

## DAAD Alumni Association USA 2017 Newsletter

### Letter from the President

Dear DAAD Alumna/Alumnus:



Taking one step at a time, but doing so in unison, has allowed us to make a difference during the last year in the lives of many students, alumni and friends of the DAAD Alumni Association. I very much want to acknowledge that this would not have been possible without your generous donations and those of your publicly minded peers. Please accept a big thank you! With the much appreciated support of the former President of the DAADAA, Mechthild Schmidt Feist, I took on the task of steering the DAADAA in January to carry out a number of activities that have benefitted our membership and students. Permit me to recap some of these.

- The year started in the spirit of celebration with a New Year's Reception meeting many new alumni and DAAD sponsored exchange students at Deutsches Haus at the United Nations Plaza in NYC.
- At the DAADAA we undertook a membership drive, inviting those who had benefitted from the DAAD in the past to give back in kind, creating access to a first class world education in Germany for qualified American college students, who, for lack of funding, would otherwise not have been able to study or do research in Germany. If you were waiting until the end of the year to join the DAADAA officially as a sustaining member, please do so now. The award of future student stipends depends on the income we receive from sustaining DAADAA memberships. The more you give, the more we are able to do by way of scholarships. For directions on how to donate, see <https://www.daad.org/en/alumni-services/alumni-usa/>
- Several New Trustees joined our Board, whose bios you will find below: Professors Mark Rectanus (Iowa State University), Barbara Berthold (University of Texas at Arlington & Dallas), and Jonathan Olsen (Texas Woman's University).
- Our esteemed, beloved Trustee and former President of the DAADAA, Helene Zimmer Loew, resigned from her Trusteeship, but accepted the award of an Honorary Trusteeship in our organization. We thank Helene Zimmer Loew for many years of effective leadership and guidance she provided in the past and for her continuing engagement with the DAADAA for the common good.
- Our Sound Understanding Concert on April 20th that featured the musical talents of young artists sponsored by the DAAD became a joyous meeting ground for many DAADAA alumni. Peter Altevogt's informative and nuanced review of the performance of the artists performing in the Concert is found below. Mark your calendar for the next concert on April 12th, 2018: you are sure to experience great music and to meet many old and new friends who are part of the DAAD community.
- On May 4th Rosmarie Morewedge participated in the DAAD Germanistisches Begegnungs treffen at the University of Toronto, CA. Michael Lützeler, recipient of our DAADAA international leadership award, was another participant. The Conference provided a framework for linking activities of the Canadian DAADAC and the DAADAA of the USA.

- Ten scholarship awards were made to RISE applicants plus two in the arts, enabling them to spend the summer in research with a German research team and in design. Please find several reports below.



- On Sept. 13th, a regional reception of DAAD students was organized by Manfred Philipp and Thomas Südhof at Stanford for DAAD and Fulbright students. We would love to plan additional alumni meetings in various regions of the USA. If you would like to organize such a meeting for DAAD students and alumni, let us know, so that we can help with planning and support.

- On September 14th we enjoyed greeting the new DAAD students in the NYC region at the 'Fresh off the Boat' Party at the Anable Basin Sailing Bar and Grill, right across the DAAD offices across the East River. It was a perfect NYC summer evening, attended by Trustees Mechthild Feist Schmidt, Erich Harratsch and Rosmarie Morewedge.

- Thanks to the influx of energy from Mechthild Feist Schmidt and Erika Berroth, our presence on FACEBOOK has become much stronger. Follow and befriend us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DAADAlumniAssociationUSA/>

- In connection with the German Election 2017, the DAADAA, the DAAD, the German Embassy, The BMW Center of Georgetown University and the AICGS of The Johns Hopkins University co-sponsored a discussion of the German Election and its Consequences that was moderated by our Trustee Jonathan Olsen on Oct. 3rd, Tag der Deutschen Einheit, at Georgetown University. See below.



- DAAD students, alumni and trustees along with faculty and other German grantees in the Metropolitan NYC area were invited to a Winter Brunch on Nov. 18th at NYU by Mechthild Schmidt Feist. Board member Manfred Philipp joined as well. Such networking is designed to strengthen ties between DAAD alumni, both in the USA and abroad. We hope that these events hosted at universities with a strong

presence of DAAD students and alumni will become a new model for regional meetings. Would you be interested in hosting such an event? Contact us for further information.

Our organization's raison d'être has been defined by DAAD Alumni: to raise funds to create access and opportunities for American students to study/research at German universities and research institutes, and to organize cultural events for DAAD alumni to strengthen ties between them in the USA and abroad. If you can contribute to our scholarship fund, please do so now at:

<https://www.daad.org/en/alumni-services/alumni-usa/>

And if you would like to contribute in additional ways by becoming more deeply engaged with the work of the DAADAA, please do so through FACEBOOK or by writing to me, sharing your ideas and ideals. Thank you for your continuing strong publicly minded support of cultural transatlantic connections between Germany and the USA. Your support enables all of us to make great strides in international education.

Please pour yourself a glass of Glühwein before you read the Newsletter and connect virtually with us. Prost! Und frohe Feiertage!

*Rosmarie Morewedge,*  
DAADAA President (rmorewed@binghamton.edu)

## RISE Scholarships:

The DAAD sponsors students in two categories: RISE grants for Science Research and grants with focus in Culture and Arts. The DAAD organizes Summer Course Grants that enable students to take intensive language and culture courses at German universities. The DAAD was happy to provide additional funds for students to improve their proficiency in German.

In 2005 the DAAD established summer Research Internships in Science and Engineering (RISE) grants that have now risen to annually 300 students who spend the summer carrying out research in Germany. The DAAD is currently able to contribute ten additional scholarships, but has the goal of providing four more. Please help us do so, as there is a special need for scholarships in the arts as well as in RISE related fields. We congratulate the students who were selected at the end of a very competitive selection process and received funding for summer 2017.

Our grants are earmarked to support environmental research, a high priority field in which international collaboration is essential for our global future. One of the highlights of participants during their stay in Germany was a conference in Heidelberg, to which all RISE students were invited to learn about the range of future research directions and the actual research interests of their peers. Here are the reports of two students whose research was funded through your contributions:

**Zechariah D. Rice from Mercer University writes,**

I worked at Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt (THI) over a ten week period during the summer of 2017. Overall, this experience was extremely positive. I worked in the Institute of New Energy Systems (InES) under Mr. Mathias Ehrenwirth and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

After my housing situation was figured out, I thoroughly enjoyed living in Germany. The work that I conducted was interesting, and I felt that I played a vital role in it. I liked getting to know the people that I worked with. My only regret is not having better German speaking skills so that I could communicate with members of the community and my co-workers.

My research was concentrated in renewable energies, which are a personal passion. I learned much about research currently being done and the research process as a whole. The experience gained was invaluable.

I wish that more funds were available to me at the time as the 650 Euros were enough to pay for rent and food but not much else. Luckily, though, I had other grants and scholarships that allowed me to travel during my time in Germany. I got to go to Prague, Rome, London, Salzburg, Munich, Nuremberg, Berlin, and many other cities throughout Germany, especially Bavaria. One highlight of my time in Germany was the conference in Heidelberg. I enjoyed meeting other DAAD RISE participants, and Heidelberg was a beautiful place.

Already, I have had two students at my home institution ask me about the RISE program, and they are both currently applying for it. It is clearly gaining popularity. I believe that I could not have spent my summer doing anything better. I learned so much about research, about Germany, and about the world as a whole. I made memories and friends that will last a lifetime.

I cannot thank the people behind the DAAD RISE program enough. It has solidified my interests in research science. I was a finalist for the Marshall Scholarship and am currently applying for PhD programs at MIT, Stanford, and UC Berkeley. The RISE internship prepared me for a successful future in research science and has opened more doors than I can delineate.

*Here is a picture of my research supervisor (right) and me (left) in front of Kloster Weltenberg, the oldest monastery brewery in the world, right on the Donau:*



**Matthew Kastelic from the University of South Florida,**

who spent the summer in Bavaria, writes of a similarly great experience participating in research and discovering German culture.

This past summer, I was awarded with a DAAD RISE Scholarship and subsequently had the summer of a lifetime. As part of my placement, I left sunny Florida and moved to Sulzbach-Rosenberg, Bavaria, to begin an internship at Fraunhofer Institute for Environmental, Safety, and Energy Technology. The experience had a great impact on me and has forever changed the way that I view research and culture around the world.

At Fraunhofer, my work was focused on the development and testing of catalysts for the hydro-

treating of bio-oil derived from the pyrolysis of sewage sludge. As part of the research, I had the opportunity to review common catalysts for the application and ultimately order materials and synthesize some novel materials myself. On a typical day, I would begin running a batch reactor for the treatment of the bio-oil; which would take a few hours to start each morning. Then, I would focus on catalyst synthesis in the lab, ensuring that each catalyst was made correctly and recorded. Usually, at the end of the day, I would focus on some tasks involving understanding greater applications of the process and the potential for scaling up. At the end of the summer we analyzed samples and I gave a presentation on results to my group.



While the experience in the lab was great, living abroad provides a learning that comes just from living. From my arrival in Germany, I could tell that it would be much different than life back home. While I was nervous upon arrival, missing my first train from Nuremberg to Sulzbach, I quickly found my fit. My accommodation at the Sebastian Erlbeck Haus was perfect for me, from the beginning, my roommates, hailing from around the world, and my landlord made me feel like family. My first time in the grocery store, I had assistance from my landlord's young teenage son, while he had a little different taste than me, the help they all provided was invaluable. My roommates and I often cooked dinner together and had conversations about our research, culture, and politics. I will never forget the experiences, and beer, that were shared there. By the end of the summer, I felt completely comfortable in Sulzbach-Rosenberg and had no problem finding what I needed at Netto and REWE.

When I set out to Germany, I decided that I would try to travel and experience as much as possible. I had the opportunity to witness a soccer game at Allianz Arena in Munich, a DTM race at Norisring in Nuremberg, a midnight walk across Charles Bridge in Prague, and ferry rides in Salzburg, Hamburg, and Bamberg. One of my favorite experiences was the conference in Heidelberg where I had the opportunity to meet Rise Scholars who had been placed across Germany. We got to share insights on how research occurred at different facilities across Germany, be it universities, or research institutes like Fraunhofer. I also frequented the many festivals that occurred in Sulzbach-Rosenberg and the surrounding area, finding a love for Bratwurst, Steckerlfisch, and Pommes.

My summer in Germany was by far the best experience of my life and I will continue to think positively of the country and its people for a long time to come. I found that research in Germany consists of a large mix of people from all over the world and collaboration is something that is very important. The environment and people I met were incredible every step of the way. I look forward to the opportunity to visit and potentially return to further my education in the near future. I would like to thank DAAD for providing me with this experience of a lifetime; it was truly a "Change by Exchange."

Matthew Kastelic  
University of South Florida



*(Top) Matthew and several other DAAD scholars*

*(Bottom) Matthew at a festival at Taufkirchen near München*

## The Sound Understanding Concert April 20th, 2017

The annual DAAD Sound Understanding Concert took place on April 20th, 2017 in the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. We are extremely grateful to the musicians for showcasing their talents while, at the same time, helping us to raise awareness of the Alumni Association and the incredible benefits of the international student exchange. Those of you who were present at the concert will recall the artistic talent of the musicians, as you read Peter Altevogt's excellent review.

The 16th edition of Sound Understanding at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall – the annual showcase of artistic prowess by musicians funded through a DAAD scholarship to study in the U.S. – featured two classical trained pianists (Anne Riegler and Ngoc Vu), a classical violin (Lukas Stepp), and a jazz quartet around the grantees Dierck Peters (vibraphone) and Janning Trumann (trombone). The program sought to present the musicians not only as individual solo artists, but also in various combinations culminating in an ensemble piece at the end of the concert composed for Sound Understanding 2017 by Joachim (Jo) Junghans to touch on the different aspects and themes of the concert.

The first half of the concert presented a vital interplay of the music of Maurice Ravel and Frederick Chopin woven around the premiere of Fade – a piece for solo violin by DAAD alumnus Alexander Liebermann. With two movements from Ravel’s Le Tombeau de Couperin (composed between 1914 and 1917), Anne Riegler – whose deep interest in the work of Ravel has resulted in her most recent CD – interpreted the composer’s delicate and atmospheric composition with much nuance to detail and artistic sensitivity. She then accompanied violinist Lukas Stepp who then beautifully took on Ravel’s Tzigane, one of the most technically challenging piece for violin in which Ravel demonstrates his love for a late Romantic style of violin showmanship. Both, the rather introspective quality of Ravel’s piano work in Le tombeau as well as his portrait of exuberant violin virtuosity in Tzigane, resonated in Stepp’s performance of Liebermann’s Fade with a perfect balance of seemingly simple lines and complex harmonies.

The last piece before the intermission then belonged to pianist Ngoc Vu who took on Frédéric Chopin’s Polonaise in A-flat Major which is nicknamed “Heroique” for its grand gestures, technical and artistical challenges, and last but not least a revolutionary impetus. In the Weill Recital Hall’s



wonderful chamber music acoustics though, Vu gave the audience an idea of how to play a romantic composer straight up with a steady beat. He thus prepared the stage for the second half of the concert, which featured jazz by The Trumann Peters Quartet of trombonist Janning Trumann and vibraphonist Dierck Peters. They were accompanied by a rhythm section comprised of Jakob Dreyer on double bass and with Jochen Rückert, one of Germany’s sought-after drummers whose lively and driven drumming brought the DAAD grant recipients to perform at their level best.



Peters and Trumann displayed the breadth of their original jazz compositions as well as the surprisingly wide spectrum of sounds of their instruments. The audience was taken on a journey through a blend of varying feels and moods turning Weill Recital Hall almost into one of New York’s finest jazz clubs. The musicians were able to play solos on the highest improvisational level and they were mature enough to step back to blend and support the music as accompanists. For the final piece of Sound Understanding 2017, DAAD commissioned German pianist and composer Jo Junghanss who delivered a Hummage referring to elements of the pieces performed during the concert as well as including participation by the audience. His concept was to create resonance, not only of the music heard throughout the concert but also quite literally and he had the audience starting the piece by humming it’s root note “e”. The single pitched evolved throughout the piece which featured a variety of sonic landscapes and action on stage, the vibraphone bowed from by three of the ensemble’s members, echoes and citations of Ravel and Chopin fluctuating around, strictly composed parts in juxtaposition with improvised parts and culminating in a full ensemble improvisation. After travelling through many shades of its root note, the composition returned to its origin and with this to the audience itself making the Sound Understanding 2017 concert a truly unique and interactive experience, echoed in long ovations. (Photos: Beowulf Sheehan)

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## News about Trustees:

Helene Zimmer Loew was named Honorary Trustee of the DAADAA



It was our pleasure to award honorary Trustee status to Helene Zimmer Loew in recognition of the spectacular work she has accomplished on behalf of international education, foreign language study in the USA on all levels, in the development of world readiness standards for learning languages, cultural competence, and the collaboration of organizations supporting German language and culture study. As Executive Director of the AATG from 1985 to 2012 she led German language and cultural studies in the USA, collaborating with key international organizations to strengthen German studies in North America. As President of the DAADAA and long term Trustee, she led important fundraising and membership efforts, while she championed the collaboration of the DAAD and the AATG. We thank Helene for her many years of service to the DAADAA and are delighted that she will continue to be active as a leader of the DAADAA in an honorary position.



Dr. Mark Rectanus is University Professor and Professor of German Studies at Iowa State University at Ames. He earned the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Washington University in St. Louis. Professor Rectanus has received numerous grants for study and research in Germany, including a DAAD Research Grant, Fulbright Research Grant, and Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Research Fellowship. His publications include research on the German publishing industry, print and electronic media, contemporary German literature, museum studies, and contemporary conceptual art. In addition to teaching courses on German film and contemporary culture, Professor Rectanus also co-teaches “Technology, Globalization, and Culture” with Professor James Oliver (Director, Virtual Reality Applications Center) at Iowa State. He also developed and co-directs the Languages and Cultures for Professions (LCP) Program with Professor Chad Gasta. Professor Rectanus mentors Iowa State students in German and the professions who are seeking study abroad and internship opportunities in Germany; he plans to use his position as Trustee to create greater access for study abroad and support for it from the broader entrepreneurial community.



Dr. Jonathan Olsen is Professor and Chair of the Department of History and Government at Texas Woman’s University. He earned his M.A. in Soviet and Eastern European Studies at the University of Kansas and the Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Maryland. From 1997-2014 was Professor and Chair of the Department of Politics, Philosophy, and Law and the Co-Director of the International Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. He is a three-time Fulbright fellow (1988-89; 2000-2001; 2006-2007 at universities in Tübingen, Münster, and Viadrina – Frankfurt/Oder) and was a DAAD Guest Professor at the University of Potsdam from 2010-2011. He is the author of four books and numerous articles on the European Union and German political parties. He serves on the executive board of the International Association for the Study of German Politics (IASGP) and from 2015-2017 was on the national screening committee for Fulbright (Germany). He is delighted to have been asked to serve on the DAAD-AA board as a way of giving back for the many career opportunities German research fellowships have provided him and is excited to be a part of the DAAD-AA’s efforts to further students’ and scholars development.



Barbara Berthold joined the DAAD-AA Board of Directors in January 2017 to help create awareness about the DAAD and DAAD-AA’s programs and services. Barbara is a Lecturer of German at the Universities of Texas at Arlington and Dallas. She strives to engage her students in the appreciation of their own and other cultures and encourages them to seek opportunities to use the German language and experience culture beyond the classroom. Prior to rejoining the academic community, Barbara served as executive director for the Dallas Goethe Center, a nonprofit organization that advances German language and culture in North Texas. She is a member of several American and German-American cultural organizations and has served her community in various leadership roles. Helping people and organizations grow is her passion and she has been described as a bridge builder between cultures. If you are a DAAD alumni living in North Texas and would like to get involved in organizing get-togethers or become a mentor to one of our current DAAD exchange students, please contact her at [barbara.berthold@uta.edu](mailto:barbara.berthold@uta.edu).



Although Manfred Philipp leaves our Board, which he served with distinction and dedication both as Trustee and President for many years, he will continue to collaborate with us as President of the Fulbright Association, something we appreciate greatly, as it benefits both international associations. Nonetheless, we will miss his regular advice and engagement. We congratulate him on his new academic leadership position, thank him for his dedication to the goals of the DAADAA, and wish him every success as President of the Fulbright Association.

Trustee Erich Haratsch’s presented “Developing Chips in a Globalized World” in the Program in Technology, Globalization and Culture of Iowa State University, in Ames, Iowa on November 7th. see <https://www.elo.iastate.edu/tgc-f17/>

Mechthild Schmidt Feist presented “Involuntary Journeys”, a talk on her month-long story project with refugees on Lesbos, Greece on December 5 at New York University. <https://mschmidtfeist.wixsite.com/involuntaryjourneys>



## Fresh Off the Boat Party

Each September the DAAD New York welcomes the newly arrived German DAAD grantees to a “Fresh Off the Boat” party. Fittingly, one could take the East River Ferry to the Riverside Restaurant, Anable Boat Basin with splendid skyline views of Manhattan, including Deutsches Haus on 49th St., the headquarters of the DAAD. Conversation between Exchange students and Trustees flowed freely. Special recognition should go to Amra Dumisic, our DAAD Liaison, who organized a superb reception.

## The German Election and its Consequences

On Tuesday, October 3, 2017, the BMW Center for German and European Studies hosted a panel discussion on the results of the German Bundestag Election held on September 24, 2017. Each of the five panelists shared his thoughts on the recent election, starting with the struggle that many Germans are still going through to understand the outcome. According to Dr. Georg Schütte, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, “There are a lot of attempts in German media and the German political science community to come to terms with...this movement of voters away from established parties... towards the political fringes, why and how this has happened.”



How, in part, refers to the surprising win of 13% in the recent election by the Alternative for Germany (AFD), Germany’s own far-right nationalist political party. “All they needed was 5% to make it into the German parliament. That was already going to be a big deal...but really it’s the first time you have, in Germany, since the war, a far-right voice in parliament,” stated Christopher Cermak, Editor at the Handelsblatt Global Edition.

With the addition of the AFD to the German Bundestag, discussion of coalition-forming between parties has come to the forefront of German politics. Most notable of these is the Jamaica Coalition, known as Jamaica for the various colors of the parties involved that would bring together the Greens, Liberal Free Democrats, and the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union. “All of these parties have a huge amount of differences, and they are differences on very arguable fundamental things...,” asserted Cermak. Dr. Jeffrey Anderson, Director and Graf Goltz Professor at the BMW Center for German and European Studies, emphasized the high stakes facing Germany, adding, “I think all of the coalition partners will understand, if they don’t right now, Merkel certainly does, that success at the European level in some capacity, to some measure, is vital for Europe.”

“There are reasons to think that this particular Jamaica coalition, if that’s what we’re gonna refer to it as, can work.” – Dr. Jackson Janes, President, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Johns Hopkins University”. Regardless of the AFD’s gain and the challenge of uniting many political parties into one coalition, optimism remains high. Minister Holger Mahnicke, Head of Culture and Communications at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Washington D.C., forecasted, “On the average I would argue that in German history, after World War 2, we have seen a continuity of German foreign policy. And I would like to predict simply, and this is something I am quite sure about, that we will have continuity as well with any given new coalition.”

The panel was moderated by Dr. Jonathan Olsen, Professor and Chair in the Department of History and Government at Texas Women’s University. Dr. Rosmarie Morewedge, Associate Professor of German at Binghamton University, introduced the panelists.

The DAADAA would like to thank all of the panelists, who shared their insight into the German election process and their profound knowledge with participants and engaged listeners. Our special thanks go to Amra Dumisic for her organizational support of the event.



## DAADAA Prize

The DAADAA Awards committee, chaired by Manfred Philipp, with the concurrence of the Board, has selected Ingrid Scheib Rothbarth for the 2018 DAADAA Award for International Exchange, an award given for international education and cultural leadership. Ingrid Scheib Rothbart has spent her entire professional life furthering the understanding between Germany and the USA by introducing US audiences to German post WWII culture and films. Mrs. Scheib Rothbarth will be receiving this special award at the Sound Understanding Concert on April 12th, 2018. We hope that you will be there for the full laudatio and to congratulate this remarkable woman on her achievements.

## Membership

We are part of a network of more than 120 alumni groups worldwide. The DAAD Alumni Association USA elected its first official board members in 1998. Today the association numbers more than 300 members and has raised over \$200,000. DAAD New York maintains an alumni-only platform for networking and getting involved in alumni activities in North America. It features a searchable membership directory, upcoming alumni events, information about regional alumni groups in North America, and other activities and opportunities for you to get involved.

The general information pages about DAAD alumni activities are accessible to the public. However, a number of prime features (including the alumni directory, bulletin board, regional listserv, and the ability to view posted jobs and housing) are available only to DAAD alumni in the USA and Canada who register on the website. To find out more, please visit us on the DAAD.org website

<https://www.daad.org/en/alumni-services/alumni-usa/>

As a DAAD grantee, you are eligible for membership; we hope that you will decide to join us as a sustaining member, so that others may enjoy the same kinds of benefits you did during your stay abroad. How to become a Sustaining Member: Anyone who received any type of DAAD grant is considered a DAAD alumnus/a and may join. However, in order to join the DAADAA as a sustaining member, you must pay an annual membership. We offer the following levels:

Student or Retired	\$15
Life Membership	\$500
Regular	\$50/75/100
Institutional	\$1000

To pay for a membership or to make a donation, click the button below and choose 'Membership' or 'Donate' to pay online.

We accept PayPal, credit cards or checks sent to the address below:

DAAD Alumni Association, c/o German Academic Exchange Service  
871 United Nations Plaza, New York, Ny. 10017 T: 212 758 3223

Along with the DAADAA Board, I thank you and wish you peaceful Holidays. See you at our events



in 2018! (Photo: Some of our board members at the annual concert. *credit: Beowulf Sheehan*)

Rosmarie Morewedge,  
DAADAA President