

The University of Regensburg Undergraduate Research Program was an incredible experience that allowed me to experience new laboratory techniques, new cultures, and new perspectives on academia. I would highly recommend it to anyone considering a research career.

My lab was part of the Medical Microbiology and Virology department, which was especially intriguing considering that virology is my main area of interest. I got to work in a lab that was within the university hospital, so labs around me were also doing active diagnostic work as well as research. This opened my eyes to how the technology we develop in labs is used practically, and the impact that research can have on actual human health. Furthermore, the lab had a biosafety level III lab. While I could not work in it, my mentor still explained and answered my questions about the techniques and experimental procedures performed in there, allowing me to get a better idea of what work inside a biosafety level III facility looks like.

My lab also allowed me to pick my project of interest, which was very exciting. My project focused on Influenza A, which is an area of interest to me (especially during this time, when avian influenza cases were surging worldwide). The lab worked on a range of viruses, from Ebola to SARS-CoV-2 to HPV, which allowed me to explore the field. It also made a point of including all levels of education (Bachelors, Masters, and PhD students) in the meetings, allowing me insight into what it looks like to be in these programs. I got to hear about troubleshooting techniques that were much different from my own, participated in journal clubs for a variety of virological topics, and learned about new therapeutics in development. In my own project, I developed new skills which will aid me in the future. I also found it very rewarding to be able to shape the direction of my project and really feel like it was my own. My lab required me to do a written report on the project as well as a presentation, strengthening my skills in science writing and enhancing my understanding of the project.

It was also interesting to see how different labs function. I found that German labs seemed to place an emphasis on sustainability, which gave me some insight to take back to my lab work. The lab group was very social, and we even went on a day long hike together. This sense of community made me feel very welcome and made even long days in the lab fun.

Aside from lab, I also found community with my fellow CU students studying abroad. On our weekends, we got to explore the regions surrounding Regensburg using our student train tickets, which came in very handy! I visited Salzburg, Passau, and Garmisch-Partenkirchen. We also coordinated a couple of weekend trips to places further out like Italy. As someone who had previously never been to Europe, it was amazing to get to learn about the history and culture present in all these places. I was awestruck by the architecture and art I saw, both in places far away and in Regensburg.



Top left: Budapest skyline at night

Top right: Cathedral in Passau

Bottom: Church in Regensburg

My fellow roommates in the dorm also became good friends to me. We were mostly international students, so we got to talk a lot about our own countries and the perspectives that we had. We also had movie nights with Bollywood movies, food from our countries, and spent a lot of time discussing world affairs. I am so grateful to have had the experience of meeting so many new people!



My time doing research at the University of Regensburg was something I will not soon forget. I am so grateful to the people I met and the experiences I had, and I hope that the next round of BioFrontiers scholars can experience the same!