

Kenneth Ventress Jr.

Class of 2025

Taking a summer to the Southern mountains of Bavaria in Munich, Germany, I experienced one of the best programs for German immersion that Bowdoin College could offer me: 4 weeks of Deutsch Intensiv Kompakt at the Munich Goethe Institute. After two semesters of preparation at Bowdoin College, I was proudly placed at the C1-level courses at the renowned institute, and met other academically intrigued students from all over Europe and the world. The two intensive courses that I enrolled in were quite challenging and consisted of four hours a day of classes about various topics and an additional cultural programming either before or after class. Thanks to Bowdoin's German department and CXD, the Hroswaith Fund award made my experience and dream possible for the summer of 2022.

After living at the center of a German metropolis, riding trains and bikes to and from classes, and munching on Brezel and Schweinshaxe from time to time, I was challenged not only linguistically, but also culturally on a daily basis. I was only able to speak German to my peers and learn of the many historic contexts of the buildings constructed by Ludwig II and Munich as a city in Germany. The cuisine and Bayerisch dialects were unlike my previous introduction of Germany near Berlin. The experience felt more foreign and showed me a side of the country I was unfamiliar with.

I realized during my experience how immensely diverse Germany is inside its borders, what opportunities are available to me as an engineering student, and how to create international friendships in one of Europe's most economically developed cities. With the new knowledge that I have acquired, I have gained more insight on German immigration, improved my accent and vocabulary to a C1-level, and discovered a potential city to continue my Master's degree abroad.