



STEUBEN-SCHURZ-GESELLSCHAFT E.V.

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Providing stability and friendship in a challenging environment

Lots of learning at the Karlsruhe Institute for Technology *Excitement about laboratory work – surprises about cultural life*

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Yanlin Zi, a sophomore at Boston College, has participated in the USA Intern-Program of the Steuben-Schurz-Society. Being a major in biochemistry, she was matched up with Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). Yanlin Zi joined Dr. Kerstin Länge's research group, and her work was focused on Bioanalytics. During her internship, besides improving her language skills, as she reports us, she also learned more about German culture as well as German universities.

My internship was a four-week-internship. My task was working in a laboratory, measuring different protein concentrations by using SAW biosensors. Before this internship, I have never learned or used biosensors before. Therefore, I was very excited that this internship has given me an opportunity to work with biosensors.



In front of the KIT-area – inside no dormitories

I had a great mentor during my internship. Before I first started working, she has spent a lot of time teaching me about biosensors. She explained to me how this technology works and what are the purposes and

applications of the biosensor technology. After my internship, I have mastered the skills in using the biosensor set up as well as using excel to analyze the acquired results.



During a trip in a zoo garden

During my internship, I have also experienced many interesting cultural differences between the US and Germany. First thing that I have experienced was university housing. Before I departed for Germany, it took me a while and a lot of effort to find housing. Because KIT is a university, I was expecting that the

university would have dormitories for summer housing. However, there was none. I forgot that as a cultural difference, unlike American universities, German universities only have limited amount of dorms. Most students live in apartments located around the campus. Eventually, I have found a room in a local small family inn.

Another cultural difference that I experienced was the business schedule in Germany. On the first Sunday that I arrived in Germany, I was planning on doing some shopping for the next week, just like what I was used to do in the US. Surprisingly, all the stores were closed; even grocery stores and pharmacies were closed. Similarly, during National Holidays, all the stores were also closed.

The German public transportation was another thing that was different from the US transportation. In the US, private cars are the main way for people to travel and commute. However, in Germany, most people, including me, rely on public transportations. There was a bus stop right in front of my hotel. Every day, I took the bus to KIT. If I would like to go to downtown Karlsruhe, I would take the S-Bahn which could take you basically anywhere you want. When I need to travel to other cities, such as Frankfurt, I would take the ICE train. These

public transportations had enabled me to do some traveling during my internship stay.

Through this internship experience, my language skill has developed as I conversed with people around. I also had the opportunity to explore the German culture and gained knowledge in the field of biochemistry. It was a fantastic experience.

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