

My impression of research in Germany is excellent. The possible resources and funding were something I had yet to experience. I was used to a constant struggle for funding until I came to Germany. There were seemingly unlimited means to do the research and any resources we needed were readily available. The work was very focused and not distracted by the constant calls for progress reports or the submission of grant proposals. The work was focused on what we were supposed to do rather than the administrative. Yet, there were possibilities to investigate aspects of the project that were unavailable to smaller group, as I had worked before. I was used to such ideas causing more problems rather than a positive outcome. Moreover, The project was part of a larger collaboration between different research institutes and universities. I was unfamiliar to this before I came to Germany. The small group I had worked for before never really collaborated outside the university or even with another university. This spirit of spreading the work and being able to accomplish more over shorter amount of time. This experience was fascinating to me.

What interested particularly with my internship was the collaboration with the group and the equipment I was allowed to use. The custom-made test stands and electronics were something completely unfamiliar to me. I am used to mostly working with older and more tested equipment. The new development equipment and the problem solving involved with it was something new to me. I was used to solving problems of aging equipment rather than developing new equipment myself.

A typical day of my internship started between 9 and 9:30 and ran until 19 to 24 depending on the amount of work that had to be done. Typically, the morning began by checking on the detector that I was working with. I checked the temperature and the connections to the data acquisition system that might have come lose during the night. I refilled the tank that the detector was sitting in to be cooled with liquid nitrogen. On

top of the apparatus I positioned a holder for an radioactive source. I moved the holder to a specified angle and radius in order to investigate the penetration depth of the photons into the detector at different positions. I then positioned a Tungsten collimator with the attached source and started the data acquisition system. I went to my office and started to investigate the data I had taken the previous day and night. I converted the files into a usable file format. While the computer was handling this, I usually worked on the elimination of cross-talk between the different segments from previous data and convert these to usable histograms. After these tasks, I was usually assigned other tasks that had to be done. They ranged between rewiring electronics to trying to analyze the effect of different voltages on the detector and the leakage current. In between, I changed the angle of the scanning contraption about every 2 hours. At the end of the day I removed the contraption from the detector and refilled the liquid nitrogen supply and began to the overnight background run.

One of my personal highlights was the time spend in the parks and biergartens of Munich. The possibility to stroll through the parks after work was relaxing as well as somewhat enlightening on an organic approach of city, rather than the iron and concrete worlds of most US cities. On the other hand, the life after work was completely different from me than at my university. Rather than going home and working or meeting with friends at their homes, one could go to the biergartens, restaurants and pubs and start a conversation with a stranger about anything really, may it be politics, economics or sports. The EURO 2008 added an goodie to the whole. The enthusiasm and partying during those three weeks were one of the highlight of the my stay in Germany.

On the academic side, my lab was the best that could happen to me. The people there were very friendly and integrated me from Day 1 onwards. The daily lunches and the after lunch coffee break bonded the whole group. What also fascinating me was the interaction

between the groups of different field. The detector physicists going to lunch with the people from astrophysics or going one to the EURO 2008 as a group. This was something I had yet to experience. I was used to small groups of people of the same ethnicity sticking together. Here everybody was interacting with everybody.

My impression of Germany, in general, is that the people are some of the friendliest I have yet to meet. They were helpful in any instance, if I had a question I could simply walk up to someone and ask them in English and I would get a reply, unlike I had experienced in other European countries. The cities themselves were safe, there was a lot more to do and more accessible than any other US city of similar size. The focused research environment and the freedom of ideas that I experienced were something I had yet to experience, and this clearly wetted my appetite for more.