

Field Report

Marshall Plan Scholarship 19/20

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1 General Impression of Research Stay Abroad

In total, my stay at UCLA was a total success. I have learnt a lot academically and personally and was able to establish a connection between the research group at TU Vienna with the research group at UCLA as another student of TU Vienna is already in LA and conducting his master's thesis in the same group. Even though, this year was especially challenging with the pandemic, I was greatly supported by both my supervisors at TU Vienna and UCLA to extend my stay and finish my work as planned.

2 Quality of Host Institution

The quality of the research facilities were high. Because of the high rankings of the University of California, Los Angeles the most brilliant minds are attracted to take part in a program of this university. Their dedication, knowledge and great ability of problem solving are attributing to a great environment to learn and strive for more. The research group I was able to do research in was a very young group and therefore with the best technology possible.

3 Contacts Within the Host Institution / Inclusion in the Organization

The Henry Samueli School of Engineering has a small department of chemical engineers which has a very familiar atmosphere. The students are invited to a weekly coffee hour where the department provides free coffee and cookies. Games are organized by the students organization which are greatly used. The favorite game of our group was 'Codenames' where lots of fun discussions started and everyone was invited to take part. Once a month, the student organisation organized a bar night for socializing. Because of the strong bonds in this department my closest friendships of my stay started in this setting. Every week a seminar was taking place where post-docs from other universities were presenting their research. The seminar was mandatory for graduate students and exchange student

were warmly welcomed to participate. It was highly interesting as most professors of the department were also taking part and engaging actively in discussions. In this way we were confronted with their views on things and animated to critical thinking. When the pandemic started, the department showed their spontaneity and organized a zoom seminar where the professors themselves presented their research strengthening the bonds between the research groups and allowing insights into the diverse research that is happening in the department. For any organizational matters, I had several people in the department that I had as contact person where I was kindly helped. For any other issue that I had, the 'Dashew Center', an office for international students, was available for in person-advice.

4 Recommendations for Future Marshall Plan Students and Fellows

Especially for Los Angeles it is said that you need a car to survive. However, as a student at UCLA living in Westwood or the surroundings the public transport system is actually pretty decent. The beach can be reached in half an hour as well as other tourist destinations for sightseeing on the weekends such as Hollywood, the Griffith Observatory or Downtown. With some patience even further places can be visited with the public transportation system. Another must-see are of course the huge sports events LA has to offer. Cards for a famous Lakers basketball game might be expensive, but it's already worth going for a Clippers game and tickets can be as cheap as 20 dollars and get the Staples Center experience. Even though there are a number of national parks close to Los Angeles, it also offers endless possibilities to go for a quick hike in the hills with amazing views.