

Field Report

Home Institution: Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Villach, Austria

Host Institution: Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center (FLREC), University of Florida, USA

Student: MAHMOUD ABUSALIM

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General impression:

As I have arrived in Florida during COVID-19, I have had to spend the first two weeks alone in quarantine. Although these weeks were difficult, I have found everything organized by my supervisor Dr. Hochmair. He asked my colleagues there to prepare a place for me to stay in, also they brought me everything I need which made my quarantine period easier. The University of Florida staff helped prepare my paperwork for staying in the US. We had a weekly online meeting during my stay in which all UF Research Center attend and make sure everything is going alright and everyone is doing fine. My colleagues Ammar, Faisal, and Innocencia were friendly and always coming by visiting me and managing to make my staying stressless.

In the beginning, I was working online from home having access to the UF server and having weekly meetings with my supervisors, then I have got access to the UF Geomatics lab so I can work from thereafter the lockdown. I had great support from my colleagues and UF staff during my quarantine and my staying period. I have visited several places with my colleagues after the lockdown such as the beach, parks, and downtown. We also have done some joyful activities like playing tennis, barbeque, and shopping. It was a great opportunity to meet new people from different cultures and exploring new places.

Quality of the host institution:

UF Research Center has different great facilities for working and having fun. The Geomatics lab is greatly organized and prepared for working in an effective and calm environment. They have brought me a monitor to my room so I can work effectively from home during my quarantine. There was also a yard for playing basketball in free times.

Contact within the host institution, inclusion in the organization:

UF Research Center staff and colleagues were extremely welcoming, supportive, and friendly. I have got all the help and support whenever I needed from my supervisor, colleagues, and staff since day one until I left.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows:

In my opinion, the Marshall Plan Foundation offers a great opportunity for students so they can have a chance to experience working and studying in such a great place as UF Research Center. Florida has expensive housing, so it is better to stay in the UF dorm which is saving transportation time and money. Having a bicycle helps in exploring the place and exercising at the same time. I recommend going out biking with colleagues exploring Florida's beautiful scenery, parks, and beaches. I also recommend, always asking colleagues about the best places to visit and also for help when needed, as they are very supportive and friendly.

Warm regards,

Mahmoud Abusalim