Alumni Updates

Rebecca Boduch ’10 GIEP is a Controls Engineer working on process automation at Organogenesis Inc., a regenerative medicine company in Canton, MA.

Josh Clements ’02 GIEP is a Senior Associate in Manufacturing at Amgen.

Jonathan Grillot ’09 GIEP/PIPE graduated with a Master of Engineering (Process Engineering and Production Management) from the University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Hannover. He just finished his master thesis titled “Energy Balance of a Four Million Tire Production Facility” at Continental in Hannover. Upon completion of his thesis he also became a full-time Engineer in the department of stock preparation. The position is highly technical and also requires traveling to various international plants.

Ania Maria Hagan ’05 GIEP/CVE has been awarded a 10-month Fulbright research grant for Mongolia on “Environmental determinants for mercury remediation from small-scale gold and coal mining in Mongolia”. Her goals include creating outcomes that will have a meaningful impact both in Mongolia and within the scientific community of environmental engineering for water treatment.

Zachary Karas ’08 GIEP is pursuing an MBA at Boston College

Chris Kreuter ’04 GIEP/POCE is a Regional Account Manager for Bombardier Transportation and he has also started a gaming company, Masquerade Games, LLC.

Tobias Lührig ’99 (TUBS alum & advisory board member) announces the birth of his son Carl Arthur on May 1, 2011 in Berlin.

Alex Pentagros ’15 IPA is a Manager, Global HR Tools & Processes at Sika AG.

Sarab Rajae ’06 GIEP graduated in May with a Masters in Public Health from Harvard and an M.D. from Brown. She begins her residency in the Vascular Surgery program at Yale University in June.

Mike Schroff ’00 GIEP works for business intelligence company Analytics8.

International Engineering Program
University of Rhode Island
61 - 67 Upper College Road
Kingston, RI 02881

Alumni chapter in Germany

Dan Fischer ’02, John Grandin, and Tobias Lührig ’99

While traveling in Germany this May, John and Carol Grandin took the opportunity to meet with alumni in both Braunschweig (May 21) and Munich (May 28). These events brought together groups of former Braunschweig students who completed either the engineering MS or the MBA at URI and current GIEPers, who are now pursuing their careers in Europe. Approximately 25 persons attended each event. It is rewarding to experience the common bond these former students share with URI and each other, and their enthusiasm about building a permanent URI alumni chapter in Germany.

John was thrilled to meet students he had not seen in several years, as well as recent grads who had landed jobs in Germany associated with some of the world’s most innovative technologies. Loren Eckardt ’09, for example, is laying cable to wind farms in the North Sea; Dan Fischer ’02 is an MRI product manager for Siemens Medical Solutions; Jesse Schneider ’94 is a key player on BMW’s fuel cell technology team; Mike Raiche ’08 is advancing in his work at MTU, one of Germany’s leading aerospace companies.

With over 500 graduates who have participated in the URI/Braunschweig exchange, it is a major effort to keep up with former students. But it is rewarding to do so, and well worth the effort!

Scholarship Winners Spring 2011

DAAAD Study Scholarship (10 months): Julia Roder-Hanna ’13 GIEP/CHE
University Academic Excellence Awards for graduating seniors
Amy Gibson ’11 GIEP/CHE (CHE) & Sara Manteiga ’11 FIEP/CHE (French & CHE)
Beatrice S. Demers Fellowship:
Chris Andraika ’13 GIEP/CHE Kayla Belanger ’14 FIEP/CHE
Narvan R. Hiltiard ’14 CIEP/MCE Alyssa Zisk ’15 CIEP/MCE & Math
DAAAD Young Ambassador Award: Colleen Grinnham ’12 GIEP/CVE
Judith A. and Robert C. Ayotte Scholarship: Nicole Bonvouloir ’13 FIEP/MCE
William F. and Pauline T. Silvia Scholarship: Luis Gonzalez ’13 SIEP/CVE
Sharon Wallace Memorial Scholarship: Emily Serman ’14 GIEP/MCE

Dear friends of the IEP,

I am eager to share several exciting developments with you which made this past spring semester an extraordinary one. On June 3rd in Vancouver, at the annual convention of the Association of International Educators (NAFSA), 3 out of 66 university applicants across the country were awarded the Senator Paul Simon Spotlight Award for an innovative international program on campus. As a Spotlight Award recipient, URI was selected for the successful internationalization of its engineering curriculum, that is, for the IEP.

Shortly after, at our annual board meeting on June 17, the IEP directors reported a 9.4 % increase in enrollment numbers, with the Spanish IEP showing the fastest growth trajectory.

Lastly, the R.I. Board of Governors for Higher Education, chaired by URI alum Lorne Adrain, unanimously approved the Senator Paul Simon Spotlight Award for the internationalization of its engineering curriculum through the IEP. Provost Dan DeHayes travelled to Vancouver, BC to accept the award on June 3, 2011. (L-R) Erin Papa ’01; Sigrid Berka; Provost DeHayes

Director’s Notes

Dr. Sigrid Berka, Executive Director

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We caught up with Raena Morley ‘12 FIEP/ CHE midway through her internship with Toray Films in Lyon, France. Tell us about your internship?

I’m with Toray Films Europe, right outside of Lyon (in St-Maurice-de-Beynost). I’m working in the R&D department to help evaluate and develop new transparent films for food packaging. My daily routine has changed as the project has proceeded and evolved. A typical day offers a great variety of tasks. A portion of it is spent at my desk, organizing and analyzing data, doing bibliographical research, or working on my report. The rest of the time is spent in a lab, either in the R&D department or elsewhere, depending on which equipment is needed. Much of my work has focused on measuring barrier properties of experimental films against water vapor and oxygen. I’ve had the opportunity to conduct many other experiments, using methods such as optical microscopy, infrared spectrometry, and refractometry, just to name a few.

My advisor allows and encourages me to design my own experiments and come up with my own hypotheses. Occasionally it can seem like feeling around blindly in the dark, but I guess that’s what R&D is! Aside from my internship project, I’ve also been able to help out accomplishing small tasks for other projects and analysis requests. Because of this, I’ve been able to meet employees from different departments and positions. I have a greater perception of the day-to-day activities across the company, from research and development up to production and post-treatment.

How has your experience with Toray been different than or similar to your experience in the classroom?

Actually, this isn’t my first internship with Toray! The summer before I left for France, I completed an internship at their Quonset location. Despite being in France, I’m not working exclusively with “French” engineers. My internship advisor is originally from Romania, and there is another employee in the department from England. It being a Japanese company, there are also a lot of Japanese employees. That being said, the engineers here don’t seem to differ much from the one’s I’ve worked with in the States on a professional level. However, the work-day itself is structured differently. It seems that those who are able to choose their hours arrive later and then leave later.

The “pause café” is a ritual repeated throughout the day. The “pause déjeuner” often lasts an hour or more, and clears out all of the offices. Vacation time is serious business too. What I’m still adjusting to is the need to shake hands or “faire la bise” (French greeting of kissing on each cheek) with everyone I encounter every day. The “règles de politesse” can be tricky... Who to “tutoyer” and who to “vous dire”? Who will serve everyone water from the carafe at the lunch table? To whom have I already said “bonjour” today? (You are required a daily quota of one bonjour to each person. A repetition means you weren’t paying attention when you greeted them the first time, and will be replied with a curt “Oh, mais on s’est vu déjà.”) Another difference: special ventilated rooms set aside in each building for “les fumeurs.”

How well prepared were you to intern for a company in France?

I feel as if I was well prepared, thanks to my semester spent at Compiègne. Of course, there’s plenty of technical vocabulary that you don’t come across on a regular basis, so that was a little bit difficult at first. I was surprised and pleased to be told that I speak well. Nowadays that’s the highest of compliments for me! What engineering skills have you learned on the job?

As far as technical skills go, I’ve learned to use a lot of laboratory equipment that I’ve never encountered before, as well as the theory behind it. Not to mention the importance of keeping a decently detailed lab notebooks. As with my first internship, I’ve also learned a lot about the research process and the day-to-day happenings of a production plant. There’s so much to take from an internship setting that can’t be achieved in the classroom!