



Medical
University of Graz

Otto Loewi
Research Center

Chair of
Pharmacology

M Northwestern Medicine
Feinberg School of Medicine

Marshall Plan Foundation - Field report

Eva Knuplež

General impression of my research stay abroad

I have chosen to spend 9 months in the group of Dr. Bochner at the Division of Allergy and Immunology, Department of Medicine at Northwestern University, Chicago. Overall, I could not be happier with the choice of my host group as well as the city, where I spent my research stay abroad. During my visit, I have developed new research skills and even more importantly, I developed a critical way of thinking, which is important, when considering a scientific career. Thorough mentorship and oversight from Dr. Bochner has allowed me to grow and enjoy my work, without unnecessary stress or fear of burnout. Moreover, by having the opportunity of living in the lively multicultural city of Chicago I was able to experience life in a big American city as well as attend many amazing events. I am confident the invaluable experiences I gained, helped shape me into a better researcher and person.

Quality of the host institution

Northwestern University in Chicago is one of the top 10 universities in the USA (#9 according to 2020 ranking). Consequently, research at this institution is conducted at an extremely high level and is cutting-edge and well-funded. All the members of faculty as well as the administrative staff I have encountered are extremely motivated and always willing to lend a helping hand. Furthermore, I was pleasantly surprised at how many activities were being carried out with the student's future in mind. For example, lunches with renowned visiting professors and lecturers were made available to students every week, in order to facilitate networking and encourage discussions of possible career paths.

Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization

From the moment, I started my official application for the stay abroad visit until my last day, I felt completely included and a full member of the group as well as an equal student at the Northwestern University. Not only did I enjoy all the student privileges (student parking discounts...), but I was also invited to all group or division events. Moreover, I had the opportunity to attend and contribute to group lab meetings, division journal clubs and attend all the external lectures. By attending such events, I was able to establish connections with members of other labs and broaden my horizons. I truly enjoyed the inclusive and international atmosphere at Northwestern University and in Chicago in general.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

- Start looking for accommodation options/possibilities as soon as possible. It can be difficult and time-consuming to find appropriate housing in certain cities.
- Precisely follow all the administrative details for acquiring your university acceptance letter and visa documentation. The process might seem complicated, but it's well worth it to do it correctly the first time around.
- Try to establish connections with not only the researchers and members of your group, but also with other students and members of faculty you meet.
- Most importantly, try to enjoy your visit to the USA and use your free time for many possible activities as well as sightseeing whenever possible. This way when you look back on your time in the USA you will fondly remember that time of your life, when you took a chance and tried something new.