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To Whom It may concern,

in this paper, I would like to express my personal experiences coming from the study abroad thanks to the Marshall Plan Scholarship.

At the beginning, after a thorough investigation into selecting an appropriate school I found the University of South Carolina, which stands out due to its scientific reputation, rich history, and international background. At the Department of Mechanical Engineering Prof. Sang Hee Won has taken my application with great pleasure and ensured my writing of master's thesis at his research laboratory.

My general impression of the research stay abroad is above average. The overall research treatment had met to my personal requirements. The laboratory takes place in the aerospace center of the university and consequently the building was equipped amazingly by state-of-the-art technology. Already in the first week, I have got every entrance permission, additionally, I had got my own workstation included a computer, screens, etc. in the office. In the laboratory, I had my own space too, where I could make my experiments. Basically, every team member has an own research, but we could help each other if it was necessary. My professor is an acknowledged person in the combustion research area and so he has a huge knowledge about it. On the first day, I had received several works of literature from him, that I had to read in the first two weeks, and then my work had begun. After that, we discussed more times a week about the work processes. The most interesting point was that if I needed anything during the experiment, I could order it to the lab without other's authorization.

Regarding quality of the host institution, I would start with the fact that there is a significant difference between a typical US college and a classic European university in terms of the campus size and thus the way the campus is structured. It took me almost a week to find my way around the campus and every time I looked confused trying to decipher the street names on a map, but someone always approached me and helped me. The campus and the environment including every building of the university was amazing. It took me the impression, that everything is built for the students. I also got the opportunity to take place on some real classes, which were kept by respectful professors.

Finding a good accommodation in Columbia is challenging at a good price/quality ratio. My housing was perfect, and my host was very kind too, but I had huge luck with him, however, I think not any international exchange visitor has this kind of luck. The University's apartments can be rented for at least one year and there are only a few opportunities to obtain a room or flat for shorter time period. The public transport in the city is not as well developed as we got used to it in Europe. Everybody has a car there but for such

a short time period does not make sense to buy or rent one. Therefore, a European must be adapted to the new situation and must be more careful to use the bike among the cars. At the same time, I had huge luck with my labmate, who was so kind, and I could join him every day when we went to the university.

Regarding the contacts within the host institution, I think, everybody was very professional and helped me to be able to go the university. First and foremost, I thank my academic supervisor, Professor Sang Hee Won, for accepting me into his research group. He is available in any time, and when I had any kind of question, he replied to me very soon. He has taught me more than I could have imagined ever. He has shown me, what a good scientist should be.

The international office is an international student's first point of contact at school and it got me a very good impression indeed. International office was very helpful during the whole visiting time. In the first days they provided a good assistance. The head of the international office was Mr. Travis Weatherford, who was very professional in any aspects. Everything was organized very well, and he made a quick way to get my visa, entrance card, insurance, etc. I was well informed what was happening and when.

Every result described in my thesis was accomplished with the help and support of fellow labmates and collaborators. Every person from the laboratory have been supportive of my research goals and who worked actively to provide me with the protected academic time to pursue those goals. I also have had the opportunities for exposure to American culture outside the lab. From the first day, every time, when we had the opportunity, I went out with the labmates after work. From my personal prospect, Americans are usually very friendly and outgoing.

In an increasingly globalized world, studying abroad is now more important than ever. If somebody gets an opportunity from the Marshall Plan Foundation to do such kind of research at US University abroad, he/she definitely must not hesitate, just the opposite: must go for it! Such a great opportunity can provide a good insight in a US study environment which is not necessarily the same as what is in Europe. Therefore, an overview of different cultural study practices provides background knowledge and an understanding of what to expect from study abroad and what the pros and cons of it can be. With assistance from the Marshall Plan Foundation, I could work with other motivated students in an inspiring environment to address local and global challenges by utilizing my knowledge, tools, and creativity in attempting to build a better world.

Sincerely,

David Török

