

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**  
**Scan|Design Fellowship Program**

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**EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT**  
**for Danish Exchange Students**

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**1. WHY AND WHERE:**

- a. Why did you decide to study in the US as an exchange student?
- b. Why did you select the UW?
- c. What were your expectations?

I chose to study in the US because I wanted to study in a country that spoke English – since this would ease communication and teach me to speak better English. Also I had already been to Canada and Australia and England seemed to be too boring.

The reason why I chose UW was that UW has a very good bioengineering department with a big course variety (I study biophysics).

I expected to learn a lot of applied biophysics, and I did.

**2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:**

- a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
- b. Please comment on the orientation and activities FIUTS is offering, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?
- c. Was the Scan|Design Fellowship Coordinator of any help for your preparation?

The best way to find accommodation is via [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com). But I do not recommend to arrange for accommodation before you arrive in Seattle, it is a lot better to wait until after arrival so you can check out the place yourself. I do not know of any specific places that I can recommend.

I enjoyed the FIUTS activities a lot, especially in the beginning of my stay. I made several friends through FIUTS. Later I found out that showing up for the FIUTS Wednesday nights at College Inn was very good for me. I made friends there and it was really nice to have a fixed time every week where I could hang out with a lot of really nice people in a relaxed environment.

The Scan|Design Fellowship Coordinator was very helpful.

**2. ACADEMICS:**

- a. Please evaluate the instruction you received at the UW. Compare the following to your home institution's system:
  - class registration
  - classroom structure
  - instruction
  - teacher/student relations
  - grading/exams
  - administration
  - library, computer, and classroom facilities

- b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
- c. In general, what did you like best and least about the UW?
- d. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
- e. How did your studies at the UW relate to your Danish education?

I was very confused about class registration in the beginning, mostly because there were many more choices, but also because it was sometimes difficult to estimate the work load before registration. Later I found out that most other students solved this by signing up for more courses than they expected to take and then evaluate them by showing up for all the lectures the first week or so – thus I started doing the same.

The classroom structure and instruction was often better than I am used to from home. The teachers were all really nice people and did their best, which in most cases was really good. The student-teacher relationship often had potential to become more personal and the teachers were surprisingly enthusiastic about their field.

All of this was in general better at UW than at my home university.

The exams were mostly easier at UW than at KU, but the work load is a lot bigger at UW so in the end they did not feel easier, and the system is in general very different – UW has more home work and more exams (midterms) so the teachers usually don't push the students as hard at the final.

The facilities were fine, I had everything I needed. The library facilities were excellent and a lot better than I am used to.

I liked the campus atmosphere at UW a lot and almost all of my courses were really exciting. What I liked the most was probably the enthusiasm that several of my teachers showed. What I liked the least was that it was mostly difficult for me to really get into contact with my classmates. They were often not interested in socializing because they already had a group of friend elsewhere and did not expect to find any new friends through courses. This was not as pronounced for grad courses as it was for undergrad courses.

Patrick Stayton, Richard To and Wendy Thomas in the bioengineering department are excellent teachers. Also Andrea Woody in the philosophy department is an outstanding teacher.

I study biophysics and took a lot of bioengineering courses at UW, which is sort of the same as applied biophysics, thus I had a chance to learn things that I would be able to actually use later in a job situation.

### **3. HOUSING:**

- a. How would you assess the housing arrangements in Seattle compared to those in Denmark?
- b. What housing options were available to you?
- c. Which did you choose, and why?
- d. What would you recommend?

It is a lot easier to get housing in Seattle than in Copenhagen. The housing options available to me were apartments, shared houses and dormitories. I was warned against moving into the dormitories, since they have no kitchens, are expensive and the American students that live in them are very young and immature. I chose to live in shared houses, because I did not want to live alone. But I lived in two different houses and none of them were social, especially the house on 17<sup>th</sup> Ave called World house was very bad. I would recommend sharing an apartment with some friends.

### **4. EXCHANGE SITE:**

Describe what you think about the UW campus and its location and surrounding community.

UW campus is very beautiful and located in nice surroundings.

### **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study at the UW.

I experienced no serious health problems during my stay and I was not really scared for my safety at any time. Of course I heard of several crimes and some people told me not to walk alone at night, but I like to be independent so it was not something that worried me.

#### **6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

- a. How did you integrate into American culture and meet members of the community? (e.g., mentors, clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)
- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

I met Americans through FIUTS and in the bioengineering department through some parties. But the first 4 months or so I was very lonely and found it difficult to find more than superficial contacts. The population in Seattle tends to be very "Scandinavian" – in the sense that they are very polite on the surface, but when it comes to making new friends they can be cold and difficult. I did find American friends after a while though.

#### **7. FINANCIAL:**

- a. If you received a Scan|Design scholarship from Denmark, please describe how it assisted you/made a difference.
- b. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the Denmark to the US?
- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
- d. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

The rent in Seattle was a lot more expensive than what I am used to since I live in a dorm in Copenhagen. Also the life style was a lot busier, so I spent a lot more money on eating out than I usually do.

Per month I spend around 520 dollars on rent, 500 dollars on food, 20 dollars on transportation.

The best way to transfer money is probably to make an American bank account eg. at Bank of America where you can get one for free and then transfer large amounts at a time.

#### **8. EXCHANGE/SCAN|DESIGN FELLOWSHIP ADMINISTRATION:**

- a. Were you informed by your home institution that the opportunity to study at the UW was due to Scan|Design Foundation support?
- a. Please comment on the assistance and activities by the Scan|Design Fellowship coordinator before your arrival to the UW and during your stay. What worked and what could be improved or changed?
- b. Please evaluate services and effectiveness of the UW administrative offices you have been in touch with, in particular the IPE and ISS Offices.

Before I arrived in Seattle I was not informed about how my exchange program was supported by Scan Design, I in fact was told I just some money for personal expenses. The Scan Design coordinator helped me a lot with personal problems and it was really great to know that I had someone to contact if I got problems. The activities were also a lot of fun.

The IPE and ISS offices were very helpful whenever I had any questions or problems.

#### **9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

Please describe the type of student for whom this exchange is best suited and what advice would you give to future students going to the UW?

I don't think this exchange is best suited for a certain kind of student, as long as the student wants to experience new cultures and different ways of teaching.

My advice for future students would be to try not to do so much work in school that they have no energy left to try to find friends. Also I found that even though skypeing with people back home is very nice, it must be limited to say no more than once a week, or else you are not really present, but thinking about home far too much. Another advice is to not be disappointed when you are unable to find friends through classes: This is not how Americans find their friends. Instead the best way to meet them turned out for me to be through research groups and laboratory classes – and then of course College Inn on Wednesday nights.

#### **10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

- a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience in the US?
- b. How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?
- c. What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying in the US and at the UW?

The overall experience was good, especially the last quarter was great. Things became a lot easier after Christmas because I could sort of start over and learn from the mistakes I did, it also helped a lot that me and my boyfriend broke up in the second quarter. The extra money from Scan Design helped my budget and Anni Fuller helped me a lot during some of my sad periods.

The greatest benefit of studying in the US was to me the fact that my English skills were improved and the beauty of the American National Parks. UW has the benefit of being a big University with a wide range of high quality courses.

The greatest challenge was to find American friends.