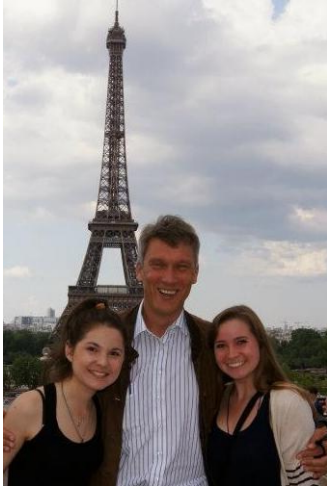




# SMEAL International Programs Newsletter

Summer 2012

*Anastasiya Shpakova and Julia Dolinsky studied in Pforzheim, Germany while learning about the European Union and German culture, business and politics.*



Eiffel Tower, Paris

**I consider traveling to be the best way to learn about the similarities and differences that unify and divide Europeans, especially when given a chance to directly approach them.**

I selected the summer study abroad program in Pforzheim, Germany because it combines a serious academic orientation and active interaction with European culture by incorporating extensive traveling and enlightening classes. From the start, I was excited about the upcoming six-week European adventure. I consider traveling to be the best way to learn about the similarities and differences that unify and divide Europeans, especially when given a chance to directly approach them.

I sought an understanding of German logic and mentality in order to interpret German political and business decisions that influence the politics of the entire EU. Moreover, the situation in Europe is of tremendous significance to the overall global community. I wanted to become familiar with the role of Germany in the European community and be able to analyze global problems from their perspective. Furthermore, this program would explain the current Eurozone crisis and explore possible solutions to the Euro crisis. I wanted to determine the differences and grounds for the discord among the member states that result in lengthy debates about the future of the region and long-lasting negotiation of the deals. I believe that understanding the European Union and the way it functions is crucial for every modern scholar.

On the other hand, I saw this program as a personal challenge and a chance to find inspiration. I expected that the complete immersion in a different environment would contribute to my personal development and help me 'stretch' my reality. I hoped to gain new competencies and advance already existing skills such as continuing to learn German. In addition, I saw this program as a wonderful chance to practice photography, since I would come across numerous attractions along the way. Last but not least, I



anticipated that this experience would help me learn more about myself and, thus, clarify my long-term goals and help to determine my future career path.

Overall,

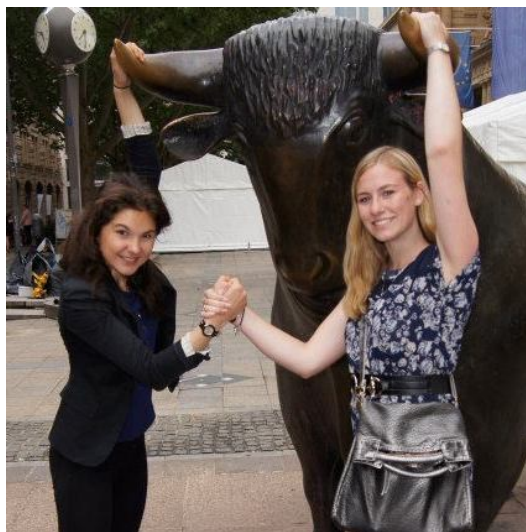
the program provided an explanation for the German way of thinking, both theoretical and practical frameworks. It provided a great amount of information about the process of European integration, a deeper insight in European history, and clarified the existing issues between the member states. Moreover, first-hand experience gained through visiting the institutions of the European Union was crucial to understand the functioning of the EU and interpreting its position in the global arena.

From an educational standpoint, I am completely satisfied with the material I learned at the University of Pforzheim. The Hochschule verified its excellence and status as a remarkable institution. I enjoyed working with the vast instructional resources and communicating with outstanding faculty members in formal and informal circumstances. Furthermore, this knowledge enables me to compare Europe and America in various dimensions and develop an individual position on multiple topics.

The program exceeded my expectations. Overall, the business program at Pforzheim Hochschule was a wonderful learning experience for me. This program undoubtedly benefit-



Gold & Jewelry Museum ,  
Pforzheim



Frankfurt Stock Exchange

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Dirk Wentzel & Sabine Schnabel

ed my academic and personal development, and extended my network by adding the people from both PSU and overseas who helped me grow personally and professionally during this program. — Anastasiya Shpakova

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Deciding to study abroad is a decision I will never regret. In Germany I experienced many good times with our program leaders, Dirk Wentzel and Sabine Schnabel, and with my classmates. In six weeks, I had field studies in more than six major cities in Europe, went to the French Open, and immersed myself in the German culture. I believe that with this program, I was able to learn more about the German people by living like they do.

For example, in Pforzheim I was able to make friends with our German buddies, a few of the locals, and some French students who I still talk to today. I was able to do this by putting myself out there and meeting new people. If you are looking for a study abroad program that helps you step out of your comfort zone while having a good time, this is the one for you!

**In one of my journal entries I wrote about the train ticket Honor System as a metaphor for German values.**

has either paid or has a student pass. Conductors do not always check your ticket or pass. If someone boards the train illegally, they are considered a very bad person and pay forty euros as their punishment. In America, when citizens travel on the bus, they must pay and or show their bus pass before entering. Otherwise, the passenger may not get on. This is similar to train travel in New York; before people get on the train, passengers must buy a ticket from one of the machines outside the train station. During the trip, the conductor comes around with a hole punch and punches every ticket so it cannot be reused.

I think the Honor System is a great metaphor for German values. They tend to be more trustworthy, because they believe that the citizens of Germany will do the right thing. Some Americans may think that the Germans are being naïve, because they put too much trust in their people. I personally believe, why shouldn't they? Just because people in America are not as trustworthy when it comes to paying to ride the bus does not mean it cannot work elsewhere. Different countries think different ways. I think that the German Honor System illustrates how they are laid back and build better relationships with their friends as a result of it. The German friends I made on this program are people that I really admire. Even though I have only known them for a short time, I feel as if I could trust them with my valued possessions and they would take great care of them.

Spending the summer in Pforzheim, Germany was a wonderful adventure and I cannot wait to go back again. --- Julia Dolinsky



Our whole group on top of the Reichstag in Berlin.

In one of my journal entries I wrote about the Honor System as a metaphor for German values:

Frequently during our stay in Europe, we used public transportation to get to our field study sites. Usually, when we went on the train or bus, we did not need to show our ticket or student I.D. because in Germany they have a code called the "Honor's System". To elaborate, in Germany people usually trust that when boarding the train or bus the passenger



Excited Julia on the high ropes course, a group activity the first week.

For more newsletters written by Smeal students:  
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