

## Visiting Professorship Reflection

### Sylvia Chan-Olmsted

The semester I spent in Zurich/UZH is one of the best memories I have outside of the United States in my years of traveling. This experience is special because of what I learned about myself and the beautiful country/people of Switzerland during the four-month stay.

First, there is no match from anywhere in the world when it comes to the accessibility of natural beauty. I made a point to hike a certain region of the Alps every single Sunday and I am convinced that there is no more incredible sight anywhere in the world that is so easily reachable through public transportation. This is something to be cherished – as mountains enrich one's soul in a way that impacts every part of the person's life. It certainly made me extremely grateful for the opportunity to be part of UZH in 2019.

I cannot say enough good things about the public transportation of Switzerland and especially Zurich. Coming from the U.S., we drive everywhere. We are expected to drive everywhere because there is no reliable public transportation that can take us where we want to go. Everything works and they work in a coordinated manner. It takes a lot of patience, dedication, and organization to make the Zurich system work the way it is. I learned that I appreciate letting others worry about getting me somewhere and I love to explore places, especially when I don't have to drive. I will miss the SBB and ZVV terribly.

The Swiss focus on the environment through recycling and reuse is something that is strikingly different from the United States. The recycling system and "brocki" shops can definitely serve as an example for many developed countries in taking care of what they have. I learned that simplicity and quality should guide how you live and how you use resources.

Finally, I truly enjoy teaching the graduate students at IKMZ. They were analytical, prepared, and organized. It was fun to challenge them to think outside of the box. Though it wasn't easy at the beginning to get the students out of their comfort zone in doing something that might not seem logical to them in ideation practices, they were getting more used to the unexpected after a semester (I believe). I was touched by the cheese gifts that the students got me at the end of the semester. Most of all, I learned the differences between the students in the U.S. and Switzerland, which make me appreciate much more the analytical ability of the Swiss students, and the creative spirit of the U.S. students. Thank you IKMZ for the experience!