

Eutin Internship Report

The following report is broken down into eight categories: transportation, housing, events, work, program coordinators, pay and living. The information below addresses my feelings, opinions, experiences and advice regarding the Eutin Internship Program, which lasted six weeks in Eutin, Germany. I interned at the Entwicklungsgesellschaft Ost-Holstein (EGOH). Vorsicht: there is Denglisch in this document.

Transportation

Letting each student find their own flight and plan their dates of arrival and departure worked fine and was a good idea, although I suspect it was never even discussed to purchase the tickets in any other way.

The fact that the interns were expected to wait so long before finding out if we were even accepted into the program was unfortunate, because the more time that passed, the more trouble there was in the Middle East and the more we had to pay for our luxury travels. Therefore, I recommend that the process of finding applicants, doing interviews, and submitting forms to the program coordinators in Germany be done at an earlier time.

The financial aid that we received last minute for our flight was insanely helpful in making my stay away from home even longer. I am beyond appreciative and am thankful that you (Jim Morrison and Rex Clark) helped us get that money!

Upon arrival all interns were given 80s and 90s styled bikes to use for our stay. This was unanimously facebook-style liked and appreciated. Without a bike, traveling would be the main occupation of my time. Our hotel was on the complete other side of town as the EGOH, so the bike really saved me a lot of calluses and blisters.

Housing

The idea of having interns stay with a host family for at least two weeks and going in pairs of two was great! Two weeks did not seem long enough, because for me it really was not two weeks but rather one and a half due to that little event called graduating college. Although I am thoroughly enjoying my stay with the other interns and find that we do speak a lot of German to one another, I would not be opposed to spending the whole six weeks with real Germans. It *is* the best way to learn German!

After the first two weeks we were moved into a big white hotel am Kellerssee. It was a former convent, but we ironically did not find bibles in our nightstands, which even normal hotels usually provide. The service there is pretty much non-existent. I do not expect that any of us will leave a tip. We have the whole place to ourselves, but believe it or not we have not played hide and seek and we pretty much just stay on the same two floors.

Mrs. Hagen and some of her elves fixed it up so that we had pretty much everything we could possibly need, except for pots under ten feet wide, skillets, a can opener or knives that were not as long as Jimmy Johns subsandwiches and designed to saw down trees. We have all learned the art of sauteeing vegetables in a giant spaghetti pot big enough to be a child's pool and how to spread butter on our brötchens with a saw (it is quite simple, it only takes one

swipe). But im Ernst, she did a great job. Whoever assembled the chairs on the otherhand should probably go back to the KBS and learn about which correct adhesive material should be used in the frame of a chair. We now have a pile of wood in the corner of our dining-room-basement from all the chairs we accidently sat on. Now we just stand around the dinner table. We eat a lot faster because of it. We have considered breaking off the legs of the table too so that we could just sit on the floor but still use the table. The jury is still out on that decision.

My and everyone else's biggest complaint is the internet for sure! In the 21st century we cannot be living like it is the 18th century. We need a functioning internet in order to keep in touch with family, friends and colleagues, to do online courses, apply for jobs, look for housing back home, plan for the next few months of our lives. The internet we currently have allows only five people to be on at the same time and it goes about as fast as the growth of a finger nail. We all pretty much accept that only one person can get on at a time and the time it takes to send an Email is approximately a googol times the normal rate, which really just equals eternity.

Events

What a full schedule we had! From the Empfang im Rathaus, Kanutour, After-Work-Party to our Ausflüge nach Copenhagen, Hamburg, Kiel, and Lübeck, we were always pinning our eyelids back and chugging coffee in order to pull through. I think all of these events were kid-in-an-amusement-park kind of exciting. We had a great time making these events awesome with our presence, but it certainly made the ‚X‘ marks on our calander add up much faster than we hoped for.

I do not know that I expected to be this busy, but I was pleasantly surprised. I suggest you tell the future interns that this ‚internship‘ is more like a summer program than just a summer job.

Work

Work? Haha, not exactly. I was disappointed to find out that I am useless to this company. I was disappointed to find out that I would not be assigned small daily tasks to do or that I really would not help out in any sort of way. I am shocked that they are paying to have me here. It is probably the easiest money I have ever earned. There is no real-world work experience here, but in several ways I can understand why. My German is not be good enough to interact with customers and I do not know all the procedures and processes for helping people out. However, I am not even used as the lowly assistant that does trivial tasks for any-and everyone. They could have shown me how to correctly file papers or operate the fax machine, scanner or printer. Maybe I could have set the conference rooms up with the food and drinks before meetings. Instead...I am just present from 9 to 4 every day.

However, at least two times a week I would do something. This included sitting in on meetings, attending a ferry conference, going to a Messe, tagging along with other employers and hearing about their jobs, attending an event relating to economic development, and ‚working‘ at the other office in Oldenberg. Most of these were dreadfully boring and tiring to sit in on, but I was willing ot take whatever sort of ‚task‘ or ‚entertainment‘ that I could get. I do feel that I got a good undertanding of what is done here and how it is done. I really enjoyed my time spent with all of the employees. They were welcoming and friendly and they

kindly answered any questions I had and were more than willing to explain things in simple terms or at a slower-than-average pace.

When I was not attending any sort of meeting or event, I sat in an office, which I had to myself most of the time and passed my time on a laptop that was given to me to borrow. Luckily, I did not mind spending all day online because the internet was a precious gift that was not available to me at the hotel. I am at ,work' doing this report right now.

I suggest you tell the future interns that they should not expect to really gain any hands-on experience or to help out. They will likely not learn anything new or useful that they could take back with them to the states. This internship is more about just watching how the EGOH runs. It was not awful, but it was not at all what I expected.

Program Coordinators

Every single person who helped put this program together did an outstanding job. Jan-Malte and Torben were in control of telling the interns about the upcoming events, when to be there, how to dress and what to bring. They dealt with all the details and the logistics of the trips. They generally led the small events and all of the excursions. They were friendly and easy to talk to and they were often just hanging out with our group as friends. I think we helped pull them out of their shells a little bit and forced them to live a little outside of the planned agenda (which was no easy feat with Torben). They also distributed our bikes and money and often drove us to the supermarket or where ever else we occasionally needed to be, which was super!

Mr. and Mrs. Hagen were absolutely splendid. They were very friendly and easy to talk to, but I did not see them as much as Torben and Jan-Malte. I know they did a lot of work behind the scenes but their efforts did not go unnoticed.

Then of course Martin Vollertsen, who not only is very musically talented and all about the midwest, but is also kind, energetic and always keeping things rolling.

As for Silke Uplegger, my boss at the EGOH, I only have kind words for her as well. She showed me around and told me about a lot of interesting things. We shared several good conversations and she was good about giving me a schedule to follow. She kept up with me and often attended the events that we hosted. She was easy to approach, talk to and was always kind to me.

Pay

€750 was given to us for our six weeks here and I have no complaints whatsoever. We received €400 at the beginning and then €350 at the end of week five. We certainly had enough to live off of and I am beyond appreciative for the money.

Living

Eutin is very beautiful and our view over the Kellensee from our hotel is serene. I get to ride by the Klein Eutiner See everyday and there are only a handful of things more fantastic than riding a bike in Germany.

Living with six other people is awesome for scores of reasons. We have a ton of fun together in the house and a lot of that has to do with the fact that we broke up into

teams and made a cooking schedule. Every weekday we all eat dinner together (often with other guests – the interns who are not living in the house, Mark Daly, and our German friends.) The two cooks for that day prepare the meal for the whole group, then we all help clean up afterwards. We each take turns buying Kisten of Beers and bottles of wine. Sometimes we pile into the living room and watch German movies, grill outside or play card games in the basement. There is always someone to talk to, but also always plenty of empty rooms to sneak into if you need some piece and quiet. Living in Eutin has been a lot better than I expected. Wir hatten so viel Spaß gemacht!