

From the Hill to the Bundestag

By Rachel Palermo '15
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While studying abroad this semester at the Humboldt University of Berlin, Mark Slinde '13 landed an internship that has given him a front-row seat to the inner workings of the German Parliament.

Slinde, an economics and German major at St. Olaf College, is working for Gitta Connemann, a member of the German Parliament (called the Bundestag), while studying in Berlin.



The internship couldn't have come at a more fascinating time for a student interested in international economics, with Germany — the world's fourth-largest economy — playing a pivotal role in the European financial crisis.

*An internship with a member of the German Parliament enabled **Mark Slinde '13** to meet **German Chancellor Angela Merkel**. Merkel has been a key player in managing the fiscal crisis at both the European and international levels, prompting Forbes magazine to dub her **the world's most powerful woman**.*

"Whether I'm at the university or interning in the Bundestag, there is never a dull moment," Slinde says.

Slinde first met Connemann while he was an exchange student in Germany as part of the [Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program](#). They kept in contact, which helped Slinde land a coveted internship in her office when he returned to Germany this semester.

In addition to clerical duties in Connemann's office, Slinde is responsible for carrying out research regarding her district. He also shadows Connemann at committee meetings, conferences, and other local events in Berlin, and has had the opportunity to watch the various parties of the Bundestag debate on the Reichstag floor.

The internship even enabled Slinde to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has been a key player in managing the fiscal crisis at both the European and international levels. "It was simply amazing," says Slinde.

Slinde's experience abroad has also given him a myriad of opportunities outside his internship and academic courses to experience a new culture, from visiting museums to traveling to Munich for Oktoberfest. Additionally, he plays lacrosse as a club sport in Berlin. "I love being on my own and discovering something new about Berlin every day," he says.

"When choosing a college, I knew that I wanted to study abroad at some point because it opens the door to an array of opportunities after college in a variety of professions," Slinde says. Once he secured the opportunity to study abroad at a key country in the international economy, he decided to put his both his economics and German majors to good use.