

Evaluation

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Autumn Quarter 2009
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The idea of studying abroad came slowly but natural to me. As I proceeded through my 3rd year of study at Aarhus University, I got to know several other students who took the possibility of doing a part of their masters/PhD elsewhere than Denmark. Several reasons formed the basis for me to choose USA and more specifically UW. First of all, I realized that UW is elected the 16th best university of the world. Secondly, UW's time schedule, i.e. the relatively late initiation of the autumn quarter, fit well in with my other studies. Thirdly, as I do organic synthesis (chemistry) and wanted to do independent laboratory research, I wanted to attend a university with a high standard within this field.

In general, I expected an overall high academic standard at UW. Furthermore, I expected myself to positively evolve in several perspectives, e.g. personal maturity and improvement of my English.

When I arrived at UW I felt very warmly welcomed. Both FIUTS and the general university staff was extremely helpful and gave some fine orientation lectures about what to be aware of as a new visiting student. It is, however, my opinion that especially the Scan|Design Fellowship Program's Assistant Director, Anni Fuller, was particularly supportive in all possible aspects.

The way of teaching at UW is quite different from what I am used to at Aarhus University. Beside doing scientific research (7 credits) I took pharmacology (4 credits) and biochemistry (4 credits). I have no complains about the latter, biochemistry, but since 5-6 professors are in charge of teaching the pharmacology class, there seemed to be a certain lack of communication among those. That being said, I think in general it was a great course going through highly relevant material at a high educational level.

For me it was fairly difficult to adapt to the enormous pressure of having test and exams constantly. Not that I did not do well, but more the fact that I find it relatively unnecessary. In Denmark I am used to having *one* final when finishing a class. At UW I had 19 test/exams in 10 weeks – and that from only two classes. The stress factor is further significantly increased as

laboratory research is very time demanding. If I fall behind one week in Denmark, because of spending too much time doing research chemistry, I would be able to catch up during the next weeks. Though, at UW (or USA as a whole I guess) this could earn you a grade that did not show what you are really capable of. That seems unnecessary to me, and I do not believe it is a better way of learning – at least not if you are used to other procedures.

In my opinion, there is many cultural differences between USA and Denmark. Among Danish students I have met during this quarter, it has become popular to think that Americans are more superficial than Danish people. Instead, I would probably use the word “casual” describing an American in the comparison of a Dane. I believe Americans are much more open minded but also much more non-committing.

In general, I do not think housing is an issue if you are a visiting student. Compared to Danish prices, renting an apartment in the Seattle area is not that different. The only thing to be aware of is the destination. Personally, I chose to stay in an above-standard quality unit in Phinney for a reasonable price with longer transportation, instead of paying less but then be living in a possibly more crime infected district near the university.

My overall experience of my stay in Seattle as a study abroad student is extremely positive. The academic quality of UW is very high and I am absolutely sure that I have gained a lot from it – both educationally and personally. Furthermore, the research group I was attached to, did a terrific job in sharing their knowledge and teaching me how to become a better chemist. There was a mutual respect among us which I truly appreciated.

Lastly, I want to thank Scan|Design Fellowship Program deeply for making my stay at UW possible and for making it a successful experience that will always be a significant part of me.

Thank you very much,

Christian Bech Rosen