

Field report

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General impression of the research stay abroad

Studying abroad helped me to launch my career and make me more competitive in the workforce as a researcher. It gave me the opportunity for studying and collaborate with an open minded, resourcefulness, high standard USA research environment like UMass. The USA study experience also let me expand my academic learning outside of the normal classroom, because you live what you are learning. One of the main reasons for study abroad was to immerse myself in the culture of the country, and especially in the academic community of USA. The advantages of studying abroad include learning the language, boosting your résumé and experiencing new things, while the disadvantages include high costs and cultural barriers and experience with a different culture allows me to expand my worldview, learn about new perspectives and develop a cross-cultural awareness, meet people with different upbringings, helping me widen my horizon and broaden my mind.

My personal impressions at the beginning were at first that the UMass campus seemed huge and hard to understand a totally different academic system. Besides, I remember one of the first things I noticed was the cold weather in winter time; it was much colder than I was prepared for, as even the campus itself was closed for some days - no one told me I would be experiencing up to -20 degree weather in winter with delay of research work.

Quality of the host institution

The University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass) provides a flagship public research university, and is one of the top universities for research as measured by international rankings, academic citations, and research funding. Prof. Mark Leckie, my host and supervisor, is an excellent researcher on foraminifera.

Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization

The main advantage for students studying abroad is the access to better quality education and improved job prospects. Although these can be beneficial there are some disadvantages like difficulty to adapt to the local culture and linguistic challenges.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

The University of Massachusetts Health Services (UHS) do not accept international J1 insurance and one has to get insurance depending on your city. This is additional administrative and financial load which seems unnecessary. It is totally different from Europe,

even you have international insurance, just that would be work for transfer you to your home university. It should be need to change your insurance and get insurance from the insurance company you go there. For example, at University of California Santa Cruz, University Health Services accepts IMG insurance <https://clients.garnett-powers.com/vs/ucsc/>. It's one of the best insurances for J1 Student in California, However, the best way is to get insurance after you arrive in the USA depends from the host city and university. Overall, Europe often has lower costs when measured against the United States. For example you need to pay at least 1500 \$ per month for rent of a room or rent place in dormitory <https://www.forrentuniversity.com/ma/amherst/olympia-place/6gmnkjt>. Also Marshal plan should support 3 weeks for spare time/vacation for every 6 months stay in USA and add this 3-weeks for the stay. I thank the Marshall Plan Foundation and the University of Vienna authorities, namely Mr. Maximilian Kudler, for the fellowship stipend and thank Michael Wagreich my supervisor and thank my Marshall-Plan mentors Mark Leckie and James Zachos for hosting and supervising my work done in the USA.