

Francis Michael Cavallo

Medical Biotechnology 2015

Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA.

My internship was from the 15th June to 5th of August.

(I did not require a visa since I am an American citizen)

I bought an insurance that was subjected to me directly by the University.

I received a scholarship of 2500\$ by the CHUST program; My hosting university did not provide a salary or any kind of accommodation.

Project description

I got in contact with my professor a few days after my arrival, we had an appointment and he showed me the lab and introduced me to the research group; The first 1-2 weeks of lab I employed to get used to all the equipment and the techniques that I would then employ in the following weeks. The professor then assigned me a project which consisted in studying the interface between bacteria and a hydrophobic surface, process that I observed in time by taking pictures with a fluorescent microscope. The project touched the areas of nanotechnology, microbiology and microscopy.

The professor gave me a lot of freedom and told me to work whenever I wanted and allowed me to have my own hours, (which was awesome) and every time I had some questions he was always nice. In average I worked about 6 hours a day in the lab, a general "PhD's" hours in the lab was from 9:30 to 17:00. I was given free access to the lab and entrusted with the microscopes that I used for the pictures.

Before I was allowed to access the lab Brown University required 2 mandatory courses, one on lab safety and the other on hazardous waste disposal, after which I was given a pair of keys and a Brown card.

The course that I took in Nanotechnology helped me to have an idea of what I was practically doing in the lab.

Campus life

Since I was there in the summer break there were no classes at the university and most of the students were home for the holidays, nevertheless there were still students at campus, the main street (Theyer street) was quite nice and had lots of shops and restaurants were there were popular places to go. The downtown (20 minutes by foot) there were even more people, and there was a very big commercial center. The prices were not that high, compared to Stockholm but the only big supermarket in that area was quite expensive.

The position of Providence is quite convenient, its half way between Boston and New York, If one seeks to visit New England it's a very good base.

Niagra falls were about 8 hours of car away; also the border with Canada is close (6 hours). Trains are not cheap and busses are much more affordable; but to fully appreciate the country renting a car is a good choice (about 50-60\$ a day all included).

Living expenses and the ticket for the two months costed me around 3000\$ and most of it was covered by the scholarship, but of course it depends on what one wants to do, one could have also managed only with the 2500\$; but the problem is that once you are there there are many ways of wasting money.

I personally did not have to prove anything to the American government, but for the Swedish citizens there is a minimum amount to show in the bank before you are allowed the visa for the stay. The university has a housing service, but unfortunately for me in that period there was a sports

contest going on and so most of the houses were occupied, although the prices were high, between 800-1300\$ a month.

I booked a ticket and left Stockholm a few days before my starting date; I landed at JFK airport and from there left by bus for Providence (which is a few hours of travel). For my accommodation I rented a room on airbnb.com from which I could choose between a few options, I ended up paying 600\$ a month and had a private room with shared kitchen (the apartment was in a really old house and was honestly quite bad).

The apartment was on College Hill and the university campus was far 10 minutes of walking, considering the position I did not need to take any busses in my whole stay period.

Providence is a nice city and not a very big one; the good thing with that was that there is relatively low crime (considering the situation in American cities), and in general I had a good impression of the city.

Application

Concerning the application I can't say much, due to my American passport I did not need to prove anything;

But from the other people that went there I know that an interview with at the American embassy of Stockholm was necessary (for which it's better to get started as soon as possible since the waiting time is quite long).

What my University requested from me was my passport and proof of my id.