's Institute for Theoretical Atomic, Molecular and Optical Physics (ITAMP) as well. Before and after these occasions, I met and discussed with numerous researchers, getting an insight into various fields of physics represented in Cambridge.

I joined the experimental subgroup of the Vuletic group, working on cavity cooling of Cesium atoms. This included participation at biweekly subgroup meetings, in which we discussed the experimental progress. A bit different and more hands-on approach at these meetings was new to me and quite interesting.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

MIT and Harvard are both situated in Cambridge, MA. Presence of two such good universities brought a great number of worldwide companies such as Google and Facebook and young experts with them. It is a town with a great young population, so it's lively, full of events and relaxed. Boston is reachable by subway, opening a vast number of possible things to do in the area. I would definitely recommend Boston area for a research visit, with the best time to visit being during the summer, due to harsh winters which can last until April.