

GENERAL IMPRESSION OF YOUR RESEARCH STAY

I was always keen to take the opportunity to studying and doing research abroad, for I believe diving into new cultures and adjusting to unknown habits and ways is key to human development. Another strong believe I live by is that exploration is key to progress and the potential for exploration is nowhere bigger than at a place you haven't been before and with people who may have a totally different view on the world.

My impression of my research stay in San Francisco was amazing! San Francisco is an exciting city with an abundance of culture and novel technologies. Besides the city and its surroundings are breathtakingly beautiful. People are friendly and it is not hard to get into contact with them. Every evening there is a meetup happening or some other event you can easily attend as an „outsider“. Yet, the peculiar feature I noticed after a few meetings was, that in San Francisco “outsiders“ do not really seem to exist. The town is booming with high-tech start-ups hiring people from all over the world. Companies constantly engage international interns and hold regular conferences with international guests, usually on a weekly basis. Therefore, I quickly felt at home and had some sense of belonging.

At the university I likewise felt accepted and at home. I was amazed by the tremendous amount of opportunities offered in Berkeley.

In summary, I would like to state, that the success of a research stay depends on constantly stepping out of one's comfort zone - this is not always easy but it is highly rewarding in the long run!

QUALITY OF THE HOST INSTITUTION IN REGARD TO RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

My host institution helped me with actually everything I needed for my research. For development of my project I was granted access to use their on-campus Maker-Space. If the University itself was not able to provide the resources I requested, they would delve into their network and get me into contact with an institution that was able to help (e.g. Jacobs Institute of Design, Aerospace Engineering NASA, Silicon Valley). Thereby I was able to get into contact with potential partners from the hi-tech industry. Their input gave further boost to my work and helped me to focus my ideas.

In general, the university was very responsive to any question or problem. I had the impression, that they really wanted my project to succeed, to come into life.

My coordinator was immensely dedicated to help me making my research going on well. Both an expert in the field and sympathetic she encouraged me when I met with difficulties, nudged me on if my work did lost momentum and guided me, when I made an error.

The University flair was a bit different from the city flair. Students were extremely busy and had to adhere to tightly meshed schedules. Because there were already “fixed“ circles of friends it was not quite easy to get into contact. Yet, my hosting institution organized many events in the entrepreneurial field where I had the chance to connect to like-minded students and meet some incredible entrepreneurs from Silicon Valley.

CONTACT WITHIN THE HOST INSTITUTION, ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR ACADEMIC COLLABORATION DURING STAY

The host institution and I had routine e-mail contact during my stay.

Apart from my research activities I visited many times for interesting events or meetings about the progress of my work.

We even organized a public event where the University gave me the opportunity to present my work in progress in front of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE MARSHALL PLAN APPLICANTS

Start the application only when have a clearly defined issue you will pursue in the U.S. Otherwise the abundant opportunities may make you stray from your planned schedule. As soon as you have gotten clearance, try to get into contact with people at the institution you plan to attend. Do also try to establish also contacts outside the teaching/research institution. This will help you finding e.g. housing, adapting to local customs.

Be polite but persistent - sometimes a „no“, needs a „why“, as a response and then there suddenly may be a way to open doors all the same. Be creative in finding a way to make your dreams come true – do not just wait for an opportunity to arise (it may not happen). Try to pursue things actively instead of waiting for them to come by will be hard but highly rewarding. Explore, explore, explore. Be curious dare to ask questions! Talk to as many people as you can! You will learn amazing new things from people you would have deemed most unlikely learning from.