

Letter of Motivation

For The Marshall Plan Scholarship

Field Report

Student: Jacob Viertel

Vienna, September 26, 2020



1 General impression of your research stay abroad

With Dr. Perkowski I was very lucky to have one of the best hosts I could possibly imagine. He supported me in every aspect regarding the subject quantum computing. He and his staff were always friendly, helpful, and kind when I approach them. Due to the global pandemic I could not experience the whole Portland State University feeling but in general the campus made a very good impression to me.

Nevertheless, Portland has a serious issue regarding drug abuse, homelessness, and political polarization. This combination made me feel very uncomfortable during the entire stay. The amount of homeless people on the street, walking around and screaming at people was so intense, that I tried to stay inside buildings as often as possible. During the nighttime all you could hear was sirens of police cars and explosions of flash grenades. I talked with Democrats and Republicans during my stay and I was always shocked about the hate they carry inside for people of the other party. It was hard to get into a good decent conversation as people always wanted to force their opinion on you.

As the time of my research stay was very special considering the global pandemic, the Black life matters movement, and the federal agents coming to Portland I do not want to say that it is always like that, but I did not experience any other times.

The only other good thing about my stay that is worth being mentioned is the nature in Portland. In general, Oregon has beautiful parks with natural sights that easily distract your worries. With long hikes through gigantic parks and good picnicks near astonishing waterfalls it was possible to somehow enjoy the stay abroad. To summarize, I would never go back to Portland again. With the things I experienced the chapter America is closed for me.

2 Quality of the host institution

My main contacts at Portland State University were Dr. Marek Perkowski and David Brandt who made it so easy for me to handle the infrastructure of the university. Research scholars have their own office and also the lab of Dr. Perkowski was well equipped for conducting any kind of research. On the campus policeman were permanently patrolling and also an ambulance was parked 247 next to the library to ensure a bit of security. The homeless people were also

inside the buildings like the library which was very strange for me as they screamed around or otherwise distracted you from your studies.

3 Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization

Dr. Marek Perkowski; Supervisor from the Portland State University
David Brandt; International Scholar Advisor

4 Recommendations for future Marshall Plan students and fellows

Do not rent any apartment near Downtown or Old Town. Those areas are very dangerous and not nice at all. Try to find anything that is located outside those two areas, as those suburban areas have more charm and are more secure. A lot of people take drugs in Portland, so you should be definitely be comfortable with people being on drugs lying on the street or in parks. Try to make friends in Portland in advance via Facebook or other social media platforms. It is hard to find nice places in Portland, so locals can guide you around. Last but not least, keep in mind that the slogans of Portland are "Keep Portland weird" and "Portland is were young people go to retire" which are both very precise.