

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
Scan|Design Fellowship Program

EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

Nils Koch Jensen

M.Sc. in Business Administration and Economics / MBA

Copenhagen Business School, 3rd semester

nils@kochjensen.dk

1. WHY AND WHERE

During my application process I identified the following criteria for my exchange:

1. I wanted to study in the US, preferably the northern states
2. I wanted to be enrolled in a MBA program
3. The MBA program had to be well recognized with a good reputation (rankings)
4. I wanted to try the US campus experience
5. The university had to be situated in a larger city with campus close to downtown.
6. The surroundings had to offer great opportunities for weekend get-away's!

Ultimately UW in Seattle was the one place that could fulfill my criteria.

2. ARRIVAL/HOUSING:

The international student organization FIUTS offers incoming exchange students to stay with a host for the first week of their stay in Seattle. I had heard good things about this why I decided to apply. I ended up staying with a really friendly young lady (29 yrs old) who worked at Microsoft. Another German exchange student stayed with her during the same period and I ended up becoming really good friends with both of them. As I could not move in to my room until two weeks after my arrival I ended up staying with her for two weeks which I was more than welcome to even though originally I was only supposed to stay there for 1 week. I can absolutely recommend applying for this option as it is amazing to have a complete stranger open up her home to you and I only met people who had good experiences with this.

During the first weeks FIUTS arranges a lot of activities. I did only participate in a few as I frankly found it very childish and not minded for MBA's (e.g. no alcohol parties). Instead I tried to get to know the MBA's who were the ones I was going to be around for the rest of the year. We were about 14 MBA exchange students and had a good social group together with the US MBA's.

I did not have a place to stay for the rest of the semester when I arrived. Through Craigslist I found a room in a shared house rather quickly. It was a big house located in Fremont that I shared with 4 local guys who were all young professionals. Great experience to live with Americans!

Regarding neighborhoods you should definitely not stay on campus or even in the U-district as you will never get out and experience all the good stuff Seattle has to offer. I ended up finding Fremont the perfect location. Fremont is a really vibrant and cool neighborhood with lots charm good bars, arts and music scene. And it is located in between downtown and campus. Approx. 15 minutes from both by bus.

Through the application and arrival process I could always find answers to my questions by contacting Scan|Design Fellowship Coordinator Mrs. Anni Fuller who was always extremely helpful and friendly.

3. ACADEMICS:

As I was enrolled in the MBA program my academic experience was rather different to what I am used to at CBS.

The registrations process was very confusing and required quite an effort to get through. The main issue was that the American MBA's had registered for courses in the spring why I ended up being waitlisted for all the courses that I wanted to take. I then had to show up for each class that I wanted (+ my 2nd and 3rd priority classes) to see if I could convince the professor to enroll me in the course. This was a major issue as there is a big workload on the MBA program already from week 1 and some professors even had hand-ins on the first lecture. I did not know anything about this, as I did not have reading lists or books at the time. So I had to spend a lot of time going to different classes and was not fully registered until the last day of the add-drop period in week 3. Nevertheless I ended up getting the courses I wanted except for one but had some catching up to do why my first half of quarter was rather busy. I talked with the MBA coordinator about this and they will hopefully improve the registration process in the future.

I took the following courses at Foster:

Competing in the Global Economy (Kathryn Dewenter)

The purpose of "Competing in the Global Economy" (*GLOBAL*) is to provide you with a knowledge and understanding of the global environment for business and of the challenges facing managers in this environment. Markets have become global in scope, and companies and their leaders increasingly need a global perspective on their industry's trends, customers and competitors. Yet persistent differences exist among national business systems, forcing companies to adapt their strategies and tactics to different cultures and political pressures. Business leaders must simultaneously "think and act global and local" in formulating and implementing competitive strategies.

Students are expected to come away from *GLOBAL* with the ability to (1) analyze the forces driving the global competitiveness of firms and countries in particular industries, and (2) understand the important differences among countries in the rules of the game for business. Students who master the material in *GLOBAL* should have a good understanding of the global competitive environment and a "big picture" framework for thinking about situations they encounter in their business careers¹.

I was skeptic about this course as it sounded somewhat diffuse but it ended up being the best course that I took at Foster. The lecturer who is a former McKinsey consultant is awesome. It is a case based course and she was really good at controlling the discussions and inspire everyone to contribute. This means that everyone in the class was always prepared and eager to discuss the cases. Ultimately this class was everything I expected an MBA class to be like. Grading was given on participation (30%), Group Case-Write up (35%) and Final Individual Exam (35%).

Innovation Strategy (Sonali K. Shah)

We are accustomed to thinking of firms as the primary engine of innovative activity and industrial progress. The research and development activities of most firms are based on a proprietary model; exclusive property rights provide the basis for capturing value from innovative investments and managerial control is the basic tool for directing and coordinating innovative efforts. The proprietary model does not, however, stand alone. The use of

¹ From the course syllabus

open models of innovation is becoming increasingly frequent – and is giving rise to a number of successful business models.

This course is intended for students who want to know what is going on at the leading edge of innovation practice. The course takes the viewpoint of a firm interested in tapping into external sources of innovative ideas, focusing on “crowds”, universities, community-based innovation, and start-ups². Each of these sources of innovative activity is examined.³

This course was also really interesting. Unfortunately the professor was not that inspiring with lecture style classes and never managed to get any good discussions going. But as a ph.d. from MIT who used to be Von Hippel’s apprentice she was an expert on her field and had produced some really interesting research herself. Furthermore she managed to bring in some really interesting guest speakers, e.g. the guy responsible for the launch of Bing at Microsoft. I learned a lot from the class and can definitely recommend it if you have any interest in Open Innovation. The class was graded on 3 individual hand-ins (20%), participation (20%), Group Consulting Presentation (25%), individual term paper (35%).

Successful negotiations (Chris Bauman)

Negotiation is the art and science of securing agreements between two or more interdependent parties who are seeking to maximize their outcomes. This course provides the opportunity to develop your negotiation skills in a series of simulations and debriefings that engage a variety of bargaining processes in the contexts of deal making and dispute resolution. Each simulation has been chosen to highlight the central concepts that underlie negotiation strategy. The course will address a broad spectrum of negotiation problems that managers and professionals face. It is designed to complement the technical and diagnostic skills learned in other courses at the Foster School. Managers need analytical skills to develop optimal solutions to problems, and they also need a broad array of negotiation skills to ensure those solutions are accepted and implemented⁴.

This was a very useful course. The course structure with simulations and debriefs worked really well and the instructor was really good at teaching the course in a structured manner with good examples. No matter your line of study you can use the tools from this course in both everyday and professional situations. The class was graded upon participation (10%), planning documents (10%), post-negotiation analysis (30%), Negotiation Analysis (50%). I can recommend this course.

B2B Marketing (Fabio Caldieraro)

Business-to-Business (B2B) Marketing encompasses those management activities that enable a supplier firm to understand, create, and deliver value to other businesses, governments, and/or institutional customers. In the context of these business markets, value is “the worth in monetary terms of the economic, technical, service, and social benefits a customer firm receives in exchange for the price it pays for a market offering.”

Specific objectives for this course are:

- Understand business markets and how they differ from consumer markets.
- Learn how to assess opportunities in business markets.

² Government and private research institutions, independent inventors, consultants, and the R&D labs of other corporations are other important sources.

³ From the course syllabus

⁴ From the course syllabus.

- Make marketing decisions that lead a company to generate and deliver value to customers.
- Design a customer-centric marketing approach that focuses on relationships as opposed to transactions.⁵

This was a horrible class! Not because of the curriculum but because of the teacher unfortunately. He did not demand much of the students and his class was not on a MBA level. I took very few learning's with me from this class and honestly found it to be a waist of time. Early on I decided to focus on my other classes and did not put any effort in to this class. I cannot recommend this class although I doubt this professor will be teaching at Foster next year!

Overall it was a great experience to be part of the MBA program. My fellow students were very enthusiastic, mature and committed to their studies, which usually resulted in a really good and intense learning environment. Except for the one course my the standard of my professors was brilliant, both on their résumés and in practice!

4. CAMPUS:

The UW campus is really cool. It is really beautiful build in old style with green areas. And of course it has fantastic sport facilities. Both for you to use as a student and for the UW teams. E.g. the Husky stadium that seats 72.000 people for the football games (great atmosphere – try it!).

Furthermore the surroundings in Washington state is fantastic and offers a great scenery for both summer and winter outdoor activities – so make sure to get out there!

5. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

Americans are extremely friendly and welcoming. The great thing about the Northwest is that here they actually mean it and are not as shallow as I have experienced that people from other parts of the US can be. People here have a great tolerant mentality, which is more similar to that of the Canadians than the rest of the US. I met a lot of Americans through my host's network, my roommates and the local MBA students. I came a long great with Americans and had no cultural issues – most of the people I meet even understood my sarcastic Danish humor.

6. FINANCIAL:

I was lucky enough to receive funding from Scan|Design. This was a great help as it first of all meant that I could get through the exchange program without borrowing money. Beside assisting with school related expenses it gave me more financial room to explore Seattle and the surroundings.

I transferred the money to my US account just by using my Danish VISA card to deposit money on the US account. This worked well and did not include any risk or fees. Rent, food, and transportation included I spend approximately \$1300 a month.

7. EXCHANGE/SCAN|DESIGN FELLOWSHIP ADMINISTRATION:

I was not informed by my home institution that the opportunity to study at the UW was due to Scan|Design Foundation support. The Scan|Design Fellowship coordinator was helpful with answering my questions before arrival and arranged great activities during my stay in Seattle. I was happy to be a Scan|Design Fellow and really have no complaints to make on the administrative offices I have been in contact with.

⁵ From the course syllabus

8. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Foster school of business has great finance, strategy and entrepreneurship/innovation courses so it is within these areas that it will be best suited for business students. The workload is greater at Foster than at CBS which one has to be ready for.

9. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

1-5 rating

Foster/UW: 4

Seattle/Washington State: 5

I sum being a Scan|Design Fellow made my stay easier. It gave me a good network in Seattle and the opportunity to get closer to American culture.