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I spent this past summer studying cytoskeletal protein dynamics at the Institute for Biophysical Chemistry at Hannover Medical School in Hannover, a city of about 700,000 in northern Germany. Moving to Germany thankfully went very smoothly because my graduate student mentor and PI both helped me find student housing on-campus and handled various bureaucratic onboarding obstacles. It took a bit longer for me to get used to the lab culture—while I've done research in the US since my freshman year, I didn't realize how different the working environment would be in Germany. My favorite difference: in my lab in Hannover, all of the students and post-docs go to the *mensa* (canteen) together every day to eat lunch. During these lovely (often hour-long) lunches, I learned so many things about German culture (and food). From learning about the German dish *mett* to going through Harry Potter trivia, these lunches were some of my favorite memories from the lab.

A typical day of my internship started with walking to the lab from my apartment, grabbing a cup of coffee and settling in, checking in with my mentor, and organizing my day. I often conducted an experiment in the morning before lunch. Throughout the internship, I had the chance to do a number of techniques, including PCR mutagenesis, protein purification, biophysical assays, microscopy, and molecular dynamics. In the afternoon, I would either conduct another experiment or just analyze data and read the literature. I usually worked from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., but there were some days where I came/left earlier/later depending on the timing required in the wet lab. After work, I usually went on a run around the many green spaces of Hannover (called "the garden city" because of how many parks it has) or hung out with the other interns located in Hannover. Coming from the US, I loved the city's walkability and public transport, even in the suburb where the medical school was located.

Of course, some of my favorite moments this summer came from traveling around Germany and Europe on the weekends. The DAAD RISE meeting in Heidelberg was definitely a highlight; it was so fun to explore the city with new intern friends located across Germany. I traveled almost every weekend of the 13 weeks that I was in Germany because I wanted to take advantage of the Eurail Pass that I bought; I saw so many cities, including Berlin, Munich, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Prague, and Bruges. I cannot emphasize how transformative traveling around all of these European cities was for me. My advice for traveling via train: know that the Deutsche Bahn almost always has delays (in an especially odd case, once my train was delayed by 45 minutes because there were kids taking selfies on the track), so be sure to budget extra hours to get yourself anywhere.

Finally, I want to say that working in a foreign country 5,000 miles from home isn't always easy. There were language barriers in navigating the suburb I lived in; if you don't speak German, I highly recommend at least doing some Duolingo before you go! Also, it is sometimes difficult to stay positive when you inevitably make mistakes, but it's important to remember that this internship is first and foremost a learning opportunity for you both academically and personally. For me, one of these moments happened when I accidentally boiled a protein gel I was staining in Coomassie; the gel exploded and blue dye splattered all over the fume hood (picture attached). It was pretty humbling, but because of that and many other experiences during my internship, I think I am becoming a more resilient and thoughtful person. In sum, I highly recommend DAAD RISE if you are looking for an experience that will challenge and expand your viewpoints and assumptions while also learning a lot of cool science.

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.