

See original version in German: <https://projekt.bht-berlin.de/elba/testimonials-from-bht>

Hello, my name is Nicholas, I am 25 years old and a student at Berliner Hochschule für Technik. I am currently in my sixth semester studying electric mobility and also spend a lot of my free time working with technology.

In this report, I would like to tell you about my experiences and encourage you to apply for an ELBA scholarship. I can tell you one thing in advance: I had a great time in the USA, and I would now like to share these experiences with you.

When I heard about the ELBA scholarship, I quickly decided that I would apply. I found the prospect of living and working in the USA very interesting. I was particularly excited about the opportunity to work on a joint project with Americans and experience the atmosphere at a college. After a three-month application period, I actually received an acceptance letter, which I honestly hadn't expected.

The day of departure arrived sooner than expected, and after a 12-hour flight (with a stopover in Iceland), I arrived in Newark. After a train ride and a subsequent Uber ride, I arrived in Trenton. I was warmly welcomed by my roommates at the guest house. Since several students from Berliner Hochschule für Technik were also staying there, the adjustment period was very pleasant, as we immediately had a connection through our shared university. The following week, I met my professor, Brett BuSha. I was warmly welcomed to the lab and given a friendly introduction to the project. All in all, I was very pleasantly surprised by American hospitality. I have traveled a lot in my life and met many people, but I have rarely experienced such helpfulness and friendliness.

Before I talk about my work in the laboratory, I would like to tell you a little about my life in the guesthouse. Of course, sharing a room with someone you don't know very well at first is unusual, but you get used to it very quickly. Otherwise, the guesthouse offers everything you need and more. In addition to a large kitchen and a basement with a washing machine and dryer, the house has a very large garden with a barbecue and fire pit. Since summers in New Jersey are very warm and sunny, it's really nice to have such a large garden. The location of the house is also very good, only about 10 minutes from the college. Sure, the nearest supermarket is 20 minutes away, but in the US, you can have everything delivered anyway.

Working in the laboratory was a new field for me, as I actually come from an electrical engineering background. With Brett BuSha however, I was able to work in the field of biomedical engineering. The aim of my project was to build a functioning pneumatic actuator with the appropriate control system. I was able to apply some of the things I had learned during my studies, but I also had to learn new things. At the end of the six months, I was able to submit a finished project. I learned a lot, especially in the areas of pneumatics and 3D design.

The focus of this scholarship is clearly on college work, but you still have plenty of time to travel, especially on the weekends. The USA, and the East Coast in particular, has so much to offer that it can be overwhelming at first to decide where to go first. New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington—you can do all of that in a weekend. If you have an extra day, you can also drive up to Maine, towards Acadia National Park. If I were to tell you about all my trips, I would end up writing half a novel, and I don't want to do that to you. I just want to say one more thing: rental cars are cheap, and so is gas. The East Coast is incredibly beautiful, to keep it as short as possible.

Nicholas Gottwick, TCNJ 2024, B.Eng., Electric Mobility Engineering

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone involved. The ELBA program is a great opportunity to get to know the country and its people. Being part of this scholarship was a huge privilege for me—THANK YOU. I can only advise you to take the plunge and embark on the adventure that is the USA; you won't regret it for a second!

Translated with deepL 😊