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Honors Program CSU

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Post Enrichment Report: Study Abroad in Bamberg, Germany

With the help of the Honors Enrichment Award, I was able to study in Bamberg, Germany during the semester of Spring 2018. This program was unique in that I took only German language courses during my five months stay, and because of the linguistic focus of the program, my peers were students from around the world. Living and studying in Germany expanded my knowledge of different cultures and gave me the tools to develop my language skills in an authentic environment.

Meeting students with international backgrounds gave me a unique and altered perspective on a lot the things common in America. Elements such as the education system turned out to be significantly different in the countries of my peers and in Germany. As a mathematics education major, these topics of discussion interested me greatly, and I even had the opportunity to interview a German high school teacher to learn more about the German system. Furthermore, in Bamberg I had the opportunity to choose from a variety of very interesting German courses. Two of my favorites were Culture in Bamberg and Stereotypes and Mentalities. These courses were ones that I took with other international students, and we were able to take a close look at the city we were living in. Bamberg is a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its medieval and baroque architecture and its importance as the seat of King Henry II in the 12th century. Through this culture course, I was able to learn about Bamberg's history and the relevance that these events still carry on through today.

Perhaps most importantly, I was also able to develop my German skills. I came into the program with a basic knowledge of German after taking a few classes here at CSU, but my German knowledge grew immensely during my stay in Bamberg. My program was excellent in taking us on excursions to get to know the town and Bavaria, and the university tried to help us connect with the local life in Bamberg as well. Now, at the end of the program, I can say that I can communicate confidently in German in 95% of the situations that I find myself in. For me, this is a huge accomplishment, and my time in Germany has made me realize that I want to continue to develop my language skills. I am considering moving back to Germany after I graduate this year to teach at an international school. This way, I can continue to do what I love through teaching, but I can also focus on the language and cultural elements that I found so interesting in class.

The contribution of the Honors Enrichment Award helped foster my life changing experience abroad. I came out of the program not only having improved my German and contributing to my German minor, but I also learned new things about other cultures and about myself. I can take this knowledge gained to help broaden my perspectives in teaching and continue to develop the interests that I have discovered while abroad.