

Winter J-Term 2018 to Germany

This year's Germany J-term was led by DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Lecturer Anett Geithner and IEP Coordinator Niko Tracksdorf, and generously funded by the Max Kade Foundation, Van Meeteren Foundation and DAAD.

First, the group explored Germany's capital city, Berlin, including a visit to the two companies Vattenfall Energiewerk and Siemens, a guided tour of the Bundestag plus the city itself, and watching Heiner Müller's play „Der Auftrag“ in the famous Maxim Gorki Theatre.



Students exploring Siemens Schaltwerk in Berlin.

After Berlin, their next stop was Hamburg, where they toured through the city, the Miniaturwunderland (a model train exhibit spanning the world), as well as the Lufthansa and Philips plant, the German Electron Synchrotron Institute DESY and the HAW.

Next they visited Cologne, where the students got to see the most important attractions of the city: the Kölner Dom, and the birthplace of the famous „Eau de Cologne“: Farina. Before they moved on to Braunschweig, the group couldn't leave without visiting the Chocolate Museum (and of course also trying German chocolate)!

As the group arrived in Braunschweig, they explored the university's campus, and we owe a great thank you to our current GIEPers at TUBS who gave insights into their institute research and advice for handling the immersion process. Wolfsburg, the city of Volkswagen, is close-by so

they went on a guided tour through the VW plant, visited Phaeno (the science world of phenomenons) and had fun with the interactive installations. Leipzig was next on the agenda, where they got the chance to compare VW's plant to BMW's, and enjoy a guided tour of the city after a stop through Leipzig's history museum („Zeitgeschichtliches Forum“) with their exhibition „Division and Unity, Dictatorship and Resistance“. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather all train service was cancelled and the group wasn't able to visit TU Darmstadt on their last day, but they still met some of the current GIEPers for dinner in Frankfurt!

The students' final statements on the blog confirm that the value of a short-term, faculty led tour ahead of the entire year abroad should not be underestimated!

You can see for yourself on our blog: <https://uristudienreise2018.wordpress.com> (see: QR code), where you can find videos, pictures highlighting the students' favorite memories, and passionate final conclusion statements like this one from Maeve Story, OCE & GIEP '20:

„As a junior in the International Engineering Program, I am already set on studying abroad in Germany next year. But this trip really put into perspective everything I am aiming to accomplish. It is one thing to learn German in a classroom and a very different thing to experience the language and culture through first-hand immersion“.



The group visiting DESY.



Winter J-Term 2018 to China



All students posing in front of the Bund enjoying the Shanghai skyline.

Two of our Chinese IEP students, **Rebekah Vecchiarelli** (MCE & Chinese Flagship Program '22) and **Alexander Cerullo** (BME & CIEP '20) were part of this year's educational trip to China, traveling to Shanghai, Suzhou, and Hangzhou.



The group in Hangzhou.

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING PROGRAM

Global Update

Spring 2018 Volume 20 Issue 1 uri.edu/uriep

Director's Notes



Dr. Sigrid Berka, Executive Director

Our April global up-date finds us well into the Spring semester.

A heartfelt welcome to our new Dean of Arts & Sciences, Jen Riley, who joined URI this Fall and has already proven to be a strong supporter of the languages and the IEP – she recently approved significant funds for language proficiency testing and faculty training which is critical for the IEP's goal to improve quality in this area as stated in our 2018-2023 strategic plan. She also included a Japanese, Chinese and Latin American position into her strategic re-investment requests to the Provost over the next three years. Hopefully, they will be accepted and allow us to develop a Japanese major as well as cover curricular needs in the Chinese and Spanish sections.

Advisory Board members Paul Croce (chair), John Grandin and Mike Byrnes worked with IEP staff Angela Graney, Silke Scholz and myself to renew the IEP 5 year strategic plan. We were lucky enough to have in-person input from alumni Toby Lührig who spent December and January at URI with his family. They are now back in Germany with Anke getting ready to launch a new inclusive and diverse charter school in Dresden and Toby preparing for his new role as CEO of B & K International in Lengerich!

In Febuary we also welcomed our Spring 2018 Distinguished Max Kade Lecturer Ulrike Reeg who joined us from Freiburg, Germany/ Bari, Italy where she teaches German language acquisition, linguistics and literature. Ulrike cherishes the

Giovanni Grande, Italian IEP & MCE '18 and Michael Videtta, Italian IEP & ISE '18, are two of 11 IIEPers in Italy this year!



Above: Giovanni inside the Colosseum, Rome



Upper right: Skyline of Giovanni's southern hometown in Province of Caserta, Campania Region



Lower right: Michael and his girlfriend in Matera.

integrated and coherent "German for the Professions" curriculum URI offers and "the highly motivated and cooperative engineering students" who, with their year abroad experience, provide a unique perspective in the intercultural literature and civilization courses she teaches here.

We now even have a knight in the IEP! Congratulations to Lars Erickson, French IEP director, for having received the honor of *Chevalier of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques* by the French Government (please see press release insert).

Congrats also to our German IEP coordinator Niko Tracksdorf who only came to URI last June but with his trademark speed and drive has already moved on to a tenure track position in German at URI. He will join our faculty in the Fall while still serving as GIEP Associate Director. Niko successfully created two 1 credit courses which are specifically geared to prepare the IEPers going abroad.

At the end of this semester we will say good-bye to Anett Geithner, DAAD Lecturer at URI since September 2013. Anett had a huge impact on restructuring the German J-term course to make it more interactive, the German internship course and the STEM oriented German summer school. Aided

by our Fall/Spring intern Jasmin Kiss she introduced a language tandem partnership between GIEPers and exchange students from TU Braunschweig /Darmstadt, organized government sponsored German campus weeks, movie nights, coffee hours. Anett, along with her husband Martin Keil who contributed much as URI Artist-in-Residence and son Leon, will return to Berlin this summer. We will miss you, Anett!!

As I prepare my talk on "The Educational Impact of Dual Degree Graduate Programs at Research Universities" for the 2018 AIEA Thematic Forum I realize that of the 340 TUBS/TUD exchange students at URI since 1995-96, 170 will have finished dual MS and 62 MBA degrees by 2019. This is a representation of an average 15% of all EGR MS and 22% of all One Year MBA degrees awarded by URI over the last 20 years. The students' research also resulted in numerous joint publications with our faculty. What an impact on URI research indeed, and the trend is growing!

We in the IEP are now getting ready to celebrate the 58 graduating seniors on their amazing accomplishments.

- Sigrid Berka

Winter J-Term 2018 to Japan

After leading URI's first Study Trip to Japan, Dr. Masako Hoye led URI's second one this J-Term 2018 entitled „Japan - Past and Present“. The two-week study tour focused on the students' interests in exploring Japanese culture, language, and history, not only by doing coursework at Kochi University, which is a URI partner university, but also visiting historically significant places in Kochi, Himeji, Kanazawa, Kyoto, and Tokyo. In Kanazawa the group explored key sites such as Kenrokuen, Higashi Chayagai, Bukeyashiki-



A park in the Japanese countryside, shot by chaperone Julian Andriulli, MCE '18.

ato, Ninja Dera, and Oumimachi Ichiba.

After eating in the Standing Sushi Bar in Himeji visiting Himeji Castle was a definite highlight. Besides traditional sightseeing the students often engaged in group activities after dinner to stay on top of their coursework, but also to talk about their culture shock experiences, expectations and newly-gained knowledge.

Next, on our way to Kyoto we stopped in a small town named Izushi, which featured the Samurai's house during the Japanese Edo period, Kimono rentals and other shopping opportunities. After arriving in Kyoto, the group walked through the Kiyomizudera Ninenzaka (Gion district), which has the city's traditional old shopping streets. We also attended a traditional Tea Ceremony, since tea is essential in the Japanese culture, and after a boat ride, we celebrated being there with Izakaya night! Before leaving for Odawara and Hakone



A great shot of Himeji Castle, also by Julian.

which we explored with a free tourist pass, we visited Fushimi Inari as well. The last couple of days were spent venturing through Tokyo with a tour guided by a dear friend of Dr. Hoye's who has lived in Tokyo all of her life and enjoyed a free afternoon visiting the famous Asakusa Sensoji temple and the Sky Tree.

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Chris Salazar: From Spanish IEP (via Spain and Chile) to PhD in Mechanical Engineering

Question #1: Tell us about your IEP experience.

"My IEP experience started out with a two-week immersion program in the small mountain town of Jaca. This place was the perfect place to experience Spain for the first time, and both my language skills and cultural knowledge took off in these two weeks. I



Chris exploring local markets in Peru.

then studied at the University of Zaragoza in Zaragoza, Spain, where I took classes in Renewable Energies, Machine Design, Philosophy, and Archeology. After a semester in Spain, I shipped off to Chile to intern at Codelco, a mining company in Santiago, the country's capitol. When I was living in Spain, I set a rule for myself: every two weeks, do something crazy. This meant going to explore a new city, walking from one province of Spain to another, or climbing a mountain. In both cities, my bike was my life. I lucked out in Santiago, Chile, and was able to rent a room in a house located at the base of the Cerro San Cristobal, a mountain/park located in the middle of the city. Every day I would wake up at 5:30 am, bike to the city center, grab a coffee, walk by the presidential palace, and start my work day. After work got out, I would bike up the Cerro San Cristobal, catch a view of the Andes Mountains in the distance, and speed down the mountain all the way to my house. Being able to travel, see the world, and live an independent life in a foreign country has been an incredibly valuable experience for many reasons. Obviously, I gained proficiency in a second language that I would not have gotten otherwise, but perhaps the most important takeaway from a year abroad

was learning, through experience, that life is not lived through books, classes, and seminars. Life is lived in the cities and in the country sides, along the trails and atop mountains. Living in Spanish-speaking countries, interacting with native speakers, you can learn more Spanish in a week than you could in a year of studying from books and PowerPoints. This understanding has completely changed the way I live my life, and I am learning more than I ever thought I could."

Question #2: What brings you back here in the IEP Living and Learning Community?

"To be honest, there are few places in the world that are as diverse and fun to live in as the IEP community. I had lived in the IEP LLC for three years as an undergraduate but after beginning my graduate degree, I decided to live a home and commute to school to save money. It didn't take me very long to realize there was something missing from my life. I had become so used to the sounds of French or German conversations as I made coffee in the morning, and the curiosity that was sparked in me every time I met a new exchange student with that common passion to see the world. Not to mention the fact that I always have the opportunity to practice my Spanish with the native Spanish speakers who live there and in doing so, continuing to learn more and more about the countries I fell in love with during my year abroad! There is a certain kind of energy I get from living in such a diverse and adventurous community, and that always translates to better work, better relationships, and a better me. I think it's that energy that brings me back."

Question #3: What are you doing now at URI?

"A whole lot. I am currently pursuing my PhD in Mechanical Engineering at URI's Dynamic Photo-Mechanics Laboratory. Generally, my job is to understand how things break. That involves high-speed cameras, giant pressure vessels, and colorful pressure-

plots. Specifically, my current project focuses on the implosion of carbon fiber cylinders, and I am currently on track to have my first paper submitted to a journal by the end of this month! I always wanted to be a published author, but I had no idea my first piece of work would be an academic article! Aside from that, I am working as a Spanish language mentor organizing a weekly Spanish Conversation hour and regular Spanish movie nights in the TI House and offer tutoring hours. Besides I am an IEP Ambassador, helping future IEP students prepare for their adventures abroad."

Question #4: What would you tell our younger and future IEP generations?

"For me, the IEP experience was proof that setting lofty goals and challenging yourself will lead to incredible experiences and an incredible life. The size of your life is directly proportional to how uncomfortable you are willing to be, so don't be afraid to get uncomfortable...during your year abroad or ever. This is the difference between an incredible life and a boring one. It is important to know this prior to going abroad, but even more so after coming back. The IEP does an excellent job of pushing you outside your comfort zone, but after you come back, that's all on you. Let the incredible experiences you had abroad redefine your normal. Let your IEP experience change your life."



Chris Salazar at Machu Picchu in Peru.

Anett Geithner, DAAD Lecturer: "What I value most after five years at URI."

Besides the regular classes that I enjoyed with my students from the first until the last year, I also had the chance to re-design the J-terms, to show the students my country and introduce them to companies where they will work as interns during their year abroad. In addition, I modified the German summer school as a 4-week immersion course with strong focus on technical and cultural topics to prepare participants better for their upcoming year in Germany. I especially enjoyed all the excursions we took during the summer school such as interviewing people on Block Island about the first off-shore wind park in the U.S., kayaking, and speaking German exclusively was a lot of fun! I also organized two German campus weeks in cooperation with the German Embassy and my colleagues: The one in 2015 was about „25 years of reunification“, featuring a panel on the refugee crisis in Europe. Campus week in 2017 was about the Bundestag elections and we had a special guest, a DAAD professor



Anett Geithner.

of those students on J-terms and taught them in Summer School. We spent 5 years together, and I will finish up my work and they will graduate. I was proud to be their German teacher all along their way! I also enjoyed working closely with my colleagues here in the German section and the other IEP programs on intercultural communicative competence. Together we devised modules to

of political science from Cornell University help our students analyse the different parties and forecast the results. I loved the great student response to our activities and competitions. I have built very close relationships with IEP/IBP students who began to study German when I started teaching. I accompanied many

include it more intensely into the curriculum or in-class activities. There are so many things to learn about a different culture, and I myself had to realize that I am also not fully competent in doing things the American way after 5 years being here, just like our students abroad.

Personally, I very much like the American friendliness and openness, and I am grateful for the helpfulness of my colleagues and my neighbors, who supported me a lot when I arrived here. I like the innovative learning methods such as e-learning/ e-teaching. I learned a lot about online tools for the classroom and we also tried out apps that students are really enjoying and that make the learning progress faster and easier for them.

I really appreciate the curiosity of the students to learn about Germany and the German culture, their optimism to always find a solution! They are also very driven and ambitious.

I had a great time here at URI, and it is really hard to say goodbye so soon!

Alumni Highlights: From Generation X to Z - IEP Spanning Three Decades



Interview with John Grandin about the first German 101 class for engineers, which provided the basis for the IEP program we know today:

"We had the idea for a couple of years and wanted to get the program up and running, but we needed money, we needed resources. For one thing, we wanted to separate the engineers as German 101 learners initially, in order to give them the chance to identify with each

other and feel that they were something special. So we were notified in late spring of the fact that we got a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, from what they call ‚FIPSE‘ which stands for ‚Fund for Improvement of Post Secondary Education‘, and that gave us the money then so I could teach that special, experimental German 101 class for engineering students. In the course of the summer I contacted all the incoming engineers of the incoming freshman and also engineers in their sophomore year. We ended up with two sections of German 101 with about 40 students, and we also could guarantee the students that stayed an internship in Germany - and they were excited about that.

They wanted something different, something special, something beyond the straight engineering degree. The basic idea turned out to be a winner, and it made sense for everybody involved: The language people could benefit, and the engineering people could benefit from it, and also the companies were really supportive and excited about it that we were getting engineering graduates who could speak German. It also makes me feel proud to see a second generation in IEP now, I mean to see that students from the first German 101 class for engineers encouraged their children or other offspring of their families to also join the IEP program is really nice."

Interview with Theresa DiRaimo Sullivan (CVE & GIEP '91) and her son Colin Sullivan (ELE & GIEP '20)

How was the IEP program for you as a student?

Theresa: "It was a wonderful opportunity. They publicized it when I was a sophomore, and I think they were looking for freshman to do it, so I ended up graduating half a year after I should have because I wanted to do the program. But I just thought it was a great idea to do the engineering and the German, and at that point we just went over to Germany for a six month work internship, and I really loved it."

What has changed since you did the program?

Theresa: "Besides the additional 6 months that you spend studying abroad, it is a lot more diverse now. Back then your choice was German or ...German, a lot of our engineering professors actually were German so it was a natural fit at that time to offer German to go along with the engineering - now you can choose from more languages. You can do a similar masters and keep going with the program as well. Back then

it was just 4.5 years and you were done, but they were also just building it."

What are your tips for future IEP students?

Theresa: "I would say: take advantage of everything the program offers you. The summer school is a great thing, all the additional things you can do outside of your German classes as well - it will be worth it at the end. Just keep chipping away these 19 credits a semester, and then when you're abroad: take advantage of every second. Go travel, experience, explore, meet people, soak it all in because once you get a job in the real world all these opportunities might not be quite so abundant. Now's the time!"

Do you think you would have done IEP without your mother having done it before?

Colin: „I think so, because the biggest thing is the two majors for the price of one which really caught my eye, so I probably would have seriously looked at it eventually, even if I hadn't known anything about it. The fact that I already had some insight just pushed me to definitely go for it. Originally as a freshman I was a mechanical

engineering student, and German seemed to fit that major perfectly."

Is it a family tradition to participate in the IEP program?

Colin: "I also have a cousin who is doing the program who is undecided engineering but German major because he already learned German in high school. I also come from a big family of engineers and URI graduates, so this program just kind of fits our family."



Theresa DiRaimo Sullivan (left) and her son, Colin Sullivan (right).

Interview with Steven Wojciechowski (MCE & GIEP '93) and his son Seth Wojciechowski (ELE & Chinese Flagship Program '21)

How was the IEP program for you as a student?

Steven: "It had definitely been different than the standard engineering, it was an exceptional opportunity - when I graduated in 1993 most of us that did the IEP had multiple job offers. It really did make someone stand out and made us better well-rounded instead of being pure engineers, a foreign language is something you don't usually see with engineers. And there was the opportunity to go abroad doing an internship which adds an extra feather on your cap. Most kids have no experiences when they graduate, but we had an internship - not only an internship, but an internship in a foreign country, so that was exceptional."

Did you recommend it to your son?

Steven: "I wouldn't say I or we pushed him, but we planted the bug or the seed, and since he did well in math he recognized the value of the engineering degree, but also the international phase abroad - I travel a lot to Germany due to

my work at Hexagon Manufacturing Intelligence and I recognize there's a benefit to have a German degree, but if you have Chinese, I mean few people know Chinese which is going to put a big feather in his cap.

What are your tips for future IEP students?

Steven: „STUDY! But at the same time - when you're abroad: Have fun! Enjoy yourself abroad, too, because once you graduate and you work, you'll not get these opportunities again. As long as



Steven Wojciechowski (right) with son Seth (left).

you are a student, take some time to smell the roses while you can and see where it takes you."

Why did you decide to go for IEP?

Seth: "I guess it was because my father had done it, and my uncle as well - he also learned German at URI - so these influences kind of pushed me to do it. And I know it gives you a leg up when finding a job and getting a career."

Did your father give you insights or tips?

Seth: "He told me to 'just study as much as you can in your free time' which is kind of true, because I spend about 90 percent of my time studying, the other 10 percent going to Chinese/ engineering classes and eating."

Do you think you would have done IEP without your father having it done before?

Seth: "I don't think so, he was the first one to tell me about the IEP program, because of him I had known everything about it. And we both know that it definitely helps to be in the IEP program to get a great job. A lot of companies look for students who have something extra to give."