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IA STUDENT, BEN FREHNER, RECEIVES IROP SCHOLARSHIP TO STUDY GERMAN COMPANIES

by **Ben Frehner** (International Affairs/Business Administration '12)

On October 14, UNH International Research Opportunities Program (IROP) 2011 grant recipients presented the findings of their summer research at a well-attended and professional symposium at the MUB. Presentations were diverse and powerful ranging from “Quantifying Methane Ebullitive Flux from Subarctic Ecosystems” to “Rhythmic Perceptions in West African Music.” Among them were two current International Affairs majors who offered Powerpoint presentations and deftly answered questions on their research and experience: Chelsea Moyer, “Women’s Rights Movements in Morocco and the Middle East” and Ben Frehner, who shares his experience below. IROP, one of the Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research (HCUR) grant programs, funds undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative projects with support from generous donors. To learn more about IROP and the HCUR, visit www.unh.edu/undergrad-research.

I went to Germany this summer to do a comparative study between the German company *Storck* and the German company *Benteler*. *Storck* makes candy products including Werthers Original, *Benteler* makes auto parts that are then sold to companies like *Ford* and *Toyota*. The study was designed to look at the employee benefits package that each company offered and how it impacted the corporate atmosphere within the company.

I was living in the city of Paderborn with three German graduate students in an apartment I found online. I spoke German 95% of the time with them and was totally immersed in the culture for the 9 weeks that I lived there. It was very interesting to experience a foreign culture for an extended period

of time. I worked with Professor Martin Schneider at the University of Paderborn who helped me formulate the project. After studying the company's benefits packages, I had interviews with employees and management from both firms.

The results from the study showed that *Storck*, which offered top-of-the-line benefits, had a very tightly-knit family atmosphere at



Ben Frehner conducted research in Paderbon, Germany

the workplace. *Benteler*, who by German standards offered the bare minimum in benefits, had a very strict hierarchy, with workers who viewed their jobs as a 9-5 time commitment and nothing else.

Personally, I had a great time. My roommates were great in helping me acclimate to the new culture and I enjoyed the country immensely. Academically, I was challenged by the new language but the concepts I was immersed in were just like what I have been studying here at UNH.

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