

36 Irving Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02114, USA

Dear all,

First of all, I would like to thank the University of Applied Sciences, FH Technikum Wien for the great opportunity that it gives us together with the Marshall plan scholarship foundation to make such a dream come true. Thanks to both institutions, many of us have seen our greatest dream come true. Having the opportunity to travel to the most prestigious universities in the world to carry out a research project of such magnitude is undoubtedly something that we all believed would remain in an unfulfilled dream. And that is why I only have words of gratitude.

Secondly, I would like to describe my research project and my role in that project as well as a general impression of my research stay abroad. Personally, I was admitted to the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, an institution that belongs to the well-known University "Massachusetts Institute of Technology". My project consisted in characterizing hepatocytes turnover in liver homeostasis and injury. The main objective of this project was to understand how hepatocytes regenerate the liver and the molecular mechanisms that allow hepatocytes to retain proliferative capacity despite being differentiated cells. This understanding could be harnessed to engineer proliferative capacity in other differentiated cell types, such as cardiomyocytes and neurons, and thereby confer regenerative ability to other organs such as the heart and brain. During the period in which I was at the Whitehead Institute carrying out this project, I had the help of my PI, Kristin Knouse, M.D., Ph.D., an eminence in her field of research with remarkable achievements. During this period, I was able to put into practice everything I had learnt in the Master program, I had moments of frustration when an experiment did not go as planned or when the results obtained were not at all as expected, but I also had moments of satisfaction when I saw all my efforts pay off. We already know what research is like, a job that requires all our time and attention but that sooner or later reveals data and results that will help us improve the lives of many people.

My overall impression of this stay abroad has been very good. People dedicate all their time to research but they try to do it in a fun way. The people in my laboratory were always very friendly and very nice, making this stay a wonderful time in my life. I gain a lot of experience and contacts that I can count on whenever I need it.

Regarding the quality of my host institution, I only have words of gratitude and admiration. From the people at the front desk, IT personnel, HR department, laboratory staff, cleaning staff to scientists and supervisors. They were all super kind, professional and helpful. They all made it very easy since the day I got admitted in the internship. In particular, I would like to recognize Rachel Hodge's work. She is the head of the immigration department in the HR department and she was the one sending me all the information and documentation to get the Visa approved. She was really helpful and made everything work smoothly. And of course, my supervisor, Dr. Knouse. She was outstanding and always very helpful.

If I had to make a list of contacts for future applicants, I would definitely say that the most important contact is Kristin Knouse as head of her laboratory. There are many different labs inside the Whitehead Institute but hers was the most appealing for me. However, I recommend the applicants to get in the Whitehead Institutes website and explore all different laboratories because each person might have a dream project and I am sure they will find the appropriate one for them. <http://wi.mit.edu/research>

I don't know who is reading this document right now, but if it is someone who is considering applying for a Marshall Plan Scholarship to contribute to society with their skills and dedication, I can only tell

you the following "Go ahead! Fight for what you want. Make your dream come true. Show the world what you are worth and what you are capable of. Do not let anyone discourage you or tell you that you do not deserve it or that you are not up to the task because from experience I tell you that they are wrong. Only you know the potential that you have yet to exploit. Only you know what you are capable of and what your dreams are. Live them now that you can because if you don't, in a few years you will look back, you will think about your past self and you will regret not having tried your luck and not having taken advantage of this unique and incomparable opportunity."

If you have any other questions about my project, my steps or academic achievements after this research project or anything else that occurs to you, do not hesitate to contact me through the email that has been provided to the foundation.

Wishing you all the very best of luck,

Esther Dolz