

As an engineering intern at Schwan Cosmetics, I would like to share some of the experiences I have had working in Heroldsberg this summer.

I am originally from St. Francisville, Louisiana and recently completed my undergraduate degree in chemical engineering at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Since graduation, I have participated in a two month internship in the Process Engineering Group at Schwan Cosmetics in Heroldsberg. The internship is part of a program called the Transatlantic Program in which 25 Americans participate and intern at various locations in Germany. The Transatlantic Program stands for projects to provide American citizens with facts on Germany and to bring the two nations closer together. The program is financed by European Recovery Program (ERP) Special Funds provided by the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. It is also supported by the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest (GACCoM) and additional corporate sponsors.

The first part of the program, the immersion seminar, took place in Berlin and included day trips to Hamburg, Rostock, and Potsdam. Throughout the immersion seminar, I and the other participants met with government officials, representatives of companies and associations, and fellow students to discuss topics of current and future interest. In addition, we participated in a German language and culture course, which prepared us for the topics discussed in the first week at work, helped us to adapt to our new surroundings, and gave us valuable advice for living and working in Germany.

During my internship, I have conducted research, overseen by Herr Markus Schmitt, on pigment processing techniques. The experiments conducted have led to a better understanding of pigment processing and certain scale-up conditions, which should be followed to obtain the same colours and other properties in large-scale production as in small-scale. I really enjoyed learning about particle dispersion techniques for large and small scale applications. Experimentation for up-scaling is very important economically to reduce unneeded large scale production as well as to reduce the number of trial runs on new equipment. Having only interned for major raw chemical producers, it was certainly a different and rewarding experience to be involved in product development and production.

My internship for Schwan Cosmetics is now coming to a close, therefore I would like to reflect on the experiences I have had here as an American intern. It was very interesting for me to work in a family-owned German Company. The people were so friendly and willing to help if there were ever any problems. I found the work environment was not so different from the American environment; especially the engineering environment. The food was delicious! I especially liked the coffee and käsespätzle. In Louisiana, the food is a little different with all the spicy creole food, but I am beginning to love German food just as much. Of course, I experienced a bit of a culture shock at first. But now in my every day life living in Germany, I have learned how to maneuver in a different way. I have learned how to take a tram, bus, and train every morning opposed to taking a car. I have also learned how to recycle everything, sleep without air conditioner, handshake stronger, and speak German better. My favorite evening activity has become walking around the Nürnberg Altstadt, and enjoying the old city feel. Above all, during my stay in Germany, I have learned how nice it is to live and work in Germany, and I hope to come back and visit soon!