

GRANDOISE GERMANY!

It is said that “Opportunity knocks your door only once in a lifetime”. For us, still sticking to the conventions of striking only once, it knocked our e-mail accounts in the form of International Experience Program 2014. Standing in front of us was GTU with an opportunity to breathe European air. Of course one had to say yes, so did we, the Electrical Engineering students of the Gujarat Technological University. Precisely on 13th June, 7am in the morning, all Electrical Engineering students boarded a flight with a mind filled with adrenaline rush and a million dreams from Ahmedabad to Hamburg, via Mumbai and the fashion capital of the world Paris. It was this German Guy, turned into a lifelong friend, Sebastian, who came to pick us up. It took no more than an hour to reach our home for the coming 6 weeks, Wismar. The Hanseatic Town of Wismar, a beautiful place, covered with lush green trees, original red brick-made and very old houses laying in perfect fusion with the numerous modern buildings, showed a smooth transition from the ancient time to how we see it today. Around the corner of the streets, one may find people standing with their bicycles talking and enjoying quiet Saturday afternoons, with their different but disciplined way of saying hellos. All of these on first weekend at Germany made no big difference, but to affirm the notion of these 6 weeks being one of the most memorable time of the students’ lives.



Mumbai Airport

Hochschule Wismar, located near the center of the town, was the name of the University. It offers courses in many fields of study, including Engineering (Electrical, Computer Science and Information Technology), Medical Sciences and Management Studies. Students were offered three subjects, two of which were a part of GTU (i.e.; Advanced Processors and Controllers and Advanced Micro-controllers and Embedded Systems) whereas one (Wireless Communication) was additionally taught for knowledge enhancement. In the kick off meeting itself students were given the detailed plan of what they were to do in the coming days. The schedule included lectures, laboratory sessions and of course examinations. Week -1 started with the additional subject of wireless communication. Students felt it a bit challenging due to the different study methods and communication but after a couple of lectures the students caught up fast and then it became easy and even more interesting to study at Wismar. Students

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were given notes on every topic in advance and were encouraged to read them before coming to the class. Majority of the work done was on the applicability of the subject after discussion of the underlying theory. Unlike their experience back home the biggest difference observed by students was a two-way communication in the lectures. It meant every student had to think and participate in the class in discussions and actively work towards the problem solving.

Evgenia Malcheva, student mentor, excursion guide and a great friend, provided all the necessary information about Wismar including best places to eat, where to spend our leisure time and not to mention, a map of the town.



Wismar at a glance

First visit through the university, students never realized Block 21 was going to give them memories which they would cherish for the whole of their lives. It is officially, The

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Bureau of International Students. Block 21 roof top was the place where students used to watch the FIFA 2014 matches of Germany. Students reflected: “What better place to be in the world, except for in the country whose team has won the world-cup, at the time of world-cup! Amazing atmosphere, patriotic Germans, great food and mind boggling after-match parties, all of it at one place, our own rooftop.”



Flags of both the final teams of world cup in Berlin

One might think soccer is the only game played in Germany. Myth-buster is the huge sports club fully equipped with gyming instruments, badminton and basketball court, a big ground and very long sidewalk paths for jogging.

There was a mensa (Food court) which served amazing food at the sports club. During the breaks students went to the mensa to taste German flavours.

Week-2 starts with the study of two subjects of GTU curriculum of Electrical Engineering. In addition, to the class work students were given tasks to do while they were out in their residences. Students were told to submit all the self studies in time and precisely as that will be counted towards their final grades.

Students extensively studied the subjects and felt that it was not a burden but was very interesting for them. The new way of learning, understanding and using the laboratory in different ways in addition to the tutorials. By now the students were habituated to German food and its time management.

In the fourth week, students celebrated the Indian week with their German counterparts. This was the unique event organized by Wismar to make the German students aware about the Indian culture and Indian food which is already very popular in Germany.

Soon as the study was over the next day was the exam of the students. This was a bit different for the GTU students who have the habit of reading before exams back home.

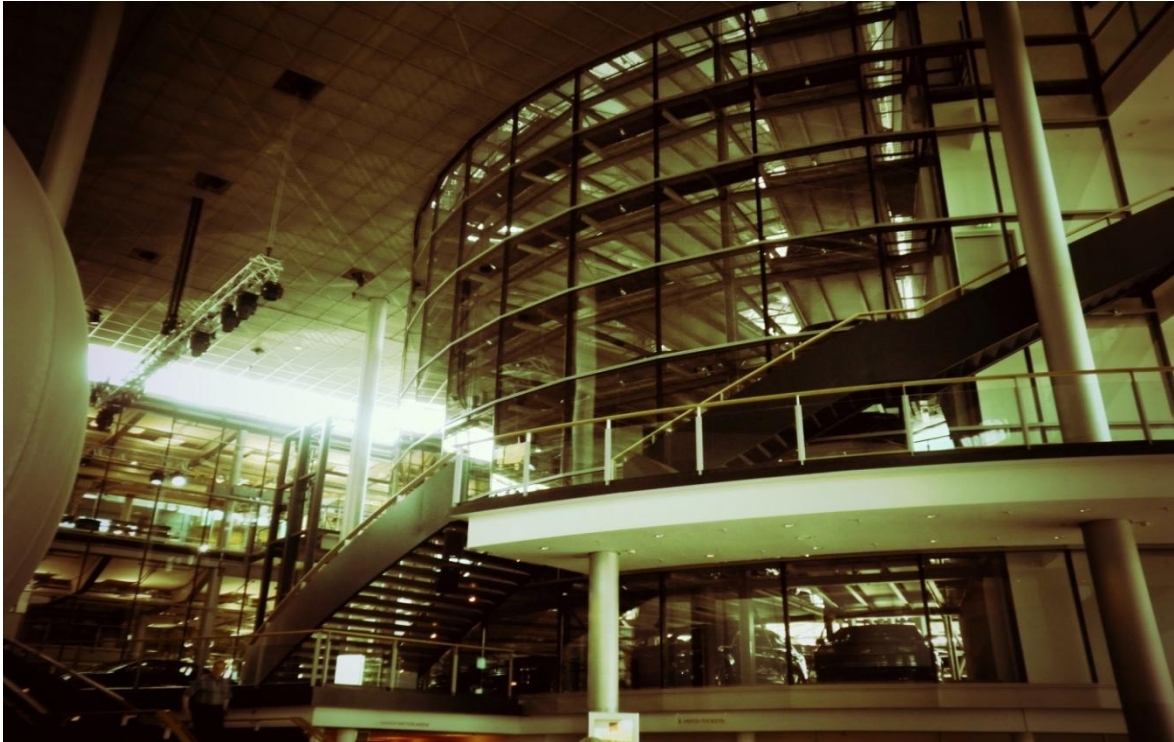
Students found the exams challenging not difficult as they were prepared for the same due to the guidance provided to them before the program started.

Scheduled 5-week exhaustive study plan, no longer remained that tiring because of the weekend trips to Lubbock, Rostock, Berlin and Hamburg, which Wismar had planned for us. All of these cities are located very near to Wismar, and provided students with wonderful experience and a chance to click some amazing pictures.



Lubeck Castle

Student shared: “The time always seem to go fast, when we don’t want it to. Exactly what happened at the end of the 5th week, when we realized our final week for excursions and visits was about to start.” On Friday, students started their journey from Wismar to Dresden. Volkswagen situated near the center of Dresden, has state-of-the-art assembly line for Volkswagen phaeton, well furnished and completed with wooden flooring. A Student quoted: “This place is an attraction for tourists and car-lovers like us. With its weekly concerts and fully transparent infrastructure, it attracts many people from across the globe.” Having visited Dresden, the Electrical Engineering group continued their journey to Prague, via train.

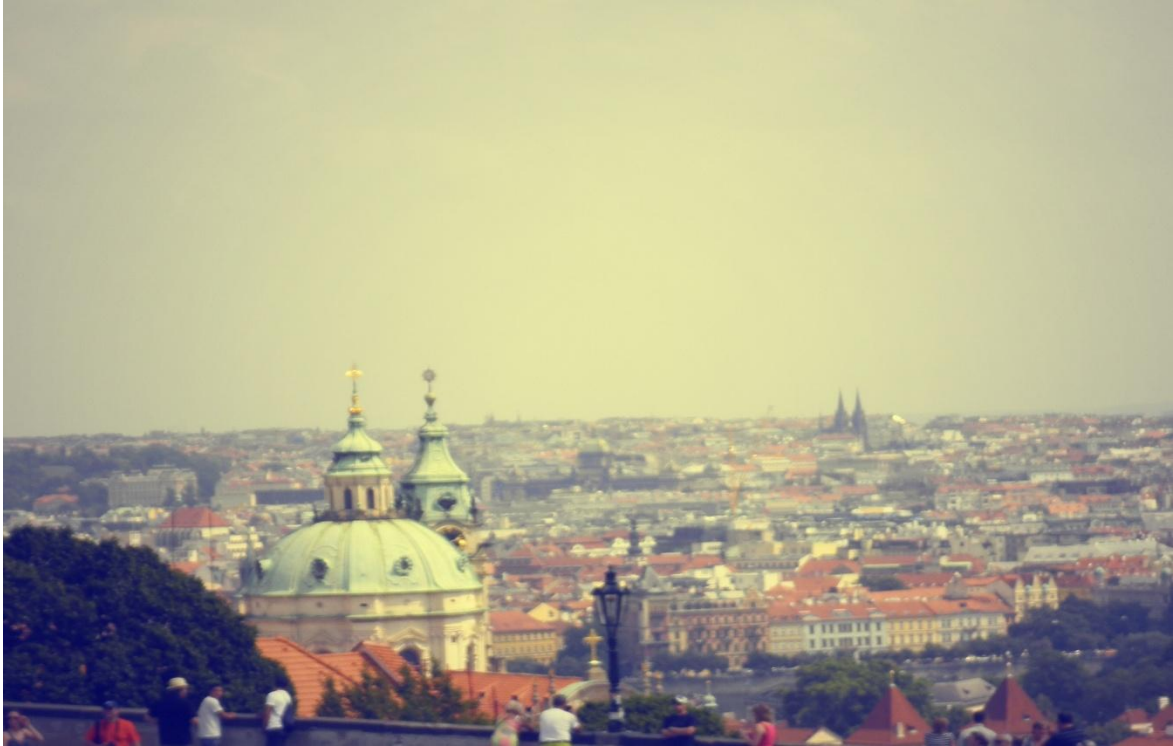


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Volkswagen, Dresden

The Czech Republic Capital starts mesmerizing one with its very first look. No one wanted to sleep. What everyone wanted was to use every minute available to them to “invade” the city. One immediately understands why Prague attracts so many people every year. With its beautiful castles, consummate cathedrals, antiques speaking world history in the museums and an icing on the cake, the Charles Bridge, all summed up to become a perfect destination, specifically for architects and historians. Nevertheless, it has a lot more to offer to people coming from every walk of life. With a heavy heart though, GTU group had to bid adios to Prague.



Prague city and Charles Bridge

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Continuing their journey, students reached another wonderful city, the grand capital of the gorgeous country, Berlin. Student quoted: "Too short a name, too big a city." Their next stop on the planner was BMW Berlin. This is what a student quoted after visiting BMW: "Perfectionists always finish a job in style, so is the story of BMW. Innovating and accelerating from much before than the world war, BMW has a series of stories, enough to write a book. All the units of the factory including the Production and assembly line, working in absolute synchronism, makes one realize that it takes a lot more than just a good design to become a leader in the market."

With still half of the day to go, students grabbed the opportunity to visit the rest of Berlin.



BMW , Berlin

They visited the TV Tower, Richstag (The Parliament Building), the Olympic Stadium, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum.



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Cathedrals and Charlottenberg Tower- popularly known as victory tower

Next day, the Electrical Engineering group had to leave for the capital of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern state, Schwerin, to visit the Centre for trade and commerce and also the Technology centre. Wismar also had one, which we had visited the other day.



Schwerin castle

Then the time arrived for the conclusion meeting of our summer school. Students were handed certificates, even at that time they were not ready to believe it was actually the end. Eventually, they were left with two days to pack. On the morning of 28th July '14, almost completely broken with the grief of separation, students left Wismar. Arriving in India was like leaving a home behind, for a home we left 6 weeks ago.



Group of electrical engineering students at BMW and On the day of Indian evening



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Student Quotes:

“In those 46 days, one of the best part of our life, apart from the technical knowledge and exposure that we got, we made a family, learnt about our own discrepancies, knew that the world is big, yet so small and yes the adage that an opportunity knocks your door only once, is definitely true, so just go, grab it.”- Nirali Desai

“I am very thankful to my college Principal Dr. Anish Gandhi who had encouraged me to join this program, and am also grateful to Mr. Hiren Thaker who gave me a lot of support and chance to attend this program.” – Harsh Desai

“We are very thankful to GTU to organize such a program. Due to this IEP-14, we gain excellent knowledge and also developed confidence in ourselves due to international exposure which will be beneficial to us ahead in global competitive market, and we are proud to be a part of IEP-14.” - Group of Electrical Engineering Students

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the students who have put an extra effort to make a wonderful report which has helped me to know and will help the future IEPans to know about this program. A special thanks to Mr. Amit Johri OSD GTU for helping me in compilation and offer his valuable time and help in finalizing this report.”

-Hiren Thaker

This report is prepared by Nirali Desai, Harsh Desai and a team of other students and is compiled by Hiren Thaker, GTU International Collaboration Head and Mr. Amit Johri OSD, GTU.