

During late August & late December I worked as scholar intern at the Mexico and Latin American Institutes from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. As part of the internship program organized by the Hinckley Institute of Politics of the University of Utah, and the International Center of my home university, the CAU in Kiel. In the following lines, I will briefly describe my experience there.

I had two supervisors, each was a guest research fellow at the Center, namely Dr. Viridiana Rios & Prof. Dr. Kent Eaton. The reason why I applied to the program was to work with the former, given that in my own research, I use some of the research techniques that she has applied in a setting (Mexico) different to the one I work with (USA). I was lucky that in the end my I was selected to work for her, and additionally, I was assigned to the Latin American Program, to assist (and learn!) from my second supervisor. Working at the Center was a very rich experience in academic and social terms. The supervision of both of my advisors was very different from each other. I learned a lot from both, it was not easy at any point (at the Center, you are given the flexibility and freedom to work the amount of hours stated on your contract, or do extra hours, as I did), rather, it was challenging. And it never stopped getting more and more challenging. But interesting, too.

I was placed in the intern room, along with a group of around 10 scholar interns. All of them were studying in different universities in the US, mostly in California and Texas. Sharing such a big office made it easy to meet all of them. It was also very interesting to get to know more about the university system in the US.

There is always a conference, discussion, talk or some sort of event at the Center going on, where prominent scholars or politicians (e.g., the King of Spain) share their results or points of view about particular recent topics. If you have the chance to attend some of these, do not think it twice. It is a good opportunity to expand your network of contacts and to get the latest updates of a particular issue.

Regarding the city, it is a warm, friendly and dynamic place. The dorm where Hinckley's interns are placed are well equipped; a bit far from the city, but the facilities are excellent. All the Utes I lived with and met were very friendly, too, curious about Germany and willing to travel, invite you to events of their internships, cook with you, go to trivia or just to grill on the rooftop.

The International Center did a great job in securing such a relevant cooperation agreement with the HIP. However, most of the administration of the program is taken care of by the latter. I would advise to be patient and to keep close contact with the Hinckley staff, since the organizational culture in the US is markedly different to the one I was used to in Germany. All in all, the people from Hinckley did a great job, too and they were very supportive, flexible and friendly during all the process.

Victor Cruz Aceves

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