

# Field Report

Nevena Jankovic

Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, Boston, MA

## **Quality impression of your research stay abroad**

My research internship at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research (WIBR) in the laboratory of Dr. David Sabatini was a great experience. The pace and excellence in research at the Sabatini lab were superb. I learnt a lot about different molecular techniques that I have never used before as well as to plan my experiments very efficiently; also, to be very critical about the observed results. It was very interesting to experience the difference between European and American research.

Besides the new approach in science, I was also able to experience a new culture. Boston is a beautiful city, combining the old historic parts, for example the Boston Common or Charlestown with new modern parts as Seaport. The people of Boston surprised me positively with their kindness. No matter if it was my landlady, the cashier in the supermarket or in the cafeteria of WIBR, every single person was very nice and polite. My housing was a bit outside the city center, so I had to rely on public transportation, which unfortunately, is not very trustworthy. If commuting by bus, it was somewhat of a gamble in the winter, if and when the busses would arrive. Nonetheless, I really enjoyed the quietness of my neighborhood. I felt very safe in Sommerville, which I did not expect in the beginning.

## **Quality of the host institution**

The quality of the WIBR is just superb. If just looking at the list of the labs located in the WIBR, one can see the prestige of this independent research institute. The WIBR also collaborates with researchers of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Koch Institute for Cancer Research as well as the Broad Institute; all located in proximity. The Sabatini lab is very relaxed, yet professional - with a good mix of American and international researchers.

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

Working in the Sabatini lab was great. All lab members were welcoming in the beginning. Both students and postdocs in the lab were very helpful during the orientation period. This allowed me a lot to get used to the lab in a short amount of time. The WIBR offers a variety of guest talks during the semester as well as seminar talks from WIBR-intern researchers on Fridays. Wednesdays are designated for floor meeting, which informs all the members of the WIBR about current research projects of different labs.

## **Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows**

As mentioned, Boston is a beautiful and prestigious city. The high-ranked universities do shape the city. This is especially easy to be seen in the pricing of housing, food, restaurants as well as public transportation. Future Marshall Plan fellows should be aware of it. Starting early enough to look for accommodations would surely decrease the housing costs to some degree. Nonetheless, I highly recommend taking the leap of faith and visiting the US for a research stay during the Masters!