

Field Report

Scholar full name: Andreas Karl Weber

Research stay: University of Southern California, 7/23/2018 - 11/20/2018

Title of Research Project: Role of Startups in the Digital Transformation of the Steel Industry

Home university: University of Leoben

Supervisor at home university: Mag. Karin Tschiggerl

Supervisor at guest university: Prof. Paul Orlando

1. Quality of the host institution

The University of Southern California is one of the leading universities in the United States and in certain fields even world-leading. Although the brand and name are not well-known in Europe, the University of Southern California is ranked 17th overall in the United States by the Times Higher Education Survey and 115th in the world by QS Global World Ranking. In certain areas, the University of Southern California is particularly strong: these are computer science (ranked 30th globally) and Viterbi School of Engineering programs overall, entrepreneurial studies (ranked 3rd in the United States) and Marshall School of Business programs overall, the movie and film program and collegiate sports (highest number of Olympic gold medal winners of all U.S. colleges).

The strong performance in certain academic areas is turbocharged by the astounding network in the relevant fields: examples include the network of the computer science department with relevant Silicon Valley companies, the Trojan alumni network, the network of the business school in Southern California and throughout the United States, and the film school's strong collaboration with Hollywood's entertainment industry.

The university is not globally known when it comes to hard sciences such as physics or chemistry, in particular when compared to other research powerhouses such as Harvard or Stanford. However, a tremendous fund-raising campaign in the last years elevated the university's endowment to be the third largest in the world and yields enough resources to fund major research projects and attract world-class research

talent. This will contribute to the university also gaining major ground in the hard sciences.

The University of Southern California is a private university and one of the most expensive schools in the world. However, this also has the advantage that all services provided are not only plentiful but also of the utmost standard. Likewise the campus, the buildings and the infrastructure are beautiful, convenient and allow for a superb research and learning experience. The university's student body is also among the most diverse in the world and gives opportunities to meet and learn about different global cultures.

2. General impression of your research stay abroad, contacts within the host institution and inclusion in the organization

Prof. Paul Orlando, my supervisor, was very welcoming and gave me all support I needed. We met about once a week and he not only gave me highly valuable advice on how to direct my research but also made countless introductions to other researchers in the department and beyond. This was particularly important, since navigating American research communities is very tough without personal introductions. Prof. Orlando also regularly asked me critical questions about my research which helped to reflect on my latest progress. I was also warmly welcomed by the department overall, in particular through the directors of the department, which also made valuable introductions.

3. Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

My advice for future Marshall Plan fellows, in particular those who engage in research, would be to try to find a supervisor who is willing to really engage with the work and is willing to help expand your network. As mentioned above, navigating American research networks without introductions is nearly impossible. This is due to the fact that leading researchers in the United States, which are often globally leading in their field, get contacted by such a high number of people, that in most cases they simply cannot reply to everyone.