

Testimonial: Attendance at 49th IFF Spring School 2018 and visiting Leibniz Institute for New Materials (INM) and the University of Bayreuth

25th February-20th March

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University of Melbourne- Dr. Daniel Heath, Prof. Greg Qiao, and Assoc. Prof. Andrea O'Connor

I attended the IFF Spring School 2018, entitled "*Physics of Life*", organized by the Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH from 26th February 2018 until 09th March 2018 at Jülich. The school provides a comprehensive program of the biophysics of living systems from a multidisciplinary vantage point. I became familiarized with the theoretical methods and the experimental techniques for the study of biological systems. It was also provided the opportunity to visit different laboratories in the Jülich research center such as polymer synthesis labs, X-ray facilities, and the Jülich synchrotron radiation laboratory, which I found to be really interesting. Participating in the school was a fantastic opportunity to meet and discuss with professors as well as interacting with many international students and make new friendships. The school organizers were very nice and helpful and organized our stay and many interesting events. They organized a welcome and farewell dinner which were great for networking and also organized excursions within the beautiful city of Cologne including visiting the cathedral and the chocolate museum.

Stephanie Allison and I also visited Leibniz Institute for New Materials (INM) in Saarbrücken and Bayreuth Polymer/Colloid Network in Bayreuth from 12th-16th March 2018. At INM, Prof. Arzt and Prof. Kraus and at University of Bayreuth Prof. Scheibel and Prof. Lang warmly hosted us. They prepared an agenda with very interesting meetings for us. We had exciting talks with professors and researchers and became familiarized with their research and lab facilities. Furthermore, I presented the results of my research on the "Design of advanced biomaterials to promote endothelialization for vascular grafts applications" at INM and the University of Bayreuth followed by interesting questions and discussions. This allows for many aspects of research to be highlighted as well as create a strong foundation for future collaboration within the network. I was really inspired by the facilities and research being undertaken in Germany in Science.

The school and subsequent lab visits were very enriching academically but we also had the chance to have some fun. During our stay in Germany, I had enough time to explore different beautiful cities in Germany such as Aachen, Saarbrücken, Mainz, Bayreuth, and Munich. I visited very historical cathedrals, museums, palaces, and historical part of cities. I really enjoyed the restaurants with traditional foods as well as the great beer in Germany. I also had a chance to go to the strong beer festival in Munich which was great!

All these would not be possible without the generous support from DAAD. My participation to Spring School and research stay in Germany were supported by DAAD funded thematic network project "Melbourne-Bayreuth Polymer/Colloid Network". It covered our flight ticket and a daily travel

allowance covering the costs for travelling and accommodation. I would also like to thank the project coordinators for organizing our enrolment in Spring School, visiting INM and the University of Bayreuth, and organizing our accommodation. I would like to have a special thanks to one of the project coordinators, Sylvia Sprödhuber. She was very nice, helpful, and friendly. She spent a lot of time with us and showed the city of Bayreuth and the campus of the University of Bayreuth and had lunch and dinner with us. The whole stay wouldn't have been the same without her!

IFF Spring School, Jülich



Campus of the University of Bayreuth

Campus of the INM and Saarland University, Saarbrücken



Strong Beer Festival, Munich

