

## **From our alumni: Timothee Cousin, University of Zurich / University of Washington, Seattle (Fall 2010)**

I have been living and studying in Switzerland for three months now, and this small country located at the heart of Europe still manages to find a way to surprise me day after day through its world-class institutions, cultural richness, and natural beauty.

Every morning, I take the convenient and timely tram and head to the UniversitätsSpital Zürich. Thanks to EuroScholars and the University of Zurich International Relations Office, I have the privilege of working in a renowned biomedical research laboratory in the department of rheumatology. I spent the first two weeks at the lab attending an intensive training course so that I may learn the proper laboratory techniques and their use in regards to the field of rheumatology. I was later briefed on the purpose and general course of my project. Working under the direct supervision of a greatly experienced medical doctor, I have been investigating the effect an immune system stimulation may have on histone acetylation in rheumatoid arthritis synovial fibroblasts. With the generous help of my supervisor and other researchers working in the lab, I have become familiar with specialized techniques such as the ELISA and Western Blot procedures. Over the course of my stay, I have been learning to interpret my results, to use them to further direct my project, and to present them according to international guidelines.

In addition to working in the lab, I have also taken a two-week pre-semester intensive German course, a semester-long German course, and a Swiss history and culture module. The pre-semester course was especially useful as it not only gave me the opportunity to practice my German in preparation of the months to come, but it also allowed me to meet people from all over the world. As the weeks passed by, my classmates and I have become close friends and we have frequently taken the time to travel all across scenic Switzerland during the weekends.

So far, my stay in Switzerland has been an incredible opportunity. I have received so much help and guidance from the staff at EuroScholars, Nadin Saxer at the University of Zurich's International Office, and the team at the laboratory. My perspective has widened exponentially since my arrival at the beginning of September. The knowledge, experience, and maturity I have gained during my stay in Zurich have allowed me to see more clearly into myself and have helped me further shape my future as a young man, student, and professional.