



## Research Internship during World Cup fever in Germany From Home-University in Pullman to Justus-Liebig University in Giessen

*Samantha McNally*

*Samantha McNally is Undergraduate Researcher at the Aguilar-Carreno Lab and member of the Molecular Biosciences Club at the Washington State University Pullman. Her time in Germany gave her many insights into collegiate research occurring at German universities. Based on the number of internships that were rewarded this year, she says, it is clear that scientific research is an important part of higher education in Germany. Her RISE research internship was supported by the USA Interns-Program of the Steuben-Schurz-Society.*

For my internship, we were identifying kinases that play a role in Influenza A infections. While working on the project, it was interesting how many different molecular biology techniques were required for this one project; the project required techniques ranging from DNA isolation to qPCR. I personally would have found the project more interesting if I had been able to work hands-on with the influenza virus itself, instead of just preparing all of the materials for the infection.



In a normal day during my internship, I would start the morning by checking my cells because I would need to make sure that the cells were still alive and healthy. After checking my cells, my activities would vary from day to day depending on what my supervisor needed to get done. These tasks would vary from transformation of DNA into a bacterial strain to RNA isolation. If my supervisor did not have enough for me to do, I would ask the other Ph.D. students in the lab if I could observe some of the experiments that they were doing. After observing these experiments, I would be given a personal experiment from that Ph.D. student so that I could practice the technique that I just observed. In addition, I would occasionally use my down-time to learn additional material, such as new vocabulary and formulas.

Probably the best part of being in Germany is the location; the country is literally in the center of Europe. As a result, nearly every place that you would want to visit is six hours or less away by train. With everything being so close, on the weekends, I was able to travel and visit different cities in Germany and other European countries. In the 12 weeks that I was in Germany, I was able to visit cities such as Cologne, **Berlin** (see foto), and Amsterdam.



I really enjoyed being able to travel and see the difference between Giessen (where my internship was) and the other European cities. An additional highlight was being in Germany during the *World Cup*. In America, not many people get excited about the World Cup; the opposite is true in Germany. People planned their day around a Germany game. Restaurants would put up flat screen TVs to show the game and would fill up hours before the game started with people making sure that they had a good seat to watch the game. It was so easy to swept up in the excitement and become completely enveloped in the "World Cup fever." When Germany actually won the World Cup, it was amazing to be involved in a celebration that hadn't happened in 24 years. That is an experience that I will never forget.

Overall, Germany made a lasting impression on me. I enjoyed being able to see a lab environment in a different country and being able to compare/contrast this to the environments back in America. Outside of the lab, I found the German people to be very friendly and excited to meet foreigners. Before this summer, I had only spent a few days in Germany; now, I have spent three months and I feel like I have a much better understanding of the German culture. With this experience, I look forward to the next time that I will be able to visit to Germany.



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