

## The beginning of something great

Monday, 09.03.2018.

Locations:

- Zagreb, Croatia
- Frankfurt, Germany
- Washington DC, Virginia

This story begins with me travelling on a plane for the first time ever, so it was understandable why I had a certain amount of fear and tension. But to my surprise, I found all of the flights very comfortable, due to the professionalism and kindness of the United Airlines aircrew. Unfortunately, everything did not go smoothly ... as our flight to Cincinnati was canceled due to routine maintenance; which resulted in spending the night at the Hilton hotel on the airlines expense.



*Dulles International Airport*

## The first contact with America

Tuesday, 09.04.2018.

Locations:

- Washington DC, Virginia
- Cincinnati, Ohio

After an excellent breakfast, we went to Dulles International Airport, where our flight to Cincinnati was waiting. During the landing, and the drive to our housing accommodation at

the Sisterhood dorm near the University of Cincinnati's campus – HUC, we had a chance to see (for the first time) a typical American city with the tall buildings, office buildings and other attractions. Already stunned by the beauty of America, we went on to explore Clifton (where UC is located) with HaRoon Khan, a Marketing student from UC. The design of the buildings, the inside grounds of campus, the multiple events that were going on and overall atmosphere; gave us a true feeling of the “American spirit” and overall student life. We concluded the day by visiting downtown Cincinnati in the night.



*Cincinnati iz zraka*

## **The D Day - 1**

**Wednesday, 09.05.2018.**

**Locations:**

- **Cincinnati, Ohio**

Finally, the day came where I was feeling a small amount of jitters, but also excitement, came. Today we visited “Clermont College” – a branch of UC’s campus with professor Victoria Appatova, a person who immensely contributed to this project. The most important part of this visit was the presenting of our various research in front of many important people involved within the program. The title of my research was *“The Positive Effects of Learning Computer Programming on Students with Disabilities”*. After our presentation which went very well, one of the professors invited us to his class. There we were “grilled”, as he called it, with multiple questions about Croatia by his students. Afterwards, we were the ones asking the questions about the local culture. This was a really memorable and fun experience from which everyone learned and benefited.



*„Grilling“*

## The first contact with American art

Thursday, 09.06.2018.

Locations:

- Cincinnati, Ohio

After a short walk around, we gathered in one of the buildings of UC's Clifton campus, so professor Violeta Vidaček-Hainš and professor Victoria could present their research and findings. After the presentation, we continued on to the opening of the "Impact Building" and new McNair office. The night was reserved for a visit to the Taft Museum, where an event was organized under the title "House Party". In the museum we had a chance to see many famous works of artists such as: Ansel Adams, Vanessa German and many others. After we saw all the art and made some of our own with a "screen printing" technique, we headed to the garden where beverages and light snacks were served.



*Work of Vanessa German*

## The culture of a "small" American city

Friday, 09.07.2018.

Locations:

- Cincinnati, Ohio

The day began with a tour of the stores located around the campus. During the tour, HaRoan was telling us about student life in the USA. Later, we went to visit the Cincinnati center with Valda Bronston, the McNair Scholars UC Assistant Director. One of the places we missed in our first tour of the downtown is the "Great American Ball Park", the local Reds baseball team stadium. After a long walk, we decided to have a drink at the bar located on the roof of a local hotel. Eventually, we had to leave the bar and the amazing view, so we could ease our hunger at the Yard House bar.



*Great American Ball Park*



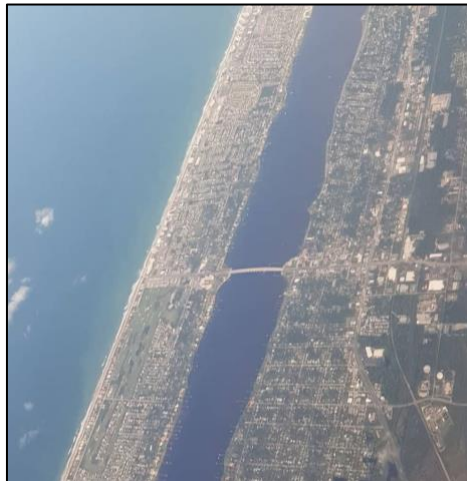
## **The arrival at „The City Beautiful“**

**Saturday, 09.08.2018.**

**Locations:**

- **Cincinnati, Ohio**
- **Orlando, Florida**

This day began with us packing and saying our goodbyes to HaRoon and the city. After we were done, we headed to the airport, where our flight to Orlando, FL was waiting. At the airport in Orlando we were welcomed by familiar faces, the board of our faculty and Michael Aldarondo-Jeffries, Director of Academic Advancement Programs. On our way to the hotel that we were staying at, we had a chance to see the many attractions of Orlando. The day ended with a visit to downtown Orlando.



*Orlando from air*

## **“We choose to go to the Moon...”**

**Sunday, 09.09.2018**

**Locations:**

- **Orlando, Florida**

After a nice breakfast we visited Kennedy Space Center. During our visit we saw a lot of the equipment, devices and rockets that NASA used throughout history. We had an opportunity

to see a few documentaries and speeches, which gave us a deeper insight into the importance of this part of our history. Especially, an important part of the Kennedy Space Center was McNair Memorial Park, which was dedicated to astronaut Ronald McNair. While we were leaving the camp, we were overfilled with joy and many impressions.



*Kennedy Space Center*

## **The future is promising**

**Monday, 9.10.2018.**

**Locations:**

- **Orlando, Florida**

This day began with our visit to University of Central Florida (UCF) campus. At the beginning of our visit we had several meetings during which many discussions were started about the collaboration between FOI and UCF. It was very interesting to hear many different ideas about the new ways of collaboration. After the meetings, we visited some of the most important buildings in the campus. The day ended with our visit to Disney World, the largest Disney park in the world.



*A meeting at UCF*



## **The arrival at “The Windy City”**

**Tuesday, 09.11.2018.**

**Locations:**

- **Orlando, Florida**
- **Chicago, Illinois**

After a quick packing, we headed to the airport as we had a flight to our last destination in the USA, the city of Chicago, IL. During our landing, I was in awe of size and beauty of this city. In Chicago, we were welcomed with a great dinner by the Director for TRiO Programs at DePaul, Luciano Berardi and Christina Tus, Project Director for the McNair Scholars Program at DePaul. On our way to the hotel, we had a chance to explore a part of the local Chicago suburbs. All in all, it was a great first day at Chicago.



*Chicago O'Hare International Airport*

## Small place but great people

Wednesday, 09.12.2018.

Locations:

- Chicago, Illinois

We spent our first morning in Chicago by exploring the Pilsen neighborhood and non-profit community-Based organization “El Valor”, which enables people with disabilities to hang out and gain knowledge and skills that are needed in today’s world. During our visit Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, Professor and Head of the Department of Occupational Therapy at UIC, was talking about the hard-working people of this neighborhood and struggles they currently face. I especially liked murals at the walls of this neighborhood and the messages their authors were sending about the current situation in Pilsen. Later, we visited the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), where we were welcomed by Fabricio E. Balcazar, a professor in the Department of Disability and Human Development at the UIC. Professor, along with his colleagues, talked about the current situation at UIC, when it comes to people with disabilities.



*Street art at Pilsen*

## “The D Day - 2”

Thursday, 09.13.2018.

Locations:

- Chicago, Illinois

This was another one of those days that caused me certain anxiousness, but also excitement. We spent this day on DePaul University, where we had an opportunity to learn a lot about student exchange program and its numerous benefits. We also had a chance to hear the exchange experiences of other students. Afterwards, a very important event followed. It was the symbolic signing of agreement about collaboration between University of Zagreb and DePaul University. The importance of the event was raised even further when Consul Gerant, Mario Martinec and Fr. Joe Grbes, Custos of the Croatian Franciscans of the USA and Canada saved us a trip and came to us.





*The symbolic signing of the agreement*

## **Chicago from all angles**

**Friday, 14.09.2018.**

**Locations:**

- **Chicago, Illinois**

As the formal part of our visit was over, we used this day to learn about local culture and landmarks. We first decided to visit Navy Pier, but we only had a small amount of time to spend there. Still, we managed to ride The Centennial Wheel, which gave us an amazing view of the coastal part of Chicago. Afterwards, we visited the downtown and Willis Tower, the tallest building in the western hemisphere. We concluded the day by visiting United Center, the arena of Chicago Bulls and Chicago Blackhawks. This was a special experience for me, because I had an opportunity to take a picture with the statue of Michael Jordan.



*The view from Willis Tower*

## A small part of culture and history of USA

**Saturday, 09.15.2018.**

**Locations:**

- **Chicago, Illinois**

On this day we visited Field Museum. This is one of the most famous museums in Chicago and we just couldn't miss the opportunity to visit it. In this museum one can find a wide range of different types of exhibitions, from Underground world, ancient Egypt and China to Evolution of the planet. Most famous of them all is the exhibition of different types of dinosaurs and their evolution. Biggest star of this show is a Tyrannosaurus rex named Sue. After the museum we took a walk in the local park and coast.



*Field Museum*

## A farewell walk

**Saturday, 09.16.2018.**

**Locations:**

- **Chicago, Illinois**
- **Frankfurt, Germany**
- **Zagreb, Croatia**

With a heavy heart, we began to pack so we could check-out for the last time on this trip. As check-out time was until noon and our flight was at 6 pm, we decided to spend our last moments in Chicago with a walk in Lincoln Park. It's hard to describe the feelings that took over me during that walk. It was a mixture of sadness, but also happiness because I had a chance to see and experience many different amazing things and also meet and befriend many great people. This was really an incredible experience which I will remember and cherish for the rest of my life. I would like to take this opportunity and thank everyone who helped in any way or participated in this year's International Student Research Symposium and in that way enabled my colleagues and me to visit this wonderful country and present our research papers. For all that, I will be forever grateful.



*Statue of Alexander Hamilton*