

Final Report - DAAD RISE Professional 2019

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Company: Fraunhofer Research Institute for Casting, Composite and Processing Technology IGCV

Location: Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany

Duration: June 1, 2019 – August 23, 2019

Work at Fraunhofer IGCV

This internship gave me the opportunity to experience research in Germany, and it opened my vision on what I want to do with my career. As a Bioengineering MS student, I design biomaterials to go into the body. However, at Fraunhofer I got to work on composite materials that go into planes and cars, as well as other industrial applications. I performed routine lab activities and analyzed some samples for other divisions, but my main project consisted on comparing two different testing methods for fiber-reinforced composites. I successfully compared both methods, and our results are so promising that the head of my department decided we are going to try to publish this work. This has expanded my creativity and gave me some ideas to try on my own thesis project back in the U.S., but has also inspired me to pursue a PhD in a program that allows me to pursue both my passion for bioengineering and my newly discovered passion for materials science.

A typical day for me involved going for a morning run at 6am (there was a forest nearby that made a beautiful view for a run!), getting to work at 8am, and leaving by around 5pm. My office was on the third floor, and the labs were on the fifth floor. I did some processing on the ground floor too, and even though there was an elevator, I tried to take the stairs to stay active. They were very flexible with how you allocate your 40 hours during the week, so I tried to put in more hours Monday-Thursday so I could leave earlier on Fridays and travel!

My stay in Augsburg, Bavaria

I was lucky to find a place to stay in Augsburg that was within 10 minutes by train or bike from work. Furthermore, there were other 5 people at the house and they became amazing friends! This was a big house, so there was plenty of room to hang out with my other flat mates and have a beer or two. They were very helpful and we became close friends. Closer to the end of my stay, we went on a road trip to one of their hometowns in the north to do some hiking.

Most of the time I biked to work. Augsburg is extremely bike-friendly, and one of my flat mates had an extra bike that he let me borrow for the 3 months I was there. This allowed me to save money by only taking the train on rainy days, but also to stay in shape! Moreover, I think Augsburg was a fantastic location for travelling! Munich was only 40 minutes away by train, and I went there quite a bit. In August, I went



Last day at Fraunhofer IGCV in Augsburg

to Munich to meet with 4 other DAAD RISE Professional Scholars that I had befriended in the conference in Heidelberg.

Some tips

In my case, my passport allows me to stay in the Schengen Area for 90 days so I did not need a Visa. I would say this is the easiest option, and there are plenty of places to travel to within this area! A good way to try to find housing before getting there is the Wohngemeinschaft (WG) website, where you can rent a room in a shared flat or house. If you're travelling alone like I did, having flat mates can be really nice to avoid being too lonely at first. I used N26 for my bank account, and it worked great. If you already have an address to stay there, I would definitely try to open the account 3 weeks before your departure to Germany so that your card gets to your place by the time you arrive. All the banking I did was online and super convenient. And definitely try to go to beer festivals! Bavaria has a lot of great Biergartens (beer gardens) where you can have an amazing time with friends or meeting new people. My favorite one was the English Biergarten in Munich.

Travelling as much as possible in Europe!

My biggest advice for this experience would be travel as much as you can! I had never been to Europe, and by the end of the summer I ended up visiting 8 new countries: Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Belgium and Netherlands. I love to travel, and having so many countries and cultures so close was incredible. I got the Eurail Pass so I traveled everywhere by train.



Hanging out with other DAAD RISE Professional Scholars in Marienplatz, Munich



Living the dream at the English Biergarten in Munich

Final Remarks

I could not be more grateful for the opportunity the DAAD RISE Professional Program gave me! I have discovered a new passion on a different research field that I plan to integrate to my professional goals, and got to work with experts and learn from them. Furthermore, I have made great friends and professional contacts, all while exploring Germany. I would like to thank DAAD and Fraunhofer for this incredible adventure and opportunity to grow on a personal and professional level.

Prost!

Sebastian Huayamares

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