Researcher: Filip Dzuroska, MSc MSc
Home University: FH Technikum Wien
Host University: University of California, Los Angeles
Field of Research: Machine Learning

General Impression:

The research at UCLA was definitely an amazing experience, which I can recommend to anyone. From the academic point of view, UCLA is well organized institution, full of motivated and skillful professionals. Cooperation with such people is definitely huge advantage in any project you are working on. The people, I had the privilege to cooperate with, were usually coming from different countries, with strong and diverse skills and expertise.

When it comes to campus and facility, it is a perfect environment for students, researchers and professors. With the university Bruin card and ID, you have access to all university resources. To libraries, with great focus areas and think tanks for group projects, to enormous number of sport and leisure facilities, as well as to medical services in case of need. Campus is perfect place for your research and in case you need to boost creativity, there are many cafés, where you can fully dive deep into your topic.

A great advantage was also city itself. Los Angeles is diverse city, full of academic as well as business people, coming from different places with wide range of experience. It was great opportunity to create friendships, find valuable contacts, even meet your future colleagues. The culture of meetups is very strong and enables to find people with same interests and expertise.

Organization and Contacts:

As a member of Computer Science Lab, I had a chance to cooperative with my supervisor, Professor Mario Gerla and his doctoral research assistant Seungbae Kim, who supported me in any type of request, question or struggles during my research.

I've met also researchers from different countries, working on similar topics. Cooperation with colleagues from countries like US, Iran, Slovenia, South Korea and China was enriching as well, in sense of different approaches to problem solving, work habits and commitment to deliver results.

From administrational point of view, I had a chance to be in touch with many departments. Although the whole administration topics were often tedious, everyone treats you as a customer and tries to help you with any type of a request or problem you are facing. The student-oriented approach was visible everywhere on campus.

Recommendations:

Starting with the general recommendation, the research and internship at such organization as UCLA is definitely worth of any efforts, but it is necessary to keep in mind many factors and plan ahead in advance many months. In my case, I started to deal with everything 14 months before my research started. Finding University and Supervisor is very difficult. The best way how to conduct a research at one of the best universities like UCLA, is to firstly find professor or supervisor here, who can help you to find supervisor in US university.

What is also very important to consider are costs. Budget you will need might be in the end much higher than what you expected in the beginning. Depending on state and the city where you are staying, university where you will be conducting your research as well as conditions you would like to have are reflected in the final figure. As I was staying in the most expensive city in the whole US, Los Angeles, the prices of accommodations are beyond any expectations. If you want to leave in rational distance from campus, in private room, you need to consider high expenses and the Marshall Plan Funding should be just enough to cover it. But beyond the accommodation there are dditional costs for university, connected with utilization of Labs, libraries and campus facility. But expect that there might be some delays of visa processing and other administrational things you might face and might postpone your research significantly.

Consider also time of the year when you are planning to go for research. If you are trying to establish things in December/January, you might face that everyone is on holidays and you can count with delays. The same applies for Summer.

In general, the research in US was great experience and I would recommend it to everyone who would like to experience different university environment, work on research abroad and with professionals with different backgrounds.