



Internship reflection in the Spa Town of Bad Homburg Garrett Feemster

Garrett Feemster writes that he was the previous semester studying in Mannheim, Germany and that he was fortunate enough to find out about the Steuben-Schurz-Gesellschaft program. They could even place him into a company that was in the field of his studies: Finance International Business and German at the Knoxville-University.

My situation was very unique in the way I was placed into an internship at FERI AG in Bad Homburg, a suburb of Frankfurt. Unlike most of the other internships, my internship was put together at the last minute, as I had been studying in Mannheim, Germany the previous semester and was trying to find an internship for the spring. I was fortunate enough to find out about the *Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft* program and luckily, they were able to place me into a company that was in the field of my studies: Finance and German. The FERI Company specializes in investment market and product ratings and is also one of the leading economic research and forecasting institutes in Europe.



The interesting thing about FERI was that there were several departments within the company and each department had its own team. As for me, I was paired with **Herr Michel** and his team within the EuroRating Services division. The division had less than ten employees. This meant that I became very familiar and acquainted with the other colleagues. Normally, there were two colleagues in a spacious room with either a work student or an intern at the extra computer. The offices in the division were all next to each other in the hallway. This meant I never had difficulty asking questions or inquiring details about fund information. I also found it interesting that the Board of Directors offices were also located on the same floor. The hierarchy at FERI was horizontal in terms of positions which was rather uncommon in the United States. The atmosphere, I felt, was very family-like as we would go out for lunch together almost every day.

Over the course of the three-month internship (March to May 2015), I was tasked with various assignments and projects. Herr Michel's team evaluated different investment groups' investment funds for both the investment firms themselves, as well as for FERI's own private clients. I mostly worked with excel spreadsheets in order to compile and

update data from the various funds within the data base. Occasionally, I would translate German presentation portfolios into English or vice versa. I would edit English PowerPoints reviews of products that were to be shipped to international companies. The data base software that I worked with always needed to be updated. That's why I spent a lot of my time researching fund information in order to see if a fund had changed or altered its information or strategy. The changes I edited ranged from fund management to the classification of the fund itself. At the end of a thorough and qualitative review of a fund, my group and I would assign a rating to it.



However, not all my time was spent at work. As I lived in Mannheim, commuting to and from work each day took four hours. By the end of the internship, I was very efficient with the German train system. In and around Frankfurt

I would normally travel on the weekends to neighboring cities *between Mannheim and Frankfurt* as my monthly train pass allowed me to visit *Heidelberg, Mainz, Wiesbaden, and Darmstadt* to name a few. In Mannheim, I shared an apartment with two other Germans. During those three months at FERI, I felt like I was fully integrated into German culture and society, as my German had improved and I was surrounded by Germans everyday unlike my previous semester. The highlight of my internship was the annual convention that FERI holds twice a year at a luxurious hotel. At the convention, I was able to listen to many speeches and presentations from top leaders of companies that were clients of FERI. I would like to especially thank **Ms. Juliane Adameit** for giving me the internship opportunity.



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