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Morris Students Are "Leading the Renewables Revolution"

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MORRIS

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[Morris Students Are “Leading the Renewables Revolution”](#)

MORRIS, Minnesota (March 16, 2017)—This spring William Kiehne '17, Zachary Damond-Midnight '18, Hannah Goemann '17, and Theo Buysse '17 visited Saerbeck, Germany, as part of the University of Minnesota's Leading the Renewables Revolution program. This multi-institutional study abroad program offered students from the Morris, Duluth, and Twin Cities campuses chances to learn about the political and technological sides of sustainability.

The City of Saerbeck has implemented a comprehensive range of renewable energy resources. Its bio-gasification chamber, wind turbines, and solar beds—all part of its successfully turning a military bunker into an energy park—have established Saerbeck as a sustainability-focused, environmentally friendly city. [The city also has a partnership with the City of Morris](#); the two are working together and sharing ideas in hopes of making both communities even more environmentally friendly and inspiring others to do the same.

Visiting Saerbeck and seeing these efforts up-close through the Leading the Renewables Revolution program helped Kiehne, Damond-Midnight, Goemann, and Buysse learn more about implementing technology in other communities to make them more energy-efficient. The collaboration between Saerbeck and Morris has inspired Kiehne to pursue internship programs and master's courses in Saerbeck to gain more experience in the historical and ethical aspects of environmental studies. The chance to see the positive impact of renewable energy on another community and its members has inspired Goemann to focus on a career involving the technological aspects of renewable energy (particularly biofuels) by putting the broader political, economical, and social challenges facing the implementation of renewable technologies into perspective. The program also has motivated Damond-Midnight to base his senior seminar on quantifying and visualizing the benefits of implementing renewable resources in Morris.

“We got a lot of different perspectives from students, politicians, and the people involved in it,” says Damond-Midnight. “It was really cool to see how innovative they are and how possible a renewable energy revolution is.”

“We were all blown away by their giant, three megawatt wind turbines, their extensive solar farm, their biogas generators, and their fantastic composting system,” adds Goemann.

“The mayor decided to turn for the better energywise,” says Kiehne, “and it's absolutely colossal what they have managed to accomplish.”

The students' participation in the program has benefited the campus and community. “This program is great because our students had an opportunity to visit our sister-city and grow the relationship between us,” says Troy Goodnough, director of sustainability. “Our students returned to Minnesota with excitement and inspiration about new directions and opportunities for our home community.”

Leading the Renewables Revolution is hosted by University of Minnesota, Twin Cities as part of its SUST 3480 course. To learn more, visit cfans.umn.edu/germany.

[View this story electronically.](#)

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.

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