I originally proposed to view this trip as an opportunity to solicit feedback on my proposal. As an environmental planning academic, exposure to as many topics and projects surrounding the energy-water nexus is also a major goal of my trip. Not only was I hoping to benefit from attending several conference sessions, discussions and round tables, but also from the networking opportunities that will allow cross-pollination and synergies of ideas between other attendees and myself. I originally scheduled meetings and activities at the TUM and other universities. I was able to partially reach some of my trip objectives, including soliciting feedback on my proposed research. I do feel however I was more successful at reaching my other goals of exposure to related topics, networking opportunities and cross-pollinations of ideas. I am grateful for the opportunity to embark on this mini adventure; this report thus recounts my activities, their contributions to my original travel goals, and a brief reflection with recommendations.

This first section discusses IGERT related activities during travel this summer. I was traveling from June 18 to July 19, 2015; the majority of the trip was with IGERT Trainee Margaret Cook. We choose to travel together for as much of our trip as possible because it made sense given our similar interests in water and energy planning and policy, as also because it was safer and more economical for us to do so. We started in Germany, then went to Ireland, the UK, Austria and the Czech Republic. The second section of this report contains general comments, conclusions and recommendations for future IGERT student travelers and administrative planning.

A. BERLIN
June 18-20, and July 18, 2015

1. IGERT: My trip began in Berlin. I originally meant to connect with faculty at the Technical University of Berlin, Department of Urban and Regional Planning (ISR) and School of Planning Building Environment. However my flight into Berlin, which should have arrived early June 18 (Friday) was delayed several hours and thus resulted in me missing my meetings. I tried to reschedule these meetings for July 17 (Saturday) in the late afternoon but was unsuccessful.

I was able to meet with the owner of Catalyzed, http://www.catalyzed.de/de, a translation and copy writing business that focuses on technical writing for “sustainability”. The owner, Kristina Wirsching (of no relation), met with me when I finally did arrive in Berlin where we discussed research projects of mutual interests, which includes sustainability and feminist organizing within the Berliner/German context.
The rest of the weekend, Saturday and early Sunday, were spent on personal time exploring Berlin and acclimating to the Eastern European time zone. I also spent my last night of my trip in Berlin so that I could make my early flight back to the US.

2. Berlin Planning Observations: I LOVE their public transport system, as with just about every other major city in Europe. There are wonderful and simple but wrenching monuments and museums throughout the city, which are incredible.
3. Contributions to Travel Goals: Since I was jetlagged and behind schedule due to flight delays, I was limited in my activities when I arrived in Berlin. I believe I gained most from this portion of my trip was networking and an opportunity to exchange ideas across disciplines through explorations of the city and my meeting with Ms. Wirsching.

B. MUNICH
June 21-July 3, 2015

1. IGERT: We stayed in Munich the longest of all of our destinations, two weeks in total. Much of the time we spend exploring the city which was rich with history, beautiful and varied architecture, and great examples of exemplar planning principles (transportation, housing and auxiliary services (co-location to small schools for children, dense neighborhoods, grocery stores, public parks and open space, etc.) for urban areas.

We were able to explore the Technical University of Munich’s (TUM) main campus near the urban core of Munich. A mix and new and not-so-new buildings were flanked by open areas that invited many Münchner and visitors alike. Atop the architecture building is a rooftop café where we briefly worked and enjoyed the view.
We made a few trips to the TUM Garching campus as well, which is where many of the engineering departments are located. Margaret had arranged for us to have a tour led by a graduate student of the various labs and projects that are located at the TUM Garching campus. The projects ranged from N2O emissions from wastewater processes to Sequential Managed Aquifer Recharge Technology (SMART).
In addition to visiting the campus, we also explored the town itself. Just like many other places in Germany, residential as well as commercial buildings take advantage of government incentives for solar and wind. There are solar panels and wind turbines of varying sizes everywhere!
We finished off the day in Garching at a local biergarten, comparing travel notes and sharing stories, with another UT Austin IGERT Trainee, Thomas Deetjen.

We also met with Kordula Schwarzwaelder, researcher in the Department of Hydraulic Engineering and Water. Aside from lunch, she took us too and showed us several projects at the TUM Laboratory Obernach in Walchensee, an hour or so south of Munich along the Germany Alps. There are several large projects, as well as some masters level student research projects, some of the most fascinating involving international project collaboration for water management along the Nile River.
Margaret and I had a very interesting discussion as she led us on a tour of the facilities. There are interesting differences in research and government sponsored projects, as well as state governance and requirements for such environmental research in universities and similar institutions.

The area was beautiful too, we could not NOT take a short break to enjoy Lake Walchensee. The lake is fed by run off from the portion of the Alps in which the lab and town are situated.
While at the TUM Garching campus, we also met and had lunch with Anja Kölzsch who works in the engineering school (Munich School of Engineering – MSE) of TUM on July 2, 2015. A phd student and researcher in engineering, she has helped coordinate meetings with IGERT students and faculty at TUM in the past, as administratively works on student programs in MSE with
various faculty. We chatted about a range of topics including graduate student life in Munich and Germany in comparison to the U.S. and in Austin particularly. Anja also took us to the Math building at the TUM Garching campus where the infamous parabolic slides are located; we went down the slides!

As a part of our exploring, Margaret and I also walked down the Isar River in Munich, from which we could see various hydroelectric power related structures and infrastructure on June 29, 2015. This is also a lovely example of how a city interfaces with nature, where the Isar serves as a community green space that continues to feed the community via energy generation and riverfront conservation.
We did use personal time to further explore Munich and Southern Germany, including Bavaria and Baden-Wurttemburg. I also had to take time, a few working days, while in Munich to work on my comprehensive exam essay revisions.

2. Munich Planning Observations: Munich was by far my favorite city from this trip. There are many examples of planning practices and principles that embrace dense urban form while providing local, smaller scaled services and amenities for Münchners. See for example these intersections by the Olympic Park in Munich, where multiple modes of transportation are accessible and yet still at a human scale with shared paths.

3. Contributions to Travel Goals: While in Munich I was able to meet with researchers and scholars and learn more about water and energy topics in planning and beyond (and that was fun).
I was also able to do some networking, although following up (getting others to respond) has been a bit of a challenge, although I am still trying. It was also very nice to chat about research projects and exchange ideas on that front with Ms. Schwarzwälder. And I very much appreciate hearing more about the engineering side of water and energy infrastructure projects, especially within the German context.

C. IRELAND
July 3-6, 2015

We took a side trip to Ireland after Munich. We saw the Cliffs of Moor, stayed in Dublin during the 4th of July, and enjoyed seeing some of the Western Irish Coast.

D. CARDIFF
July 6, 2015

IGERT: We flew into Cardiff for the day to visit with Cardiff School of Law environmental law professor Valerie Vogleman. Professor Vogleman specializes on deconstructing and comparing European Union (EU) environmental law to U.S. environmental law. She teaches environmental law and liability, including policies regarding environmental damage and liabilities in the UK. She also consults on other environmental law projects, especially those regarding estimating impacts from fracking in the EU. It was fascinating to hear her perspectives on those and also about water law, as well as planning practice, in the UK compared to the US. She kindly
followed up with us and sent us both more material regarding these last two topics, as well as a fracking lecture she gives students, after our meeting.

After walking around downtown Cardiff briefly, we headed into London later that evening.

2. Contributions to Travel Goals: This portion of my trip I believe very much met my goals for this trip. Our meeting with Prof. Fogleman was great as she is very familiar (and teaches) US environmental law, and she lived in Texas for a couple of decades. She also shared lecture slides, contacts, and some of her work related to fracking and water policy in the US, EU, and the UK. It was also refreshing to hear another set of perspectives on my own work from her.

E. LONDON
July 6-9, 2015

Margaret had a couple of meetings and tours scheduled for the London area. I however choose to use this time to continue to work on my comprehensive exam essay revisions and dissertation proposal edits.

F. BRIGHTON
July 9-12, 2015
1. IGERT: We both attended the International Academic Forum (IAFOR)’s International Conference, with tracks in Business & Management, Politics, Economics & Law, the Social Sciences, and Sustainability, Energy & the Environment (SEE). We both focused on the SEE portion of the conference and related sessions. Margaret presented her own paper, “A Techno-Economic Analysis of Water Use and Recycling for Shale Production: Lessons Learned in Texas” which she co-wrote with Yael Glazer and Dr. Michael Webber, from The University of Texas at Austin.

Other sessions I attended of interest included a morning keynote entitled Green tartan - The Scottish renewables challenge and one entitled Sustainability and Social Justice. The sessions were interesting but it is very important to emphasize the interdisciplinary focus of the conference. There were very few sessions that were a good fit for my research interests, however many seemed to at minimum be interesting in some way.

The rest of conference time on that first day I spent working on comprehensive exam essay revisions and dissertation proposal edits. Brighton has a lovely and popular waterfront that made for a fun backdrop for dinners and free-time in this beach town.

We took some personal time to make a side trip to Salisbury and Stonehenge, a short train ride into the British countryside.

3. Contributions to Travel Goals: Getting to hear different perspectives, including some negative comments (though joking he said) about planning from a native UK professor, was quite fascinating as they related to energy and water. We did get to meet other scholars and hear vastly different topics, so that met one of my goals as well. But it was difficult to hear more about what was directly related to our work outside of a couple of sessions.
1. IGERT: We went to Prague to attend the “Association of European Schools of Planning: Definite space – fuzzy responsibility” conference hosted by the Czech Technical University School of Architecture. I attended several sessions including *Spatial Justice and the City*, and *Environmental and Social Justice*. I thoroughly enjoyed those particular sessions as they discussed justice and planning theory, both of which I have deep academic interests in. I enjoyed meeting the various scholars in attendance there and the topics covered.
I also spent time wondering through the city and seeing it’s famous sites, as well as working on and submitting my comprehensive exam essay revisions as well as a rough updated draft of my dissertation proposal.

2. **Contributions to Travel Goals**: This conference was the most relevant to my work and my interests within planning, which aside from energy and water planning include theory and methods. I was able to attend sessions that were related to social and environmental justice and planning, planning theory and advocacy, as well as ethics for teaching planning. It was great and I think could still be accessible to non-planners interested in policy or engineering aspects of planning projects and research. I was also able to meet and network with other planning scholars from Germany, the UK, and Australia while there, which also met one of my major travel goals. In meeting with and networking, there were interesting opportunities to share knowledge even though my research is novel and very unique to the US in some ways.

**H. VIENNA**
July 16-18, 2015

Personal time.

**I. BERLIN => NEWARK => AUSTIN**
July 18-19, 2015

Travel back to U.S. via Berlin and Newark with an overnight stay in Berlin.
II. COMMENTS, REFLECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall I had a great time on this trip and learned plenty. Munich was wonderful and everyone we met was very helpful and generous with their time. Below are some thoughts I had upon reflecting on the trip this summer and my overall goals and trajectory in my PhD program.

Contributions to Overall IGERT Travel Goals: As mentioned earlier, I originally proposed to view this trip as an opportunity to solicit feedback on my proposal, get exposure to as many topics and projects surrounding the energy-water nexus, and take advantage of networking opportunities that will encourage cross-pollination and synergies of ideas. I was able to partially reach some of my trip objectives, including soliciting feedback on my proposed research. I do feel however I was more successful at reaching my other goals of exposure to related topics, networking opportunities and cross-pollinations of ideas. It was difficult given my other tasks over the summer which included comprehensive exam revisions (as of August 7 I passed!) and proposal writing (defense scheduled for Oct. 1). These definitely took more time that originally thought, and took some of my travel days away to accomplish these tasks. However, it was very refreshing to be in a completely new environment, meet and learn from other scholars in similar fields, and be exposed to other planning policy and approaches via the places we visited.

Traveling Alone vs. Traveling with Another IGERT: I traveled with Margaret for most of the trip, and I highly recommend having a ‘travel mate’; it worked out though because our academic interests are very similar which meant we could attend many of the same tours, meetings, and conferences together. This meant we shared lodging which I believe ultimately saved money compared to traveling alone. This also meant that we were not traveling alone; traveling in a foreign country alone as a woman can be intimidating (but it really isn’t the more you learn) and scary. Regardless, safety, aside from traveling with someone, should be carefully considered through the itinerary planning process and actual traveling.

Coordinating Meetings from the U.S.: Coordinating meetings long before traveling can be challenging while you are also setting up your itinerary. I recommend starting this process early, and being persistent. I had a lot of other things going on, including preparing for and taking my comprehensive exams, and my mother’s cancer diagnosis and on-going treatment in the months leading up to and during my trip. It helped to sit down with another IGERT and hash out travel details together in meetings.

AirBnB vs. Hotels: Both have their pros and cons, but be aware of both when making your travel decisions. AirBnB can be a great way to go, and generally speaking was for us (except for London). It can also be significantly cheaper than a hotel, and come with nice amenities like a full kitchen, which was great for Munich. However, hotels have more reliable services and amenities like wifi and air conditioning. Also consider, especially when packed for a long trip (therefore a heavy suitcase), how many flights of stairs and/or the presence of a lift (elevator) for convenience. We didn’t quite think about that and wish we had.

Lodging Location Selection: In general, access to public transportation is a plus and should be carefully considered along with the final destinations (meeting locations, conference centers, etc.). In Munich, I’d recommend being within a 5 min walk to a U-bahn (Munich Underground/subway) stop and within what they consider to be the first ring. It is cheaper and easier to get around via U or bus or taxi (or bike, walking) in this area too.
Be Prepared for Anything, Including Nothing: Meeting cancelations, rain, public transport strikes, picky ATMs, spotty internet/cellular access. This can all happen and did to me, so just be prepared, do research beforehand, and, honestly, just take it all in stride. Or at least try to. And try to pack light.