

RISE Internship

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When I first received the letter telling me I had an internship position in the RISE program, I was faced with mixed emotions. I was ecstatic to be going to Germany, my first trip outside of the United States, but I was also extremely nervous to be leaving friends, family, and familiarity for so long. However, in the weeks leading up to my trip my mentor was incredibly helpful and encouraging. It was an enormous personal challenge for me to simply travel to Rostock since I did not have any prior experience with traveling abroad, with German language and culture, or with using such an extensive transportation system. However, I thrived on this challenge and the intellectual obstacles it presented. These obstacles were present throughout my entire internship, and I loved every moment of learning how to confront them.

The research that I conducted in Rostock was unlike any research I had ever done before. I loved the continuity of basic science and human applications that were present at work daily. There was so much material and many procedures to learn, but my mentor was an incredible teacher. She taught me extensively once, wrote protocols and then let me perform the procedure on my own, always being there in case I had questions or needed help. It seems that at such a young age students in Germany know how to enjoy knowledge, learn so much in so little time, and have the ability to pass this knowledge onto others even in a language that is not native. The professionalism and kindness shown to me in Germany was enormous and made me feel at home in the foreign atmosphere. My mentor was there to greet me off of the train with an arm full of sheets, food and comfort items I would need during my stay. She helped me figure out the train system and housing, and even baked me cakes on my birthday, the second day of my stay. The lab I worked in was fairly large and we all went to the beach one evening for a cookout, which gave me a chance to interact more with my colleagues and learn more about German culture. We would also all eat lunch together, and I got a chance to meet four other RISE interns working in my lab. We would learn so much in lab all day,

and then spend all night exploring the city and experiencing life there. The four of us and two other RISE students working in Rostock became close friends during our stay and we took several weekend and day trips together to Berlin, Hamburg, Koln, Warnemunde (the beach in Rostock), and Heidelberg for the conference. The trip to Heidelberg was amazing, and the city was the most beautiful place I have ever seen.

I loved Germany, my research, my mentor, colleagues, friends, and freedoms acquired in my RISE internship. I had the chance to challenge myself daily with new knowledge of science, Germany history learned firsthand by visiting the places involved, culture, language, and the critical thinking needed in order to get myself from place to place on a daily basis. I thought, laughed, danced, and walked my way through the journey. I have never done so much living at once, and this internship gave me the opportunity to live life to it's fullest.

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