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From August 2009, through January 2010, I participated in an exchange program at Aalborg University (AAU) in a Masters program in Sustainable Energy Planning and Management. It was my goal to study in Denmark to understand energy planning and policy from a European perspective. Denmark is an ideal choice for this reason, because of their progressive views towards renewable energy and environmental standards. In addition, I wanted to work with researchers at Aalborg University who specialize in a consequential Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), which is directly related to my current research at the University of Washington. Furthermore, it has always been a goal of mine to study abroad in Europe and this was an excellent opportunity for that.

I lived within the city of Aalborg, in the Northern Jutland region of Denmark. I elected to have the international office at AAU find me housing for the duration of my stay in Denmark. My apartment was half-way between the city center and the University, in the suburbs. This location made it fairly convenient to travel between downtown and the University. I stayed in a studio apartment in a Kollegium filled with mostly other University Students. My studio was furnished and included bathroom, kitchen, and bedroom/living area. It was reasonable priced, and housing costs are comparable to Seattle. I would recommend this option to other students, since I know that several international students had problems finding housing, because they had not made prior arrangements, however, for future students who would like to be more involved in the social scenes within the Aalborg I would recommend living closer to the city center. Aalborg University and the local students organized a number of events where I met other students in my program, as well as, other international students new to Denmark and Danish students through the buddy system

The coursework at AAU is quite different from UW. Courses are generally structured as lectures and workshops. Homework is not usually assigned, and there were either no exams for courses or pass/fail exams at the end of the semester. Some courses were specific to our areas of study, while others were general that encompassed several other collaborative program units. The final grade was based on a semester long group project related to a research topic of choice. We assembled in groups of 3 to 5 students and chose a particular topic of interest. We then worked with our groups and an assigned faculty advisor to develop the research project. At the end of the semester a project report was submitted and the project itself was presented to our faculty advisor and an outside supervisor. We were then graded individually based on how well we understood our project and could defend it, along with being able to expand upon some of the key ideas presented in the report. Overall, the educational experience at AAU was good. Some of the most interesting components to studying at AAU include:

- Collaborating with international students on an energy related project,
- The opportunity to focus on research and develop analytical skills,
- Gaining an international perspective on global issues surrounding energy and the environment.

The city of Aalborg feels completely safe. The only thing you I ever worried about was getting my bike stolen, since bikes are so common that people often just walk off with them. It is extremely easy to travel within Denmark to other major cities (Arhus, Copenhagen,..etc) and outside of Denmark via train or plane. However, traveling around Scandinavia can be quite expensive. Train tickets from Aalborg and Copenhagen generally run around \$150 roundtrip and take about 4.5 hours each way. General goods are also pretty expensive in Denmark, as it cost around \$200 per week in basic food and living expenses. Going out to eat, or a night on the town can add up pretty quickly with prices around \$30 a plate for a dinner, although there are deals if you find the right spots. The Scan|Design Fellowship covered most of my expenses in Denmark, while expenses from my travels outside of Denmark I paid for myself.

In regards to the Scan|Design administrators and board in the US and Denmark, all I can say is they are all amazing people. In the US Anni Fuller was extremely helpful and a very wonderful person. In Denmark Marianne was absolutely amazing, I can't say enough good things about her, I'm so grateful for the chance to have met her and for all her hospitality. It was also great to have met the members of the Scan|Design board in Denmark, they are also all wonderful people. The only thing I could recommend about the setup itself is to try and get either more students in Aalborg, or all students closer together. There were many wonderful opportunities to engage with the other Scan students that I could not participate in because of the regional distance between Aalborg and Copenhagen.

Overall the experience was life changing in so many unexpected ways. I had an absolute fantastic time, traveling abroad, meeting people and sharing in so many wonderful experiences. I've made several Danish friends, who I'm sure I will remain in contact with. One of them is actually coming to Seattle this Summer and will be staying with me. I was able to work with faculty members at AAU and made some great network connections. After I returned to Seattle, I was even contacted by one of the faculty members at AAU about a job offer in San Francisco, one in which I would have took if I was not in the middle of my studies at UW. I'm very grateful that I was given the opportunity from the Scan|Design board to study in Denmark, and I appreciate all the support they provided in making this trip possible.