

FIELD REPORT

by Saskia URLASS

I had the honour to attend my internship at the University of Chicago from the 1st of August 2016 to the 13th of January 2017. The University of Chicago belongs to the world's top 10 universities according to Times Higher Education, and is considered one of the leading research universities in North-America.

I was working in Eugene B. Changs Laboratory, which is located on the campus of the University of Chicago, in the 9th floor of the Gwen and Jules Knapp Center for Biomedical Discovery (KCBD). The KCBD is a very new and modern building, which gives space for many laboratories from the department of Medicine & Pediatrics, as well as the Comprehensive Cancer Center and many more. Eugene Changs laboratory focuses on Gastroenterology, more specified on intestinal microbes which are related to digestive diseases or immune and metabolic-related disorders. And I was working besides my supervisor Kristina Martinez, PhD RD, who gave me an amazing introduction into the research topic and gave me a versatile and intensive training in many different experimental techniques.

My project focused on the role of *Clostridium bifermentans* (a member of the family Clostridiaceae) in driving small intestinal fat absorption by using *in vitro* and *in vivo* models. Preliminary data suggested that this microbe induces gene expressions that are involved in fat transport in small organoid cultures. The results led to novel findings that might have great relevance for the public in fighting against obesity.

This internship was a great possibility to expand my scientific knowledge in a practical manner. Additionally, the fact of absolving six month abroad is the perfect opportunity to get introduced to another culture and another way of thinking. Moreover, I am really

grateful to the whole laboratory team, which welcomed me warmly and to the friendships that I have formed during the time in the United States.

I would really recommend to be open-minded and being curious at all time. Also keep in mind since the time passes by very fast, you should try to utilize it as best as you can.

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