

## Field Report - Research stay at Louisiana State University

### MARSHALL PLAN SCHOLARSHIP

Topic: Beyond Authoritative Safety Assessment: Applying Geospatial Technology to Explore Perceived Safety in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

#### 1. General impression of your research stay abroad

I am very happy to have received the Marshall Plan scholarship. This is a unique opportunity and I did my best to take advantage of the time spent at Louisiana State University (LSU), Department of Geography & Anthropology. I arrived to Baton Rouge at the end of January 2019 and I spent three months there.

This was my second experience in the USA, the first one being at the University of Virginia in 2017. The university has a large campus, which is not usual for European universities. The student center includes many food outlets where you can get food and drinks. In the northern part of the campus you can find various restaurants and a CVS supermarket/pharmacy. The campus is well connected, there are buses between the buildings. There is a shuttle bus from 5pm to 12am every day which you can call or order on the phone app. The shuttle can bring you to any part of the campus, but not outside. For example, I used to live at the border of the campus and I was taking the shuttle from the office if I was leaving close to midnight. The campus is safe during the day and it seems to be safe during the night too, but it is recommended to be very cautious.

I managed to achieve the goals of my stay abroad together with connecting to US citizens and other foreigners as me. I met many valuable researchers and I learned from them. I worked closely to my professor, Michael Leitner, and my colleague, Judith Stratmann, who was also a visiting scholar from Carinthia University of Applied Sciences. I participated in a couple of conferences where I got the chance to present the research from LSU and make people interested in the topic. I think it is important to have a decent time schedule, to learn to multitask and to be productive. The weather started to be warm at the end of February and this was a good opportunity of starting walking around the campus. It is ideal to learn work related things during the stay abroad and save some time for exploring the surroundings and spend time with new people.

#### 2. Quality of the host institution

I am satisfied with the quality at LSU. Since the first day of work they helped me accommodate. I received a desk in a secure room together with other visiting scholars. I received two monitors and a performant computer. In addition, it was very easy to get the student ID (tiger card) from the student center. LSU has as mascot Mike the tiger that is actually a real tiger! LSU is giving a lot of

attention to Mike's habitat which is free to visit in the side of the campus where the stadiums are located (the large stadium for football games and the small stadium for basketball). LSU has an amazing sports center, called UREC, which is recently renovated. You can do many types of sports there, it includes a pool, a running track inside the center, climbing area etc..

### 3. Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization

If the candidate will go to the same department where I was, namely LSU Geography & Anthropology, I would recommend as contacts Lauren C. Evans - Business Coordinator LSU Geography & Anthropology - she will take care of documents and other necessary information; and Luke Drisdell - for IT. Among others, there are two amazing people at the International Office, namely Associate Director - Loveness Schafer and Administrative Program Specialist - Janice Goodloe. They are very nice and helpful with international visitors. The center is organizing multiple events and they will keep the candidate informed about everything.

### 4. Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

My experience in Louisiana was helpful to understand new cultures and try new gastronomic elements. Louisiana has a rich food related culture and it would be great if you can be there during crawfish boil festivals (approximately in April). Another important event in the state is Mardi Gras, heavily celebrated. New Orleans is not far away and I recommend to visit during the weekend.

At the beginning you might be lost at LSU campus due to the size and the similar looking buildings. However, in a few days you will find a way. Try to live close to the campus, if not, you would need to drive to get to the university. The transport system is very weak. However, there are a few buses, one of them taking you from the university campus to downtown. There are people walking in the campus but that is about it. No one walks in the city, everybody is using a car. You cannot really go grocery shopping without a car. The city is not walk or bike friendly at all. In many areas there are not even pedestrian paths. Everything is built for cars. In addition, the majority are big cars (maybe because the roads are very bad?).

To conclude, I had a very nice period at LSU for both parts, work and personal development, and I am highly grateful for the Marshall Plan opportunity.