



## "I Like Everything Here!"



Jutta Ritche

*Jutta Ritche, an undergraduate student from Germany, doing her internship in the Marine Sciences and Fisheries Department at SQU. Miss Ritche shares her experience in SQU and her impressions about Oman.*

Jutta Ritche is all praise for Sultan Qaboos University and this beautiful country. Jutta is an undergraduate student from north-western Germany, doing a Bachelor degree in Maritime Technologies with the focus on Marine Biotechnology at the Applied University of Bremerhaven. Along with the studies she has to do an internship in a company or a research center. As Jutta is interested in new green Antifouling methods, she chose to join the Biofouling Research Group at Sultan Qaboos University, headed by Dr. Sergey, Associate Professor in the Department of Marine Sciences & Fisheries at the College of Agricultural & Marine Sciences. She will continue her studies at SQU for almost five months, though the duration of the internship as required by her school is three months.

Jutta Ritche works mainly at the Marine Sciences Department. Part of her work is done at the Chair in Nanotechnology at SQU. "I not only work at the marine science department, but also together with the Chair in Nanotechnology Prof. Joydeep Dutta and his research team. My work mainly includes two experiments on the antifouling activity of zinc oxide nanorod coatings, the first one was a mesocosm experiment in a seawater tank which we just finished. We used glass slides which we coated with the nanorods and kept in the tank for different time periods. The second one will be a field experiment in the marina, using fishing nets as a substrate for the nanorods" she explained.

Jutta will use the results and collected data from the experiments, for the bachelor thesis which she is writing after her return to Germany. "It is an interesting work and I've already learned a lot during the last two months. Working with Dr. Sergey and his team is a very good experience and I'm glad that I've made the choice to come to Oman", she said.

Jutta came to know about the Antifouling Research Group at SQU,

which focuses on the new green antifouling methods through the Internet. "I contacted Dr. Sergey through email. He readily agreed with my request to do my internship at SQU. I already finished with my exams. What is remaining is the internship and the final thesis. My university allows students to do their internship in any part of the world. Considering the convenience, most of the students prefer to do in some part of Germany. However, I decided to do it in Oman as I found the right researchers whose work matches with my interest".

Jutta is very excited about the future field experiments which will be done in marinas like the Wave Muscat or Bandar Rawda. "The experiment involves putting fishing nets with zinc oxide nanorod coatings in seawater for four to five weeks and taking them out for lab investigations to measure the effectiveness of the coatings in antifouling. The antifouling technology is mostly developed in SQU. It is some photo catalytic process that prevents settlement of microorganisms on the coated surfaces", she said.

In her opinion SQU is a great place to stay. "I've met many nice and friendly people here. From the beginning itself, everybody was very helpful and I'm really enjoying my stay. It is very interesting to learn about the culture of this country which is so different from the European one". According to Jutta, Oman is a lovely place to live. "SQU gives you the freedom to work and explore new things. I live on campus in one of the female student hostels. Every person I meet here is so friendly and helpful. I am quite happy about the facilities and food offered at the residence complex".

During her stay in Oman for the last three months, Jutta explored many places in Oman including the Sharqiya Sands, Wadi Shab, and Wadi Bani Khalid, Al Rustaq, Nakhal, Nizwa, to name a few. "When I came to Oman in October, the mercury levels were a bit high. Now, the weather is really nice. I enjoy it. In a nutshell, I like everything in Oman. This is what I can say from my experience in this country. I wish to come to Oman again. If I do my Masters in Germany or elsewhere, I would like to come to Oman again for practical work and field experiments", Jutta Ritche concluded.