

DAAD Final Report

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Home university: Bowdoin College

Subject: Biochemistry

Guest university/institute: Institut für Experimentelle und Klinische Pharmakologie

Name of supervisor: Meike Kähler

I spent my summer doing research in Kiel, a small port city in northern Germany. My research looked at the effect of the RNA-binding proteins ZFP36L1/L2 on the development of imatinib resistance in leukemia cells. I was very impressed with the level of research conducted at the Institute for Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology. The research environment was collaborative and friendly at my lab and even though I primarily worked with my research mentor, I was able to get to know the other people working there. I was impressed with my colleagues' willingness to go out of their way to help me or explain something to me.

Germany universities are very different from American universities. I learned this from talking to university students in my dormitory, as well as medical students and PhD students in my laboratory. Since education is much cheaper in Germany, the academic system worked quite differently. I lived in a student dormitory all summer, so I had the opportunity to meet many other students. From what I saw, student life was very vibrant at the University of Kiel. The students living in my dorm were incredibly diverse, coming from countries all over the world. They were all very welcoming to me, showing me where the nearest grocery store was and helping me learn German.

On a typical day at my internship, I woke up at around 8 in the morning and biked to work. In the morning, I sometimes attended a lab group meeting, at which someone would usually present their research. After running an experiment or two, I usually had lunch with my mentor at noon. Sometimes on nicer days, we took a walk to the ocean front to buy fresh fish sandwiches. In the afternoon, I usually finished up my experiments for the day or read literature. I left at around 4pm, stopped to buy groceries, and went back to my room to make dinner. After dinner, I often had free time to explore Kiel, bike around the city, or walk along the ocean front.

Although I loved my experience in Germany, there were a few highlights of my summer. One highlight was Kielwoche or Kiel week, a large festival in the town I lived in that celebrated Kiel's unique sailing culture. Kielwoche was a ton of fun, since the city brought in many artists for concerts, food vendors selling food from all over the world, amusement rides, sailing exhibitions and much more. The festival was special to me because it happened during my first few weeks in Kiel and it allowed me to better understand and appreciate the city I was to call home for the next three months. Another highlight of the summer was the DAAD Rise Conference in Heidelberg. At this conference, I was able to meet and connect with so many cool, amazing people who had so many similar interests to me. I was also able to learn about all the different research that was being conducted, as well as explore the incredibly beautiful city of Heidelberg. I will definitely cherish the memory of that weekend.

My impression of Germany was very positive. Germany is a very advanced and orderly country, with a highly organized and dependable transportation system in almost every city I visited. Germany also has a fascinating history and culture that I began to scratch the surface of during my time there. I was able to travel a fair amount throughout the country and noticed quite a bit of differences in the regional culture of Germany. One very positive thing I noticed was that the people, in my opinion, are much more environmentally friendly than people in America. Most people bike everywhere or use the local public transportation, and even I bought a bike for the three months that I was in Kiel. Proper recycling is highly emphasized as well. Overall, I had a wonderful time and I gained a lot of respect for this country during my stay. I'm so thankful for DAAD for giving me the opportunity to experience Germany and I look forward to returning to and learning more about this country!

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