

Before the Research Internship

I stumbled upon this opportunity when I was looking through my emails. Even though I didn't have the chance to attend their info session due to scheduling conflicts, I was able to do more research about this program through seniors' reports and their official website information. With that, it sparked my interest to use this opportunity to travel abroad. Not only can I use this chance to explore the United States, but I also have the opportunity to work under professors who are outside of Taiwan.

After submitting the necessary documents for the application, I just waited patiently for the university to send me another email, and at the end of January, I received an email saying that I was accepted into the program, and I would be working under Professor Marcus Foston.

After receiving the news, I was preparing the necessary documents to secure my visa. In addition to that, I also emailed Prof. Foston about my arrival and asked him about the scientific papers I need to read and familiarize myself with before arriving at the university. With that, Dr. Anand, who's my mentor in Prof. Foston's lab, gave me a few scientific papers to read.

During the Research Internship

After arriving in the United States, the first thing I did was stock up on home appliances and groceries since the cost in the United States is significantly higher than in Taiwan. Therefore, we can't dine out on every single meal. I was very fortunate that Jeffery Huang from OIA was able to connect me with one of the NTU alumni who is currently pursuing a PhD program at Washington University in St. Louis. Fortunately, he also has a car. Hence, not only was he able to pick me up directly from the airport, but he was also able to bring me around Trader Joe's and Walmart to buy some necessary home appliances and groceries. After that, people from the program started to move into the dormitory, and a few days later, the internship started.

During this internship, I would usually clock in at 9 am and leave at around 5 pm. Every day, I would check in with Dr. Anand, who's my mentor, and he would give me a brief rundown of the planned experiments for the day. After that, under his guidance and direction, I would conduct those experiments. Once the experiments were finished, we would further analyze the results. There would also be a lab meeting once every week, where students of Prof. Foston's lab would gather together. During that meeting, PhD students would update the professor about their progress on their respective projects, and the professor would give them advice on their plans for it. Moreover, to ensure that I'm keeping up with the lab, the professor would also schedule an in-person meeting with me just to make sure that I know the objective of the project I'm working on.

Other than lab work, there are also some activities and events that the program would host. For instance, they would host a Graduate Student Forum, where they would invite professors and

current PhD students, encouraging and explaining why students should pursue a graduate degree. Moreover, they also hosted an event called a Poster Palooza, where students from various summer programs at Washington University in St. Louis would present their projects with a scientific poster. Through that event, not only was I able to present my project to my friends and professors, but I also got a chance to see what other students are working on. It's an amazing opportunity to gain more insights about other labs' projects.

In addition to these works during the internship, during the weekends, my friends and I would plan some trips to explore St. Louis and the United States. For instance, we were able to visit the Budweiser factory, Cardinals games, Six Flags, The Arch, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis Art Museum, etc. We were even able to plan a short weekend trip to Chicago, too.

In conclusion, this 10-week period in the United States has been the most fulfilling, valuable, and rewarding summer I've ever had. I'm very thankful that Washington University in St. Louis was able to give me this opportunity, and Prof. Foston for choosing me as his student intern.

