

# Marshallplan scholarship – Field Report

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## General impression of my research stay abroad

The overall impression of my research stay was very positive. My host professor, Prof. Losego, and all of his group members were very welcoming and I was quickly integrated in their group, on-, as well as off-campus. It was a very fruitful time regarding the research activities but also in diving into the American culture.

## Quality of the host institution

Georgia Tech is a very good University with a huge campus. I was working at the Materials Science & Engineering Institute but most of the research groups have collaborations across the University's institutes and schools. The lab equipment was excellent, and I furthermore was able to also use shared facilities. One of them was a student-run materials characterization lab and the other one was a shared facility with high-end devices, professionally run by technicians. As already mentioned, collaboration is very active at Georgia Tech, so if there are some devices which your own research group does not have it is likely that you find it at another group.

The Institute furthermore held weekly seminars, with top researchers from all over the US.

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

The organization before the trip as well as the arrival there was professionally managed by the secretary staff. There was no delay for documents for the visa and the work in the lab could be started very soon upon arrival. The research group was very welcoming, as already mentioned.

## Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

### *Housing*

Differently from major European cities, major US cities always have areas where it is usually not very safe to live. This is not different in Atlanta. As it is very difficult to find a place before arrival in the US, I booked an Airbnb for 1 month. There are many Airbnb possibilities with usually discounted prices for longer stays, so this was not much more expensive than for a permanent housing (I paid around 800 – 900 \$). In the US, I found a place via a University housing Facebook group (GT Housing,...) and I lived in a shared apartment with 3 other people (I paid around 700 \$ for a room with my own bathroom). The house was very close to campus in Home Park. This is an area which was considered very dangerous a couple of years ago; however, in the last years the GT police started to patrol in this area and now many students live there. It is not a fancy neighborhood but I can recommend it, it is very close to campus and comparably cheap. Organized student apartments are extremely expensive and usually cost more than 1000 \$/month. Areas which I can further recommend but need longer

commute: Midtown, Virginia highland, Cabbagetown/Reynoldstown, Atlantic Station and the area north of it.

### *Transport*

Atlanta has horribly traffic and it is huge. The highway cuts right through the middle of the city. However, there are some fairly new and good possibilities to bike. The Beltline is a shared bike/walking path and it brings you along the Atlanta Eastside to Piedmont Park and further to Georgia Tech. There is a good biking path from Georgie Tech to Downtown. I bought a used bike at Sopo Bicycle Cooperative, it was a fair deal. They have a workshop and help you repair the bike. A further possibility is Starter Bikes at Georgia Tech, they are in the CRC garage every Friday afternoon. It is hard to get further out of the city without a car. Many main roads are not at all bike friendly and very dangerous. Pay attention where you ride your bike. Public transport is not very well established, except for the connection to the Airport. It is usually safe to use it.

### *Sports*

The Georgia Tech sports center (CRC) is excellent and cheap, you can find lots of activities there. There are also outdoor clubs, which do great trips and I got to know some climbers very quickly (climbing trip to Tennessee). There is a boulder gym in Midtown which is not too bad. If you want to do a longer bike ride, there is a good path to Stone Mountain. Bike group rides every Monday: M + M rides

### *Miscellaneous*

Thing worth a visit: Beltline, Piedmont Park, Georgia Aquarium, History Center, Museum of High Art (check out the Friday Jazz session), Martin Luther King Memorial

Good church, very nice people: Midtown church (<https://midtownchurchatl.com/>)

Concerts: Little Five Points, Fox Theatre

Festivals: Stomp'n'Chomp (Chilli cookout), Music MidTown, East Atlanta Strut...

