

Marshall Plan Scholarship – Field Report

Daniel Alexander Rotter, Massachusetts General Hospital Endocrine Research,
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General impressions

My research stay at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in the research department for endocrinology was very satisfying. The department consists of several laboratories located on two floors of the Thier research building in the center of Boston. The public transportation system allows an uncomplicated transfer to the work location even from the outskirts of the city. Boston shares similarities with most European cities and has a lot of resident students from abroad which allows easy networking with many different people around the world. The members of the Endocrine research resemble that diversity. Principle Investigators (PIs), postdoctoral fellows and laboratory technicians from Europe, Asia and America work closely together on related research topics and create an open-minded and friendly working environment.

Quality of the host institution

MGH is one of the best hospitals in the United States and has the best endocrinology department in the country. The department of Endocrinology at the MGH is famous for the discovery of parathyroid hormone and has a long history of prestigious scientists to this date. The Thier research building and its department for endocrine research are old but provide everything that is required for basic and advanced experimental setups. The endocrine unit also hosts the histological core-facility of the Harvard medical school which is very convenient for *in vivo* studies. Multiple collaborations with other institutes provide access to equipment that may not be available in the endocrine unit.

Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization

The Endocrine Unit is led by Michael Mannstadt and hosts more than 10 PIs with their lab. Group and joint-meetings, regular journal clubs, cookie talks, and meetings of the center for skeletal research as well as the open workspace on two floors allow open communication and networking. I worked in the lab of Marc Wein on one project which served as the basis for my master thesis. I was also collaborating with one of his postdoctoral fellows on another minor project for grant applications. The laboratory of Marc Wein was working very closely with the laboratory of Henry Kronenberg and Tatsuya Kobayashi which allowed deep insights on other projects and exchange of knowledge. However, the Endocrine research unit does not host students regularly and is inexperienced with the handling of students. Nevertheless, all members of the department are voluntarily helping with any upcoming topic. Regular social events within the whole department and smaller hangouts with the lab members made the inclusion in the organization very easy and convenient.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

Living in Boston is very expensive. Affordable apartments or rooms are most likely located in the outskirts of the city. Public transportation in Boston is quite accessible but unreliable. I recommend living close to a subway station and avoiding buses to overcome weather-related service limitations in the winter. The weather in Boston changes very quickly and has harsh winters and hot summers, make sure to pack a winter jacket and a swimsuit. Boston has various prestigious universities and institutes besides the MGH such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard medical school, Dana-Farber cancer institute and many more which makes it a perfect location for any student looking for a scientific career.