IT University Travel Report

Host University: University of Oregon

Study Programme at IT University: Software Development and Technology

Activity Abroad: Oregon Programming Language Summer School (OPLSS 2014)

Your stay abroad

Please describe your stay abroad:

Broadly speaking, OPLSS 2014 is a two-week summer school where we received lectures from well-renowned researchers in the field of programming language research. The main theme this year was “Types, Logic, Semantics, and Verification”, and it encompassed topics ranging from proof, type and category theory, to programming in and designing dependently typed programming languages, to practical software verification using Coq.

In addition to attending scripted lectures, there was an opportunity to present your current work and listen to other short student presentations. These were often interesting and varied, and some of them did serve as an inspiration to rethink how my current work was structured. Additionally, I used the opportunity to present myself and got some really useful feedback that I had used to make my presentation even better.

Besides the academic content, it was of course possible to attend various social activities. For example, I met some people who had worked in the same field and had interesting discussions with them. I had also attended some of the social gatherings and sometimes we went out for a couple of rounds of playing board games. In fact, during the whole summer school some of us had agreed on playing a game of Diplomacy online (http://webdiplomacy.net/), which led to a lot of heated debate during the breaks throughout the summer school on which alliances to form and what strategic moves to make (If you are interested, the game ended draw).

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?

My work has been focused on programming languages and specifically dependently typed programming, and therefore I was recommended to attend the summer school by some friends who had attended there the previous years. Since the topics seemed really interesting to me, and I had lacked formal introductions to some of them; I thought it might be a good idea to follow such
recommendations and attend. Furthermore, I was at that time applying for various PhD-positions around the world and believed that it would strengthen my application if I had a good background in such topics.

I believe that many of my expectations were met, and I was definitely happy to attend there. It was a bit harder than what I originally thought, but this was perhaps not unthinkable since there were many topics to be covered and the lectures were densely packed.

**Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?**

From an academic point of view, I got a lot smarter and have gotten a more interesting background on some of the topics I previously only had heard shallowly before. I had also achieved to learn more about the thing I was working on now in depth, and got to learn new takes on how to solve some of the issues I was struggling with.

From a personal point of view, I got to meet a lot of interesting new people (and perhaps future colleagues). Furthermore, it was my first time in the United States, so I got to experience first-hand how the culture was there, visited the Pacific Ocean, and got to hear some interesting stories.

**Arranging your stay**

**Please give a short description of the process involved in arranging your stay:**

I just had to send an e-mail to one of the organizers, who had pre-arranged both accommodation in the dorms and access to food in the cantines. Some other people, had found their own place to stay nearby but I found the other place reasonable.

**What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?**

I just read the homepage of the summer school, which said to contact the organizer.

**How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?**

Contacted the organizer. The only major thing I had to arrange was to book flight tickets which I did online, and then take a shuttle to the university.

**Expenses and Financing**

**Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad**

Attending the conference costs around $1000 (almost 6500 kr.) covering lectures, activities, accommodation and food. A plane ticket costs around 8500 kr. to Oregon, and I had used around 500 kr. for other transportation locally. Finally, I would expect that some pocket money is needed for various activities over there which I would recommend having 2000 kr. or more depending on how
much you plan to do. So I would expect, the trip to end up costing around 16000 kr. in total, if you plan to attend.

Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

I had only applied for the travel pool.

Recommendations for other students:

• Plan well ahead (like 3 month or more), since there a lot of things to be taken care of, like paper work and possibly have sometime to apply for grants
• You can apply for a grant over there to cover accommodation and food (that is almost 5000 kr. worth), if you don’t have such covered. I didn’t apply since I thought it was too late, but I had later head that most of those had applied that year got accepted (so it might be a good idea).
• Definitely go for presenting your work at the student presentations. They are meant to be informal, and much of the feedback you get over there will be useful for your further work/research.
• Attend social activities. As much as the academic content is important, many of those who are attending are probably people you are going to meet in the future (if you are continuing in academia). Also discussing with other attendees might provide you a new angle on the work you are already working with.