

FIELD REPORT

My name is Markus Losgott and I studied a semester abroad from April 1st until August 2nd, 2019, at the California Polytechnic State University. In this report, I would like to describe my experiences and impressions.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

Not a day goes by that I don't think back to my semester abroad in California. It's always just good memories. Of course, there were ups and downs in America, but the positive experiences outweigh the little difficulties.

Still, I can almost certainly say that the stay in the United States was the best time of my life. I was able to gain an incredible amount of new experiences, got to know new people, and could travel through America. The western part of the USA impressed me with its diverse landscapes and its unique metropolises. But I also got to know American culture and the California lifestyle. I met strangers who became friends, and today, we share beautiful memories. With some of them, I am still in touch, and I am pretty sure that we will meet one day again. The time abroad has enriched my life, and it is nearly impossible to put all of these impressions into words.

QUALITY OF THE HOST INSTITUTION

The California Polytechnic State University is located in San Luis Obispo, California, and has around 20,000 students. The Department for Agriculture and the Department for Architecture are the two most prestigious fields of study. That's the reason why this host institution was the perfect choice for me, since I study Architecture myself.

I have heard from many local students that Cal Poly is one of the top architecture universities in the entire United States and highly regarded. Unfortunately, I cannot report any experiences about the quality of the classes. My research work consisted of independent desk research at the library and field research visiting architectural relevant office buildings.

CONTACTS & INTEGRATION

In the beginning, I had contact with Prof. Margot McDonald, AIA, NCARB, LEED BD + C, head of the architecture department, and Susan L. Trip, an international coordinator. Due to the time

difference between Austria and California, communication via email before the stay was rather tedious and lengthy.

When I arrived at Cal Poly, I was warmly welcomed. I had a check-in appointment where I got all the necessary organizational things explained. I got an account for the internal network with email access and general information about the campus facilities. Communication was a lot easier when I was in America because I could talk with the staff personally, and there was no time difference anymore. Margot McDonald was my host supervisor and also introduced me to other professors and international coordinators. So, I had enough contacts who I could ask for any organizational or topic-related advice.

I had access to the library, the workshop for architecture master's students, and all the public facilities of the campus so that I could carry out my research without any significant problems. Unfortunately, I had no access to the recreation center where most sports- and leisure activities took place.

Furthermore, social meetings and activities were organized by the university for exchange students. Every Tuesday at 02:00 PM, the international coffee took place, where I could get in touch with other students. So, I quickly found social connections.

During my stay, I met my supervisor several times to discuss the progress of my work. When I left, there was also a check-out appointment. Margot McDonald and I recapped my stay and talked about future possibilities for other students who want to study abroad at the Cal Poly. All in all, communication and integration at the Cal Poly worked well.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE MARSHALL PLAN STUDENTS

Probably the best advice I can give interested students is: "DO IT! You won't regret it." Of course, in the beginning, there are organizational hurdles to overcome, and the application process has to be managed, but it is definitely worth the effort. In my opinion, the most important thing for future Marshall Plan Students is the communication between you, the host institution, and your home university to prevent problems.

Another recommendation I would give them is to travel as much as possible alongside their studies and be open-minded for new things.