

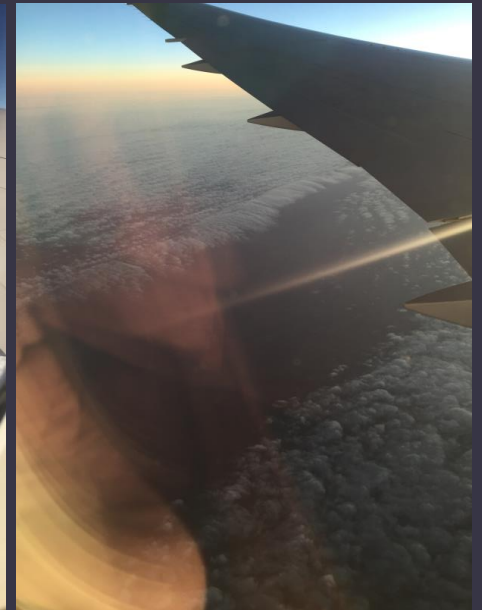


TRAVEL ABROAD PROJECT

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Flying To Europe

- On July 3, 2016, I left for Poland. It was my first time flying overseas. We flew above the clouds, so I was able to see constellations like the Big Dipper clearly.
- Three hours after nighttime (America) I was able to see the sunrise at around 4 am Central European Time.
- First stop in Europe was Munich, Germany, where I transferred to a flight to Gdansk, Poland. The flight was much, much shorter this time, taking only a few hours.



Biotechnology Summer School XXII at Miłomłyn, Poland



BSS XXII - Miłomłyn, Poland



- The day after arriving, we went to Biotechnology Summer School for a week with PhD students and faculty from all over the world.
- The place we lodged in was beautiful. It was surrounded by lots of trees and had lakes.
- The first day at summer school was filled with interactive activities. We were assigned to a group and got to know each other better.

Elbląg Canal



Elbląg Canal



- In addition to learning about Biotechnology, Education, and Careers in Science at the Biotechnology Summer School, we explored a little bit of Poland by visiting the Elbląg Canal.
- The Elbląg Canal is considered one of the Seven Wonders of Poland. It is special because of its use of rails on inclined planes to carry vessels across varying water levels (pictured).

Biotechnology Summer School XXII



BSS XXII

- In BSS, we discussed issues in the scientific world. Among the topics covered were the under-representation of female scientists, making science interesting for the layperson, and reducing the spread of misinformation to the masses.
- We also learned about the work done by the guest speakers through a series of talks.



BSS XXII Fancy Dress Party

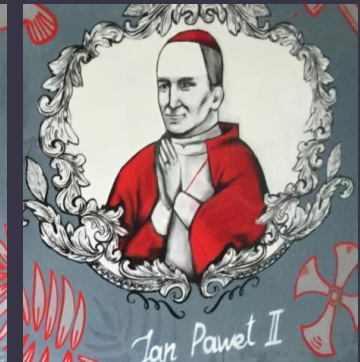
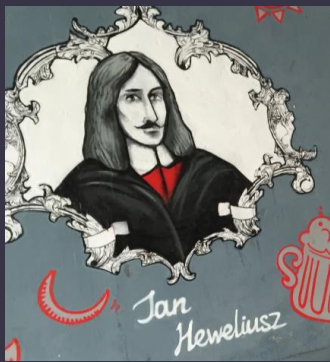


BSS XII Fancy Dress Party



- One of the social events we did at the summer school was a fancy dress party. In a very funny case of miscommunication, we misunderstood what they meant by “fancy dress”, so we wore uniforms as we did not pack formal wear. We later learned that what they really meant was a costume party.

University of Gdansk



University of Gdansk

- After BSS, we went back to Gdansk to start on our research. I worked at the new Biotechnology building (not shown here – it is actually behind the building shown) in Gdansk, where I studied *Ochrobactrum* bacteria.
- I gathered data on how *Ochrobactrum* species grew in different conditions and media and determined the presence of large plasmids on certain strains.



Living in Gdansk Oliwa



Gdansk, Poland



- We stayed in Poland for a total of six weeks. I did not expect many people to understand English but was pleasantly surprised that a good amount of people did. I was able to get by with a limited Polish vocabulary (Dziękuję, Proszę, Przepraszam, Tak, Nie, Dzień dobry, Do widzenia, etc.), though offline translators helped a lot when I was not able to access the internet.
- Living in Poland was a little challenging at times, but I was fortunate to live with fellow UHD students in close proximity as we were able to work as a team when problems arose. We had many adventures – some scary – but I felt like I grew as a person when we succeeded.

Gdansk – Old Town



Old Town

- Old Town was beautiful. We went back there several times as there was so much to see and learn about. On one of our first trips there we learned about its history, it being considered the place where World War II started (the invasion of Poland by Germany started in Gdansk, then known as the Free City of Danzig). Ultimately, the city was destroyed though it has been reconstructed to resemble its pre-war days.
- We also came back to watch a play ("Kiss me, Kate") at the two-year-old Gdansk Shakespearean Theatre.



Gdynia



Sopot



Gdynia and Sopot



- The two other members of the “Tricity” region – besides Gdansk – are Gdynia and Sopot. All three cities are found by the Baltic Sea so you get a good view of the beach from the region.
- All of the cities are tourist destinations so there was a lot to see and eat. I, however, was not able to swim at the beach because the water was too cold for me.
- In Gdynia, we visited the aquarium, though the line was very long. People did not seem to mind, however, as they managed to pass the time by catching water pokemon through Pokemon Go. They took advantage of the nearby charging ports so drained batteries were not a problem.
- Sopot had a lot of stores and a vibrant night life. There were so many restaurants and they even had an outdoor theatre.

Gdansk Oliwa



Gdansk Oliwa

- On my last days at Gdansk, I decided to further explore the place I lived in for five weeks. I caught wind of a restaurant that was known for its pierogi (one of my favorite foods in Poland), so I decided to check it out.
- I was very fond of Pierogi Ruskie, but I decided to try something different – like Wild Boar Pierogi with Carrots. Sadly, I had forgotten to take a picture, but shown here instead is a raspberry lemonade and Barszcz Czerwony (Red Borscht), which I had also eaten there.



Jelitkowo Beach and Park



Jelitkowo



- Also on my last days in Poland I decided to finally visit the beach in Gdansk. Despite being a tram ride away, I went there by foot, stopping by the parks and enjoying the scenery. I walked on the water, which was still cold by the way.

Cosplay for Kids



Cosplay for Kids

- Another thing I managed to do while in Poland was take part in fellow UHD student Milimar Murillo's Cosplay for Kids event. This we did on our last day before departure and it was a success.
- We were somewhat nervous because we did not know what to expect – we did not speak Polish so that would be a hurdle in communicating with the kids. However, our Polish helpers did so well and we were able to overcome the language barrier through gestures and simple phrases.





- Traveling abroad was a great experience. I learned a lot academically and personally, as I was exposed to so much history and culture through merely living in Poland and experience through the research I did in Gdansk.
- I was able to see other people's perception of the United States, the world, and current events, which for me was absolutely fascinating as I felt like I had always lived in a bubble, being exposed to only American views.
- I learned some Polish and was very proud to have been able to communicate and understand people without the use of a translator – at least in the grocery stores.
- I met some very interesting people and was able to widen my world view. I grew as a person as I was able to navigate independently in a different country.
- I am very fortunate to have taken part in this experience.

Thank you!

