

I was lucky enough to be able to do a research internship at the lab of George Church at Harvard Medical School, in the hub of biomedical research that is Boston. This group occupies multiple physical laboratories in both Harvard Medical School and the Wyss Institute, and houses over a 100 scientists. This was a completely new experience to me, as other labs I knew typically consist of less than 1/4<sup>th</sup> of that number of scientists. This scale comes with obvious consequences: even after 6 months there were still faces I've never seen before, and time with the PI is scarce and in high demand. At the same time though, scientists enjoy a high level of autonomy, and there are many different colleagues you can approach for help, advice, or to have a drink with during the Friday afternoon happy hours.

This of course changed when the coronavirus made its way to the US. Considering all possible outcomes, I count myself very lucky. My project was deemed essential so I was allowed to continue working on it, albeit without supervision present and in an almost empty lab. Luckily we managed to finish it in time.

Boston itself is a beautiful, lively city if you know where to look. Many areas have an almost European feel, like downtown or Harvard Square in Cambridge. The virus did affect my social life outside of the lab, as I spent approximately 3 months in semi-quarantine. Yet I still met many people prior to Boston's lockdown, and was able to see these people again closer to the end of my stay.

For anyone that is considering Boston as a destination for studying or working abroad, I can without a doubt recommend it.

Björn van Sambeek  
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Me (right) and my daily supervisor (left) in Harvard yard during my last week in Boston.