

# Report

## Marshall Plan Scholarship

In the past semester, I had the opportunity to stay at the ALFA research group of Prof. Una-May O'Reilly at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Obviously, I am very grateful for this chance, as it allowed me to collaborate with an excellent, diverse team of researchers and to work on an exciting new research topic while writing my master thesis. I immediately felt very welcome and was provided help whenever needed.

Overall, the entire trip went very well, beginning with the travels there and back and all intermediate trips. Although doing research at the MIT was very demanding, I found time to explore Boston and New York, with the latter being in comfortable distance for weekend trips. Beside this, I was even sent to a conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to present my work at a conference – which was a nice change from the big American cities I saw before.

The MIT's dedication to excellence was obvious from the very beginning. The mentoring by the institute's HR department and the International Students Office was great, including the introduction events and the very detailed information I got there. I also enjoyed spending time with the international community in Cambridge. Aside from this, Nicole, the research group's assistant, was a great help to me in all possible situations.

From an academic point of view, studying at the MIT is probably the best thing that can happen to everyone who is interested in technology or applied sciences. In addition to the already mentioned brilliant people that work there, the university has first-class facilities and equipment. I also enjoyed the possibility of visiting the talks by internal and external professionals from different fields of research that are regularly hosted by the different institutes.

In conclusion, I can definitely recommend spending a semester abroad to all students who have the chance to do so, especially at a host university like the MIT. For me, it was a huge enrichment both professionally and personally. I met many inspiring people with whom I had lots of fun, and overall learned more than I can say. Living in other countries opens up completely new perspectives and can definitely not be compared to a few weeks of vacation, where one only gets a peek of the foreign culture. Even when studying part-time like me, the Austrian government offers interesting programs to support educational leaves of people already working at companies in Austria. However, even with the government's financial support, my stay would not have been possible without the Marshall Plan scholarship. I am therefore very grateful for this opportunity and all the support I received from both my home and host university, especially from my supervisors and the international offices.

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