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DAAD alumni 2014  
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### DAAD RISE Professional: Final Report

At the end of my junior year in college, I made an appointment with a fellowship advisor at my university to start planning for post-graduate life. During this meeting we discussed multiple fellowship and scholarship options, one of which was DAAD RISE Professional. When the portal of internship opportunities on the DAAD website opened in December of 2013, I quickly found two internships I was very interested in. Although I had thoroughly enjoyed the research experience I had at my university in medicinal chemistry, I wanted to explore new areas of chemistry before making any decisions about graduate school. Additionally, I never studied abroad when I was at university, so that was an important draw to the program as well. I spoke with my research advisor and again with my contact at the fellowship office who both encouraged me to apply. After a month of long preparation, editing, revising, and rewriting of my application, I submitted it in late January. Within a month, I heard back from DAAD stating I had been chosen to do an internship in Polymer Chemistry with BASF. The next two months were very stressful because I could not accept how easy it was for an American to acquire the legal rights to live abroad in Germany for six months (a lot of it you wait until you are in Germany to sort out, although there is some paper work to be done in the States).

When I arrived in Germany, the only words I knew in German were "Jungen" (boy), "Mädchen" (girl), "trinken" (to drink), and "essen" (to eat), thanks to the language program I used in the airport on the start of my journey overseas. When I arrived to my new apartment in Mannheim, I was greeted by an employee of BASF who purchased a cell phone for me and provided me with maps of the surrounding towns. The next day, she helped me setup my bank account and obtain a residence permit. It did not take me long to realize how friendly Germans are.

From the first day of my internship at BASF, I felt apart of the team. Almost daily, I would meet with my supervisor to discuss my results from the previous days' reactions and we would plan out new reactions together based on literature research I had done. I was reassured that my ideas were valuable and that the research I was doing laid the foundation for important chemistry the group would be doing in the future. I also had the opportunity to present my research findings to the entire research team twice during my employment with the company. The people with whom I worked were very knowledgeable and helpful in the laboratory. I had a lot of fun practicing my German with them (and they had a few good laughs about it too!). After taking a language course, I went from being able to say "Hallo" to having simple conversations with my new friends and coworkers in German. Overall, I learned a lot about industry and had an unforgettable experience meeting and working with people from all over the world.

Outside of work, I was able to comfortably do a significant amount of traveling on my DAAD and BASF stipends alone. I travelled to Spain (Barcelona), France (Paris, Versailles, Rennes, Nice), Monaco, Italy (Genoa, Venice, Rome/Vatican City), Austria (Salzburg), Switzerland (Zürich), and other parts of Germany (Berlin, Cologne, Heidelberg, etc) and still managed to save money after the internship was complete. One piece of advice for those who plan to travel: plan early and strongly consider purchasing the Bahn 25 discount card from Deutsche Bahn (there are frequent deals on

their website). These are travel experiences I may never have had if I did not apply for a DAAD scholarship.

Overall, if you find an interesting research project, enjoy traveling and meeting new people, and are looking to take a risk, I would highly recommend you spend the time to develop a competitive application for a DAAD scholarship. It has been an unforgettable experience that I will always look back on fondly.

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 *professional* program.

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