



Marshall Plan Scholarship

University of California, Berkeley

Field Report

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General impression of your research stay abroad

The general impression was great. It was an unbelievable experience to work at such a renowned institution. Passing by the offices of Nobel laureates on a daily basis and reflecting all the great achievements at UC Berkeley was a very good motivation to work hard and make the best out of my research stay. It was very interesting to see the big differences between research in Europe and research in the United States. My impression is that European researchers are much more detail-oriented and tend to make valuable incremental research, whereas researchers in the US seem to focus on the 'bigger picture' and on groundbreaking ideas. Furthermore, the US researchers I have worked with in my research stay are also very capable in selling their ideas and in convincing others of their vision.

I hope that I can combine in my future career the best of both 'worlds'. Hence, I am sure that this research stay will be a boost for my career as a researcher and engineer. Besides the academic side, I am pleased that I have made many new friends all over the world and have learned a lot about the American way of life.

Quality of the host institution

I think it is not necessary to say a lot about the quality of UC Berkeley, the institution has, among others, 107 Nobel laureates, 25 Turing Award winners, and has won 20 Academy Awards. Some of the smartest people in the world have taught, worked, and studied at this institution. In Berkeley you see this pride in the University everywhere and you also see it in the work ethics of the employees and researchers. Unfortunately in Austria we are sometimes missing this identification with the alma mater.

Also my colleagues in the research group at UC Berkeley are extremely smart and I was able to learn a lot from them. It was obvious that the PhD-system in the US is very different to the European/Austrian system. PhD students in the US typically do not have a Master's degree and have much more time for the PhD thesis. A PhD can take six years or even more, compared to the 3-year contracts in Austria. The advantage of our system is that we are a little bit more focused as we have less time and the American students sometimes lose track. On the other hand, the US students have time to explore different fields and ideas during their PhDs, hence, I think their PhD is much broader and I have felt this broad spectrum of the PhD students in every discussion. I think also in Austria it would be a great achievement to increase the minimum duration of a PhD to at least four years but ideally even longer.

Contacts with the host institution, inclusion in the organization

Already some months before my research stay in Berkeley, I was added to all mailing lists and communication channels of the research group and they gave me the feeling that I am a coequal part of the group. I was even involved in discussions for future

research projects and publications. This opened my mind and is something I brought back to Austria as well. Here in Austria some researchers tend to stay silent about their research work and do not openly discuss ideas with colleagues.

Even now a few months after the research stay, I am still part of the Slack communication channels of the research group and I am actively keeping touch with my former colleagues at UC Berkeley. Hopefully, Professor Prabal Dutta will also visit TU Graz and become an examiner of my PhD thesis.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

The most important suggestion for Marshall Plan students is to extend the duration of the research stay. Unfortunately, I just had slightly more than three months, which was by far too short. As already mentioned, the differences between European and US-American researchers was more than expected. Thus, especially at the beginning it takes a while to arrange yourself with the new research environment. Furthermore, I had a very important deadline for the ACM/IEEE International Conference on Information Processing in Sensor Networks briefly before my research stay at UC Berkeley. The submission for this conference made a proper preparation for the stay very difficult. Hence, I would suggest for future Marshall Plan students to keep at least a months before the stay clear to prepare properly for the research stay.