

Once in a lifetime opportunity

The Presidential Scholarship in Poland in the eyes of participants

We meet Jean-Marie Potthast and Zachary Hase in US, around two weeks after their stay. What did they say about the Presidential Scholarship in Poland?

EDC: Why did you decide to take part in the Presidential Scholarship in Poland?

Jeanne-Marie: I've been already interested in Poland. I was there once, when I was 12. Ever since, when people asked me about it I always wanted to come back. It was a great experience. So when I got an e-mail I thought: "Oh man, this is really nice, I'll apply for it, because why not?". And this was a very good decision.

Zach: Before this year, I didn't know much about Poland. In January, I started my 4th co-op rotation with GE Aviation. From Cincinnati, Ohio, I get to collaborate with engineers across the world in Poland, the UK, and India. The EDC (Engineering Design Centre) in Warsaw was the only connection that I had with Poland before the trip. I've never gotten the opportunity to travel outside of North America, so when I saw this opportunity I was really excited.

EDC: What are your thoughts after this adventure? Was it worth doing it?

Zach: The entire trip was incredible. The Polish people's hospitality was gracious and unlike anything I've ever experienced. We were greeted with a warm welcome everywhere we went in Warsaw, Kraków, Wisła, Wrocław, and more. We even got to meet the President, Marshal of the Senate, Minister of Investment and Economic Development, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Their desire to meet with us shows how important they feel it is to continue the strong relationship between Poland and the US. We also visited to the Warsaw Stock Exchange, the EDC in Warsaw and the GE Power plant in Wrocław.

Jeanne-Marie: I don't really know what I expected from it. I guess I expected to be in a lot of meetings, just talking with people, which is good, but I don't know if I could have done two weeks of that. I think what they did that was really great was that we would have a meeting in the morning and later - a tour in the afternoon. We learned a lot about different businesses, different cities, had a lot of business meetings, and then we learned about history and culture of the cities that we were visiting. So that was really great. I really enjoyed the balance between the two sides.

EDC: Is there anything that you would never forget about that visit?

Zach: It was surreal going to the Presidential Palace and meeting the President, Andrzej Duda. He presented each of us with a diploma and as a group we got to ask him a few questions.

Then we went to the Palace's garden to watch the Polish soccer team play in the World Cup with the President and First Lady. This was one of my favorite days.

Jeanne-Marie: I really enjoyed that as well, but my favorite part was going to Wisła, in the mountains there. We went to one of the residences of the President of Poland, we stayed a little bit in a hotel over the top and I really enjoyed being out in the country. We walked around and we went to a sheep farm where they made cheese and that was really fun. I really liked the atmosphere there.

EDC: If somebody would ask you, would you recommend the scholarship to others?

Jeanne-Marie: Yes, of course. Apart from the whole cultural and historical part I really liked touring at EDC. There's a lot of equipment that I haven't seen before. All the equipment was so high-tech. It was very impressive to me and I really enjoyed getting a tour around there and getting to know what EDC engineers do.

Zach: This trip was a once in a lifetime opportunity and I'm honored to have been able to go. I'm thankful for everyone that stopped to share with us their story, passions, and wonderful country.

EDC: Thank you for sharing your emotions with us.