

REPORT

International Business Internship Exchange, Webster University

June 30 – August 31, 2006

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In February 2006 I heard about the Missouri-Germany Exchange. At the University of Cooperative Education in Heidenheim there was an informative meeting where Wilma Prifti from the Webster University in Saint Louis presented the exchange program. Wilma is the director of the International Business Internship Exchange. When she talked about the exchange I decided to participate because everything sounded so wonderful. I was very happy when I heard that I can go to Saint Louis in summer 2006.

On June 30th 2006 I flew to the USA. I arrived at the airport in Saint Louis where Teresa Sarai, the Coordinator of the exchange program, received me cordially. I stayed the first two days at the Webster University with students from Mexico, Ghana and Germany. During our orientation we learned about the internship, the host families, the culture of Missouri etc.

After the orientation-weekend all the students were picked up by their host families. My host family (the Bernhardts) lives in Columbia, which is about two hours away from Saint Louis. The parents (Melissa and John) are very nice and they did everything for me. They have a daughter (Tessa) who is 23 years old and a son (Matthew) who is 19 years old. And there was a dog. I had a very nice room and my own bathroom. My host family took me to several towns and cities in Missouri. We made a lot of trips and it never was boring.

The other German, Mexican and Ghanaian students all lived in Saint Louis and could meet each other on the weekends or during the week. I just saw them on a few weekends. But it wasn't a problem for me because I had so many things to do with my host family and my friends.

During summer it is very hot in Missouri. There is a very high humidity and on some days the people don't want to go out because of the heat. But I liked the weather because it doesn't rain very often and there is a lot of sun.

I did my internship in Jefferson City (capital of Missouri) in the Missouri Department of Economic Development. I worked in the Sales Department for eight weeks. My duties were to assist with market research and to help the International Business Managers with Marketing Missouri. It was very interesting and all the colleagues were nice and friendly. I had an intensive practice in English and learned the language very well. One of my colleagues gave me a ride to work every day. I had the opportunity to go to meetings with the co-workers and to see other companies and other cities. We went to Springfield, Kansas City and Saint Louis. I did a lot of research about other companies, helped in the preparation of presentations and learned a lot about how business works in the USA.

Some of my colleagues took me to restaurants after work and we went to concerts and parties. On my last weekend we had a barbecue together where I met all the other families. It learned a lot about other cultures because I had colleagues from China, Korea, Vietnam etc.

The internship was wonderful, I learned so much and I had a lot of fun.

After the eight weeks of internship it was time to say goodbye to my host family, my colleagues and my friends in the United States. I wanted to stay longer but I'm sure I will go back to the USA and to Missouri sometime.

After the internship and home stay I had two weeks of vacation and travelled with three other German students (from the University of Cooperative Education in Villingen-Schwenningen). At first we flew to Las Vegas and stayed there for three days. Then we flew to New York and rented a car. We drove to Long Island, Washington, to the Niagara Falls and finally back to New York. The grandparents of my host family live in Washington and invited us to stay there for three days. We had a very good time in the USA and saw so many different places.

It's difficult to describe all the experiences I had in the USA during the internship, with my host family, my new friends... I arrived in the United States and didn't know the people, the company, the work I had to do, the host family and the country.

This program gave me the opportunity to make a lot of wonderful experiences, to learn from an international culture and to create friends.