

Field Report



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

Host Institution: San Diego State University, San Diego, USA

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General Impression:

My research stay abroad started quite interestingly, since it began during the coronavirus's first wave and the resulting restrictions. The day my journey began I was deeply grateful to make it into the USA before the travel restriction came into effect the next day. As I arrived there, I received the message to self-quarantine for two weeks and the prospect that the university won't open up for an undefined period. During my first night in San Diego worldwide travel warnings from the Federal Ministry of the Republic of Austria were released with the recommendation to come back to my home country, Austria. I called my professors from the Host University as well as from the FH Villach, and discussed the current situation with them. After weighing all the pros and cons of staying in the USA, I came to the conclusion that it would be better to fly back home. Therefore, I returned to the airport the same night and tried to catch a flight back to Austria, which suddenly didn't appear that easy anymore, since nearly all the counters of the different European airlines were already closed, and the flights cancelled. However, after spending one entire day at the airport comparing different options to get home, I managed to apply for a Canadian Visa to enter Europe via Toronto.

The second attempt for the research stay abroad was a home office solution. Therefore, I attended weekly meetings with my professors from the San Diego State University as well as from my home University, the FH Villach. In between the meetings I kept in touch via mail with my professor from the host university. This solution made it possible for me to integrate foreign knowledge and knowhow into my master thesis. However, I still hope to experience San Diego in person one day soon.

Quality of the host institution:

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to enjoy the qualities of the host institutions since I didn't have the possibility to enter the facilities of the host institutions physically due the covid lockdown restrictions. All used programs for my thesis run on my one computer or were used on the server of my home university.

Contact with the host institution, inclusion in the organization:

I am super grateful for my guidance of the thesis by the professor of the host university. Anytime I mailed him a question I received his answer almost immediately as if there was no difference in time zone.

Recommendations for further Marshall Plan students and fellows:

I think San Diego State University is a great place to work and study especially with the support of the Marshall Plan fund since the costs of living in San Diego is quite expensive. I can recommend starting the search for an apartment/room to stay early since they are rare and therefore expensive and hard to find.

Yours faithfully,

Erik Frühwirth