

RISE Germany 2016 - Final Report

Name of intern: Daniella LaPlante

Home University: Northern Arizona University

Subject: Biology

Guest University: University of Lübeck

Name of supervisor: Birte Ohm

What is your impression of research in Germany?

Research at my lab in Germany is highly organized, similarly to many labs I have worked in previously. Everyone knows what they are supposed to be working on and everyone takes care of their responsibilities refilling supplies and cleaning up the workspace. There is a clear laboratory hierarchy, where people with more experience teach those who are still learning. In the lab it is important to stay informed on current research and published articles in order to build on research that has already been done and also to be aware of the most current methods being used to advance the field.

What is your impression of German universities?

I did my internship at the University of Lübeck which is very focused on medical sciences. The university campus itself has a hospital and several clinics. Unlike the organization of studies in most subjects, medical school in Germany is actually very different from the United States. Because the class structure seems to be quite different from what I am accustomed to, I would be curious to actually take some classes at a German university. The campus has many similar resources to my home university including a student cafeteria and a library where it is possible to study.

What did you find particularly interesting about your research?

The research in immunology, that I participated in, was particularly interesting to me because we were studying the immune defenses against *Toxoplasma gondii* which directly relates to and expands upon my previous knowledge of research in parasitology. The laboratory techniques applied in my lab include many that are commonly applied in biology research, which means I will be able to use the skills I learned here in my future research. Some of the new techniques that I learned include ELISA, cell culture work, and real time PCR.

Describe a typical day of your internship.

In a typical day at my internship I would arrive at the lab in the morning ready to work. I would help with the experiment my supervising student was doing at the time and learn the procedures as well as maybe get quizzed on information I learned during previous days. I would eat lunch with a small group of people from my lab and keep working after lunch. In the evening there would often be a lecture or presentation that I would be invited to attend, so that I could broaden my knowledge of the topics being studied in the lab.

Highlights of your stay (both personal and academic).

One of the highlights of my stay was the DAAD meeting in Heidelberg where I had the opportunity to not only see a beautiful city with an interesting history, but also to meet a large number of diverse individuals who all share my passion for science. I particularly enjoyed learning about the other projects that were taking place and sharing experiences with the other students. Beyond that the best experience was just having the opportunity to live in Germany and getting to know the culture and the city of Lübeck.

What is your impression of Germany in general?

Germany is a country with beautiful and varied landscapes, a rich culture, and long history. I was particularly surprised by how much I like the language, and my time here has inspired me to spend further time learning to speak German. The people in my lab were very kind and welcoming and were happy to teach me new lab techniques and even some German vocabulary. I am sure that I would like to come back to Germany in the future whether it is to study or vacation.

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