

Marshall Plan research stay at Drexel University

Drexel University as a private research university based in Philadelphia, PA is a go-to destination for research in various fields in the US. The Marshall Plan Scholarship allowed me to work in the lab and group of Prof. Lau in the department of Chemical and Biological Engineering (CBE) at Drexel. The department and group are rather small and, thus, quite straightforward. The staff of the International Students and Scholars Services (ISSS) helped me with the necessary bureaucratic work, introduced me to the campus and what overall and legal implications the stay at Drexel via the scholarship has. The Program Manager of the CBE helped me getting a working space, keys to the facilities, etc. In general, the staff was helpful, even though the bureaucratic paperwork and appointments I had to go through upon arrival were more and took longer than I expected (additional to visa and Marshall Plan application before my stay). It seemed like they did not have a ton of experience with international students.

However, the research group I could be a part of was welcoming concerning lab work as well as off campus. Collaborations and the working environment were very open and based on individual freedom. Furthermore, the central research facility (CRF), having loads of equipment for investigations and measurements, is well-organized and extremely useful (pretty standard in the US, but something special for people used to European universities).

Concerning housing, I rented a room in a shared apartment via Airbnb as it was by far the most convenient option. There were several such rooms available approximately 5-15 minutes from Drexel campus. This was also what other group members recommended before my stay. Another option I was recommended is looking for a room in a Facebook group called "Drexel University Housing, Sublets & Roommates". However, it seems like most offers are published before the semesters start and, usually, leases are longer than a few months. Generally, I can recommend contacting the respective host department/group; they probably know better about the current situation and available options. Regardless, Philadelphia is among the most affordable of the big cities in the US, so it should not be too much of a problem finding something with an ok price.

On campus, you can find facilities for sports (recreation center and gym), good food (Dizengoff's for middle eastern, Pitruco's for pizza), libraries and much more. Enjoy your research stay and have a good time in Philly!