

January 22, 2008

22 URI students take Study Tour to Germany

The International Engineering Program's annual study tour to Germany took place from January 7 – January 18, 2008. Accompanied by German faculty members Doris Kirchner and Norbert Hedderich, the 22 students visited companies all over Germany as well as the Technical University of Braunschweig. The tour began in the northern city of Hamburg where the group visited the neo-gothic city hall and was received by Dr. Joerg Draeger, Hamburg's senator for science and research. In Hamburg, the group also toured one of Europe's largest aircraft maintenance and overhaul facilities at Lufthansa Technik.

The second stop was the city of Braunschweig, located 1 ½ hours drive west of Berlin. Students visited the Language Center, various research institutes at the Technical University, took a guided tour through the historic old town and toured the Natural History Museum. The students also meet with the 20 URI students who are currently studying in Braunschweig as well as with the German exchange students who will come to URI this fall. The group also visited one of the largest automobile plants in the world, the headquarters of Volkswagen AG in nearby Wolfsburg.

After a brief stop at the historic town of Goslar, the group moved on to the city of Wetzlar, located an hour north of Frankfurt where a visit was paid to Leitz-Hexagon, a company specializing in sophisticated measuring instruments. This company is connected to the former Brown and Sharpe Co. in North Kingstown.

Traveling by tour bus, the group then moved on to Southern Germany, spending the night in Tübingen, one of Germany's most famous and historic college towns. The next destination was Lake Constance, Germany's largest lake, bordering Germany, Austria and Switzerland. After a brief stop at the baroque church at Kloster Birnau, the group toured ZF Industries in Friedrichshafen, which manufactures car and truck transmissions and steering columns. This city is also home to the Zeppelin airships built in the early part of the 20th century. The Zeppelin Museum was one of the highlights of the trip.

Thanks to clear weather, the Austrian Alps were in plain view as the group left Lake Constance and moved on Hilti Corporation west of Munich. Students not only got a first hand glimpse of the manufacturing process of power tools and fasteners, but actually also got to drill holes into concrete in the company's testing center.

The final stop of the trip was Germany's third largest city, Munich. This cultural metropolis is as vibrant as ever. Students had free time to explore the city and the

automobile enthusiasts in the group got special treatment at Bavarian Motor Works (BMW). A guided tour through the classic car division was followed by a visit to BMW's brand new and futuristic delivery center *BMW Welt*, located next to the Olympic Stadium. The day concluded with a plant tour.

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