My passion for research was sparked during an independent study project I completed with Dr. Zamora as a result of the European Union study tour I participated in through Albers. During this tour, we visited many EU businesses and regulatory institutions around the time that Germany had passed a quota for female representation on corporate boards. As a finance major, I was curious about the impact of this type of legislation on firm financial performance. As such, during our visit to Deloitte’s EU policy center, I asked our hosts if they had seen any reflection in the financial performance of the firms that had met the quota. The answer? “It’s complicated.” This inspired my curiosity; I wanted to further understand the intricacies of the situation. As a result, Dr. Zamora and I decided to pursue an independent study on the topic.

During this independent study, I fell in love with the research process. I truly enjoyed the quest for knowledge that seemed to be unfolding in such an organic manner. I liked that there was not a clear answer in the back of a book where I could check my work, like there often is in many finance problems. It felt that I was making a real contribution to the body of knowledge that exists on the topic. Along the way, I learned invaluable skills that have supported me in additional research projects.

During my first independent study, I gained the understanding of a research framework that enables me to see a phenomenon in the world, develop a concise question about it, and then use my resources to begin to uncover an answer.

Prior to this study, I had never conducted a full-fledged literature review. This process required significant gathering of information and articles. In order to accomplish this, I utilized Felipe, the business subject librarian, and the Academic Search Complete (Ebsco) database. These library resources enabled me to gather the information necessary for our literature review and hypothesis development. While learning how to use these resources was incredibly helpful at the time, I did not anticipate what doors it would open for me in the future.

During the research process, I became captivated by this creative and complex type of learning. When I learned I would have the opportunity to study abroad in Berlin last fall, I proposed doing another independent study with Dr. Zamora in addition to my regular courses abroad. This study ended up being a natural follow up to our previous paper. My previous experience with the research process enabled me to work more independently and made me feel comfortable with using new resources abroad.

For this project, I utilized the resources of Freie Universität (FU) in Berlin, which was my home university in Germany. This paper required information in German and English, so I was able to utilize the FU databases to gather the necessary information. FU is a large research university, with separate libraries for each discipline. While this was initially intimidating, my prior meetings with Felipe
reassured me that I would be able to communicate my needs to FU’s business librarians, despite the mutual language barrier.

Some of the unique resources I utilized for the project included consultations with the German business librarian at FU and the Nexis database. In addition to these, I was able to use SU’s databases to search for articles that would support my literature review. Lastly, unsure of the scope of my project at the time, I used the Dafne\(^1\) database to gather financial data in the event that I wished to pursue an empirical study in the future.

The culmination of these various projects enabled me to synthesize the knowledge I’ve gained in my finance courses and the skills I’ve learned during my research projects in order to produce this paper that ultimately helped me process key cultural differences I experienced during my time abroad.

\(^1\) Dafne is the German version of Amadeus