

## **Master's thesis in the department of microbiology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City**

### **General impression of my research stay abroad:**

My name is Shirin Strohmeier and I am currently a master's student enrolled in the program Molecular Biology with specification in Molecular Medicine at the University of Vienna. Since it was always a big dream of me to study abroad and gain more international research experience, I decided to apply in Dr. Krammer's laboratory at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai to perform the practical part of my master's thesis. After a personal interview via Skype, in which Dr. Krammer introduced his laboratory as well as potential research projects, I was very happy when I got offered a position as a visiting student. I started with my master's thesis on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2017 and stayed in the US for an entire year until the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2018.

In general, New York is a great city, which offers a lot of different entertainment options, especially for young people. You can explore many different cultures and can get in contact with people from all around the world. The city is really impulsive, fast living and exciting. However, besides the fun parts, it is important to mention that New York is an extremely expensive city, especially with living costs. Therefore, it should be considered to apply for a place in a student dormitory, which will definitely relieve the pressure on a small student's purse. The institute is located next to Central Park in the Upper East Side. From there, you have an impressing view over midtown Manhattan. In general, the microbiology department offers a great opportunity for enthusiastic, motivated and hardworking students. A lot is expected from potential candidates, but from my point of view, all the effort is completely worth it for later PhD and job applications.

### **Quality of the host institution:**

During my master's year, I had the honour to work with excellent researches from all around the world in a laboratory with state-of-the-art facilities. The entire microbiology department was very friendly and welcoming to international students. Therefore, the start and the integration into daily research life was very smooth and enjoyable. Dr. Krammer was a great mentor, who strongly supported me during my stay abroad and tried to push my young academic career to a new level. I had the chance to publish multiple papers with my colleagues from Mount Sinai as well as with collaborators from different institutions. I also had the chance to join international conferences and establish a scientific network with people from different institutions.

### **Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization:**

The whole department of Microbiology was extremely welcoming, friendly and it was possible for me to find a lot of new friends during my year abroad. My friends and I went regularly out for drinks after work or met on the weekends to watch different movies. Furthermore, they helped me with many different things in my daily life, which could be difficult to handle when you are alone in a foreign city. Besides my free time, I had weekly seminars and journal clubs to discuss current scientific topics. We also

went for a lab retreat to strengthen our team work. The opportunities as well as the great working environment within the department led me to my decision to join the Krammer laboratory for at least another year.

**Recommendations for future Marshall Plan Students and fellows:**

I personally really enjoyed my stay abroad and I am confident that I have made the best choice in order to perform my master's thesis. Therefore, I am really happy that I have gone this step in my life. I have met some awesome people, made new friendships, explored a lot of new interesting things and cultures and grew personally and as a researcher. Since I was really satisfied with the laboratory and the research I was able to conduct there, I decided to come back for another year to continue with my research projects. I can recommend an experience abroad to everybody who wants to challenge himself in a new way and collect a lot of great memories that nobody can ever take from you.