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Initiativkreis Ruhr "RuhrFellowship"

## Press Release

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# Top students from the USA as ambassadors of German Ruhr Area

- RuhrFellowship-grant 2015 takes US students two months to attractive Ruhr Area
- Alliance of three largest regional universities (Universitätsallianz Ruhr) cooperates with Berkeley, Harvard, MIT, Pennsylvania and Princeton
- American scholars will establish valuable contacts to renown companies of the Initiativkreis Ruhr (IR), an initiative of the leading regional enterprises

The Ruhr Area, most famous industrial area in Western Germany and home to over 5 million people, is becoming increasingly attractive for American students: it offers a tight network of renowned and reputable universities, a concentration of innovative and worldwide operating enterprises as well as a vivid cultural scene. It is no surprise therefore that the "RuhrFellowship 2015", a scholarship for talented students of top US-colleges run by the Initiativkreis Ruhr (IR), has seen increasing numbers of applicants for this year's program. In summer 2015, 17 students from the USA will get to know the area as "RuhrFellows 2015". Five young ladies and ten young men are spending two months in the region. During this time they will take part in a summer school program organized by the three major local universities before becoming interns at the IR-member enterprises.

### California requested participation: Berkeley taking part

The invitation to visit the Ruhr Area comes from the Initiativkreis Ruhr (IR), a partnership of the largest regional enterprises together with the academic alliance Universitätsallianz Ruhr (UA). They are asking students of Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the University of Pennsylvania, of Princeton University and for the first time this year of the university of California, Berkeley, to spend June and July in the Ruhr Area. "The RuhrFellowship is taking place for the fourth time now and has become increasingly popular at top American universities - shown by the fact that Berkeley is now also participating," says Dirk Opalka, managing director of the Initiativkreis Ruhr GmbH. The University of California, is now the first college representing the American Western Coast universities, whilst all other participants are coming from colleges on the American East Coast. Opalka says: "The number of student applications this year was five times larger than the places of scholarships we are offering, although we have once again increased the number of fellowships."

On (DATE) Opalka met the 17 scholarship recipients for a kick-off at the IR-headquarter Alfred-Herrhausen-Haus in Essen. Just before, Professor Dr. Ursula Gather, president of the Technische Universität Dortmund had received the visitors at lunch for a casual get-together. "We spared no effort to set up a fastidious and exciting program for the young natural scientists, engineers and economists from the USA", says Prof. Dr. Gather. "I am sure we can convince them of the high standards at our universities and enterprises. Also, I would like to see the RuhrFellows return home to the USA as friends and ambassadors of the research and economic base Ruhr Area".

### **Two-folded program: summer School and internship**

The two-month RuhrFellowship puts emphasis on two parts: the first four weeks the US-students will be attending summer-school. This year, the academic program is organized by the UA Ruhr under the lead of the Technische Universität Dortmund. The students will get insights into student-life at the three UA -universities – Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Universität Duisburg-Essen and Technische Universität Dortmund. During the second half, the exchange students will complete a four-week internship at IR-member companies. This year the following companies are offering internships: BP Europe, Deutsche Bank, Emschergenossenschaft und Lippeverband, Evonik Industries, HOCHTIEF, ista, KPMG, National-Bank, RAG, Ruhrverband RWE, SIGNAL IDUNA, SMS, Siemens, Thyssengas and Vaillant.

Around the academic and work program, the fellows will take part in an ambitious side program which makes them get to know the Ruhr Area as attractive region for working and living. Parts of the program will be excursions and visits to companies as well as cultural institutions. German language courses round the exchange program up.

Opalka: "One of the main attractions of the RuhrFellowship is the combination of studying and internship, thus a combination of academic qualification and practical work experience. The guests will establish valuable contacts." The RuhrFellowship is one module of the IR educational initiative "Talent Metropole Ruhr". One aim of the fellowship program is the establishment of long-term cooperation in the fields of research and economy between the Ruhr Area and top US-universities. Future employments in one of the enterprises in the region are very welcome. In order to follow this up, the RuhrFellows 2015 will be closely integrated in the Alumni program of the UARuhr liaison office in New York once they have returned to the USA.

### **Initiativkreis Ruhr (IR)**

The Initiativkreis Ruhr is a union of about 70 leading commercial enterprises and institutions. In total they employ around 2.25 million people worldwide with global turnover of more than 630 billion euros. Aim of the Initiativkreis Ruhr is the promotion of the economic and professional development of the Ruhr Area and to strengthen its future and compatibility. For further information: [www.i-r.de](http://www.i-r.de)