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September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
DAAD – RISE

### **Summer Internship Experience**

*I agree that my report and accompanying pictures are used by the DAAD in printed materials, presentations and on the website in order to inform funding organizations, sponsors, and students about the RISE program.*

During the summer of 2009 I was given the opportunity to conduct research at a German institution through the DAAD's Research Internships in Science and Engineering (RISE) program. My place of research was the Institut für Thermodynamik und Raumfahrt (ITLR) at the Universität Stuttgart, where I conducted experiments dealing with flows emerging from porous media.

#### *Impression of Research*

Research in Germany was an amazing experience. The students and professors were all highly motivated, providing a refreshing change to the sometimes more relaxed pace of research in United States institutions. The ITLR had a significant amount of funding from businesses, augmenting the culture of productivity. Equipment was also of very high quality, and the in-house machinists and electricians were exceptionally helpful.

#### *Impression of German Universities*

The educational techniques in German universities seem to be quite different than those in the United States. For example, my flatmates had very little required coursework during the portion of the term in which lectures were held. Instead, their grades were

determined nearly entirely by intense final examinations, which were conducted over the course of many weeks. Consequently, there were extended periods of time where they did not have much pressing work to do, followed by periods (sometimes lasting several weeks) of frenzied cramming and testing. This is quite different from the steady grind of work throughout the semester experienced by most university students in the United States, though we also endure intense, albeit much shorter, examination periods.

German dormitories tended to be more like shared flats or apartments in which a student had a private bedroom, a big change from the shared single rooms in most dormitories of American universities.

### *Interesting Aspects of Research*

I thoroughly enjoyed conducting research at the ITLR. The independence associated with the project was exceptionally nice. I was, for the most part, allowed to set up experiments how I saw fit, to use whatever coding language or programs I desired, and to determine my own hours (within reason, of course).

### *Highlights of Stay*

Being immersed in another culture was exceptionally interesting for me; it was an eye-opening experience that I had never had before. There are so many things in everyday life, big and small, that I didn't really think about as being cultural until I realized they were different in other countries.

The proximity to other cities, both in Germany and throughout Europe, allowed me to travel extensively on the weekends and see so much of the world that I hadn't seen before.

In summary, I found Germany to be a great place to live and work, and I am extremely happy that I was able to participate in the DAAD's RISE program.