

# Field report

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Marshall Plan Scholarship – Research stay at Utah Valley University, Orem, Utah

## General impression of your research stay abroad

My research stay abroad was an invaluable experience for me to develop myself further from a personal and professional perspective. Having the opportunity to gain an understanding of workflows abroad provided me with new methods and insights that contributed to improving my workflows. Furthermore, I was also able to gain a lot of new contacts within the US and Europe, which enabled me to network and find people who share the same professional interests that I do. Besides the research part, I was able to use my time abroad for personal development, diving into the American culture, and experiencing first hand its similarities and differences from home. All in all, I can say that I feel very fortunate that I had the opportunity to experience this exchange program.

## Quality of the host institution

I would describe the quality of the host institution as outstanding. The courses and assistance I was provided with were very insightful, and I was able to learn a lot from them. The facilities I used during the stay were modernly equipped and provided everything I needed to work on projects. Aside from an academic point of view, Utah Valley University also offered a lot of non-academic activities and services. They also helped me to schedule our courses in a way so that I was able to gain some free time for extra-curricular activities and to explore Utah and other states.

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

I was taken care of right from when I got the confirmation that I would be able to participate in the exchange. I want to take this opportunity to thank Carlos Alarco from UVU's Office of Global Engagement for assisting me with any questions and problems that came up before and during our stay. I also want to thank Michael Harper for being a key person in making this exchange program possible and helping me out with everything I needed during my stay. Last but not least, I also want to thank Duane Andersen for providing me with a great class and exciting opportunities to participate in during my stay. I felt welcome from the first day and received a lot of help settling in. One thing that is also great about UVU is that they have an International Student Council which organizes activities for international students and enables them to get to know each other and gain new contacts right away. At any point, I was able to contact the Office of Global Engagement if a question or problem came up, and all of the professors of our classes included me within their classes without any issues. I was able to connect to multiple fellow local students right away.

### Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

First of all, I would recommend everyone to take the opportunity to participate in this program. The experiences and insights you gain from a stay abroad in the US are invaluable and can contribute a lot to develop oneself further. Furthermore, the US has not without reason a reputation for its breathtaking landscapes, so it also offers a lot of opportunities from a non-academical standpoint.

I think it is vital to network. This has proved to be very useful to me as a lot of the different things I was able to experience came from locals inviting me to trips.

Utah specific recommendations I have are as follows:

The US is a car country – this required me to accommodate a lot. Public transport is not as developed as in Europe, and in the case of Utah also does not operate on Sundays (however, for students of most of the local universities, it is free at least). So if your research stay has a longer duration, it might be worth looking into buying a used car. I was able to get around by renting cars or asking local friends. Without a car, you are very limited.

Housing can be tricky (especially if you are staying less than 12 months). Most leases are based on one year, and landlords seem to be a bit reluctant to take on international students as it makes things complicated for them. So I would recommend organizing that before you arrive in the US.

In general, I would recommend planning enough time ahead of your stay. Obtaining all the paperwork that is required can be very time-consuming, and you want to have as much done as you can before your stay starts.