

## IFFTI Faculty Exchange; Fashion Institute of Technology and Reutlingen University October 23-25, 2017

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As I am driving away from Reutlingen University in Germany, I think it is best to start my report. I'm feeling passionate about how important the exchange between IFFTI member Universities is to the membership and the futures of International collaborations between Fashion Technology schools.

The connection I have made with Professor Jochan Strähle and the faculty, staff and students at Reutlingen University will be ongoing. Our interests in fashion, technology, social media and sustainability align, even though we are countries apart. This exchange will be the beginning for us as we've discussed so many opportunities to continue our collaboration. Professor Strahle will be touring the United States in March and we will meet again at both FIT and outside the university.

The best way to summarize my Exchange will be to identify the objectives of the visit and the outcomes, plus the plans for the future. For efficiency I will refer to the Fashion Institute of Technology as FIT and Reutlingen University as RU.

1. **Objective:** To present my research paper "Fast Fashion, Social Media and its Effects on the Environment" to a class of German senior students of Professor Strähles at Reutlingen University. It is important to note that this paper has only been presented three other times in the past eighteen months. The paper is part of a ongoing primary research study to measure the opinions of young millennials on the topics of fast fashion, social media and ultimately its effects on the environment. The first presentation was made to a group of Brazilian faculty and students in Sao Paulo Brazil in April of 2016. The outcomes from the collaboration and the fabulous students at the University of Sao Paulo (USP) completely challenged my research based on the different psychographics of an emerging fast fashion market in Brazil. This presentation was very well received and through it I met the PHD students (also attending the Fashion Colloquia in Sao Paulo) who led me to Professor Jochen Strahle. The opportunity to compare results with an established international fast fashion market and its millennial demographics in Germany was my original motivation to apply for the exchange. When I found out Reutlingen University was an IFFTI member I jumped on the

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chance to collaborate with Professor Strahle and his students who were interested in my research.

**Outcome:** Thought provoking conversation in the classroom and the opportunity for both the students and Professor Strahle to experience a different teaching style and techniques used in the classroom.

**Future:** I am sharing my work with a bachelors' degree student who wants to use some of my research for his bachelor's thesis. As many students go on to their Masters degree I have agreed to share my new primary research study (to be administered in April of 2018 with the University and students.

2. **Objective:** Create an open dialogue between FIT students and Reutlingen University students during a International student exchange on Google Hangout.

**Outcome:** Jochen and I with the help of Professor Blumenthal from FIT and Professor Matthias Freise from RU gathered two groups of students with similar objectives together from the prospective Universities to discuss successes and opportunities among their University businesses. This was done virtually through Google hangout. The FIT Merchandise society club students have had great success developing Logo University product for the clubs school store "The Style Shop" and retailing it to FIT students and the public. The RU students have a entrepreneur business named RU Enterprises. Their goal is similar; to source sustainable fabric from Turkey and develop University logo product to retail in their school.

I decided to get the students together on a Google chat to show best practices and connect ideas. The outcome was fantastic. It was 6 PM in Germany and noon in New York City. We connected through Google chat and discussed our clubs different businesses for almost one hour. For example the RU students wanted to know how they made and were able to sell so much diverse project at FIT. The FIT students learned more about RU enterprise sourcing in Turkey. The most fun was the students showed each other samples of product, some in production and

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other product that is already retailing in the FIT Style shop. It was fantastic and a highlight of my exchange. I will have a video with highlights to share.

**Future:** The students are interested in continuing their exchange on Google Hangout and keeping each other updated on their businesses. Also the students at RU belong to an International Sustainability group “Oikos” that they are looking to build with our sustainability club at FIT. I am going to connect these two groups.

3. **Objective:** Teach and create interest among RU students on Merchandising and buying practices in the New York Market.

**Outcome:** I delivered a lecture on “The New York Markets “and created hands – on workshop assignment that we did in class. I brought a line of Swimwear samples with me to Germany. I also brought the manufacturer line sheets from the swimwear line. After I explaining how buyers in the domestic market go to a showroom, view a line of merchandise, take notes on the line sheets and finally create the buy. We then proceeded to do just that with the swim samples. We as a class made buying and merchandising decisions on color stories and fixture display.

The students had so much fun and the lesson was completely new to them. Many students wrote emails saying how much they learned from the experience.

**Future:** Dr. Strahle appreciated my teaching techniques and expressed how he may use in the classroom. I left the line of samples and all the line sheets at the University. He expressed that it was not easy to get these types of learning tools. I am already working on securing a new sample line so I was happy to leave the samples so he could possibly continue the merchandising lesson.

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4. **Objective:** Explore the possibility of a student exchange or study abroad program between the Universities.

**Outcome:** I met with Monica Boning the Director of International students and Professor Dr. Peter Bug, Dean of International Fashion Retail and they are both interested in an exchange with FIT. I briefly reviewed the curriculum and felt we could match coursework. I also toured the campus, the classrooms and the library and felt the school would be an appropriate match.

**Future:** Take all this information back to the chair of the Fashion Business Management department, Robin Sakin and Deidre Sato the Director of International education and to Dean Steven Frumkin.

5. **Objective:** Most importantly, building my relationship with fellow Reutlingen University colleague and IFFTI member Professor Jochen Strahle.

**Outcome:** We had a ambitious, productive exchange in Germany. We continued to build on the relationship that began at FIT in spring of 2017. We compared teaching methodologies and techniques in the classroom. We connected our students and will connect our administration. It was an incredibly productive exchange.

**Future:** Jochen and I now have a excellent working relationship. We will be further collaborating this year on future objectives.

We are planning to present at the IFFTI conference in Manchester 2019.

I would like to extend a warm thank you to IFFTTI and the committee for this opportunity. I hope you have found my report on my IFFTI Faculty Exchange between The Fashion Institute of Technology and Reutlingen University interesting. I believe it has met the objectives of the mission to connect faculty and students.

I will be happy to speak further on any of the outcomes from the exchange. I am also happy to be an ambassador to other IFFTI member faculty who are interested in the faculty exchange opportunity.

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Thank you,

Professor Catherine Geib

Associate Professor, Fashion Business Management

Fashion Institute of Technology

New York, New York 10018

[Catherine\\_geib@fitnyc.edu](mailto:Catherine_geib@fitnyc.edu)

212-217-4831