Dr. Adam Erickson had always shown interest in math and physics, so when it came time to decide on a major, he sought a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. Determined to expand his horizons, he explored research opportunities during the second half of his undergraduate degree. His first introduction to research was under Dr. Alexei Gruverman, which corresponded with his learning more about ferroelectricity and atomic force measurement. These experiences sparked a deep interest in quantum measurement techniques, which encouraged him to work with Dr. Abdelghani Laraoui as a graduate student. In this period of his education, he and Dr. Laraoui built a microscope to image nanoscale magnetic textures. He also became the first author of four papers, with his name attached to ten more, in just four years. When asked about how he achieved such a resume, he highlighted the significance that aiding labmates and engaging in academic collaborations within EQUATE have in achieving greater advancements in knowledge.

Having lived in Nebraska his whole life, he once again displayed his tendency for academic adventure by emailing Professor Christian Degen at ETH Zürich, showing interest in joining his group. So far in his journey at ETH Zürich, he has focused on researching with his new group as a postdoctoral researcher, but he is excited to start working as an educator. When asked about his transition from living in Nebraska to moving to Switzerland, he expressed his initial fears of loneliness and being in a foreign environment, and explained how his coworkers at ETH Zürich helped him overcome his concerns and adjust to his new surroundings.

When asked about how the EQUATE program helped his academic journey, he referenced the program's ability to help build connections. While the program inherently

supports collaboration between departments at UNL, it also provides the resources needed to cooperate with other institutions, such as the time he spent working with Jingsheng Chen's group at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He then went on to discuss how the recognition provided by his collaboration with the EQUATE program aided him in his academic curiosity and ability to work with established groups outside of UNL’s traditional communication channels.

During the interview, Dr. Erickson explained the importance of being educated in an area that you find interesting, as this is what led him to transition from his degree in mechanical engineering to his passion for experimental phenomenology. He also mentioned how taking the first step to embrace opportunities and being willing to confront concerns of unfamiliarity had helped him join ETH Zürich. My interview with him has encouraged me to look for hidden opportunities, explore possibilities of applying current knowledge to unfamiliar problems, and investigate future research activities.