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IP&E PROGRAM EVALUATION OUTLINE:

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Program/Location: ScanDesign fellowship in Aarhus, Denmark (in the political science dept)

Term: Spring Semester 2007

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1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

You will probably fly into Copenhagen and can go directly on a train to Aarhus from the airport. From the train station in Aarhus to your accommodation, you can either take the bus or take a taxi. If you arrive when your dorm room is ready, you can go directly into the room. If it is not ready, you can stay in a youth hostel in the downtown area. Most students had their mentor (assigned to you by the university) come and pick them up.

b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt? I had an orientation once I arrived in Aarhus. It was informative and an opportunity to meet other students.

The university also puts on a program called Denmark Today for exchange students. It's a month long program where you can meet other students and learn Danish. I didn't participate in this program but I heard very good things about it.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure

The classrooms are really nice -- a lot newer and cleaner than most rooms in the older buildings at UW.

- instruction

The instruction is a bit different than UW. I had very few hours of class each week, so there is much more reading to do at home. The instructor did less lecturing, but we had more discussion. The classes I had in the political science department were really small (5-12 people) so you really need to know the material and be present to participate.

- teacher/student relations

The relationship is a little more casual. Its common to just call your professor by his/her first name (instead of using titles like Professor or Dr). The instructors I had spoke English really well, so it was very easy to hold conversations. Of course like any other university in the world, each professor's personality is different, so some will be more interested in you and friendly than others. I felt very comfortable in class since the teacher usually sat at a table with the students, rather than lecturing in front.

- grading/exams

This was probably the hardest thing for me to get used to. The final exam was 100% of my entire grade, so I felt very unsure and pressured at first. I had papers due during the semester, but these are merely to get you thinking, rather than to be graded. But, in the end, it wasn't as stressful and difficult as I thought it would be. There are various final types of exams (oral, written, week long take home exams, long detailed research papers, etc..) that I was not used to, but the teachers tried to explain how to take them. The oral exams were very new to me.

- administration

The international secretary office (the people that coordinate ALL intl students -- similar to IPE) was

very helpful and welcoming. They hold events for the students throughout the semester. However, the administration at the political science department was a bit more difficult to communicate with. Signing up for courses, exams, and getting information was sometimes difficult. But, this varies by department. I had friends in other departments that loved their administration.

- library, computer, and classroom facilities

There is a state library on campus that is nice and each department has its own library. They have wireless and are similar to UW's libraries (except they are smaller). The only problem was that they have limited opening hours (usually 8am-5pm). The political science department had a nice computer lab. It had limited opening hours as well, but you can get your student ID card activated so that you can access the computer lab building at any time of the day. I also got free printing from my department.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

I was happy with the quality of instruction. The style of instruction took some time to get used to but I was very pleased in the end. The instructors spoke English very well so that was not a problem.

c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?

In the political science department, every foreign student has to take the Danish Politics course that is taught by two professors. One of the professors was not very good but he just retired so future students won't have a problem. There are various English courses. Future students should look through the university website and look through the course offerings. Most students stay within one department but you can ask to take courses from various departments.

d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?

They convert to a few credits I can use in the Jackson School

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

Dorms or private housing

b. Which did you choose, and why?

I chose to share a private apartment but this was only because I had already been to Aarhus and knew people there.

c. What would you recommend?

I would recommend the dorms. It is the easiest way to live in Aarhus. They are really nice and livable. The rooms are very clean and pretty big. Some have private bathrooms and kitchens and some share them between 2-5 people. The kitchens are equipped with everything. They had pans, cutlery, blenders, etc... Most people I knew were very happy with their dorms. Most of them are close to campus but I knew some dorms were not as nice and further away. The only problem is that you can't really choose where you want to live. The international office just assigns you to whatever is available.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The university campus is very beautiful. There is a huge park and lake in the middle of the campus. Its really nice once the sun comes out! Aarhus is a small "hygge"(cozy) city. The downtown area has enough nightlife but is small. It is a quiet city and easy to get to know. There are many beautiful beaches and parks that you can enjoy when it is warm. It's a nice city with a lot of nature.

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 abroad experience.

As a exchanged student with a resident permit, you'll have access to free medical services. I went to the doctor a couple of times because I had severe allergies during the spring. My doctor was really helpful and spoke English perfectly. I never really worried about theft. Aarhus is a very safe city.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

The university has events for foreign students and the Friday bars are the best place to meet other students. The Studenthus is a place just for international students and they put on various events (traveling, bbqs, bars, concerts). I didn't go there very much but I knew some students that really enjoyed it. Its easy to meet other exchange students. If you really want to meet Danish students, it's a bit difficult. I joined the International Committee in the political science dept. It was a group of Danish students that were working on improving conditions for exchange students. The departments also have mentors for each exchange student but the effort and interests of the mentors vary. Some students had very helpful mentors while others did not.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.

(e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

There were not very many differences that were too difficult for me. The hardest thing would be that if you are trying to learn Danish and improve, most people will speak back to you in English if you ask something in Danish. This is usually because most danes speak English fluently. The university student life is based on drinking, which is really different than UW. Stereotypically, danes are very closed and can seem shy or unfriendly at first. But, if you just initiate the conversation, they are extremely nice. I don't think it is very difficult for Americans to adjust.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

I just used ATMS to pull out money. It seemed to be the easiest way. You can open a Danish bank account and transfer money but I think transferring money can be quite expensive.

b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

Rent varies from \$300-\$600 per month (depending on your dorm).

Food is generally very expensive in Denmark but this can be avoided if you shop smartly. There are cheaper grocery stores (Netto). Eating out is very expensive (\$20 per meal and up) compared to the US but you can always find cheaper places to eat. The university's canteen had reasonably priced food and I ate there for lunch often (\$4-6 for lunch).

The bus system is very convenient in Aarhus but is very expensive (\$3 per ride), so I never took the bus. I got a used bike and rode it everywhere. Aarhus is not a very big city so you can generally bike everywhere. I would HIGHLY recommend getting a bike. It is extremely safe and easy (the bike lanes are very well kept and big). All of my Danish friends used bikes and it would have been very inconvenient to rely on the bus. The only difficult part is that when it is cold outside, it can be quite miserable riding a bike! Some dorms have events where you can find cheap or free bikes. There is a police auction each month where you can buy cheap bikes.

If you are under 26 years old, I would recommend getting a 'Wildcard' which is a discount card for the DSB train. It pays for itself very quickly. With the card, you can go back and forth from Copenhagen quite cheaply. Or you can take the bus. The international secretary will give you info.

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Books are extremely expensive in Denmark. If you can, try to find out the textbooks you need

before you depart and buy them in the US (or you can get them shipped from amazon.uk).

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications? If so, how did you address them?

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

It was very easy. I didn't have any problems.

b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

This program is for an independent student that doesn't want to go on one of the department programs with 20 other UW students. I was the only UW student and there were very few other American students. It's an academically challenging program, so it is not just a program to experience culture and be abroad.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

I really enjoyed this program. I met very good friends and felt very satisfied with my experience. I was challenged academically and had good instruction. It was also very interesting to see how other universities in the world teach.