

Thoughts from Abroad!

Reflections from MIT ...

Diana Malvius, March and April 2010

Just in time for only one month left of the semester left and I finally feel as if I am actually up to speed on what's happening! I have now spent so much time at MIT and in Boston that I am beginning to feel at home here. Outgoing and positive Americans have become a daily event; Starbucks coffee a part of the diet. I greet people in recognition in the MIT corridors and at our local Whole Foods, and find myself casually dropping "How you doing?" to strangers I pass on the street... Phenomena and social patterns that were totally foreign to me almost a year ago have now crept into my habits. I've even gotten used to paying bills by mail cheque (although I sincerely hope that Americans will soon open their eyes to the beauty of the internet).



I have not been as heavily involved in the research project as originally planned, so I've had more time for things other than my research. I have participated in a research study at Harvard – as a subject instead of a researcher for a change. In fact, I have spent time being inspired in areas other than my own. In a city with over 300 000 students, there are many opportunities to attend lectures. There is always something interesting going on for those who have the time and interest. In addition to the extensive MIT offerings, I have greatly appreciated being able to attend free lectures elsewhere - at Harvard, for example, which, with its beautiful campus, is always nice to visit. I've also attended a few lecture series that have required my core competence.

I was one of the lucky few able to attend when Bill Gates appeared as a guest lecturer at MIT. Clearly a very cool experience that belongs in with the highlights of my time here!

Spring came early to Boston this year and I think that the city is at its best now - the climate is very pleasant and everything is in full bloom! The magnolia trees that line the streets are magnificent and are in themselves worth a trip here. Fantastic to run the Boston Marathon this year to such a setting (I'm only imagining, obviously!)

If you want to seek more flowers, you can go a little bit outside the city to the Arnold Arboretum, America's oldest botanical gardens, with a large collection of trees and shrubs. I was there on a trip with some colleagues when the lilacs were in full bloom (in April!) and can really recommend a visit.

A nascent interest in gardening, do you think? In which case, a funny and completely unexpected side-effect of my stay abroad ...

Springtime greetings,

Diana Malvius

PIEp PhD Student,
Visiting Researcher at MIT Aero-Astro Department



Magnolia in Boston Back Bay...



...and lilacs in the Arnold Arboretum