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Journalism & European Studies

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1. WHY AND WHERE

a. Why did you decide to study in Denmark as an exchange student?

i. I had planned to study in Denmark since entering the University of Washington and my decision to attend the UW was even partly based on its excellent Scandinavian Studies department and the study abroad options presented. I myself am a Danish citizen and was greatly interested in pursuing a course of study that could draw from my heritage. I had prepared for the exchange by taking Danish courses at the UW the two years following the exchange program. Further, I had pursued a course of research pertaining to a cross-comparative analysis of Denmark and the U.S. regarding environmental policies. I felt an exchange program in Denmark could further these academic interests and lead to future opportunities.

b. Why did you select the particular institution you studied at as an exchange student?

i. I chose to study at Århus University (AU) due to a number of reasons. I had narrowed the decision to the University of Copenhagen and the AU. Primarily, I based my decision on advice from my Danish family, all of who live in a small town in the southwest part of the Jylland peninsula and recommended that I study in a smaller setting than Copenhagen, that would be more similar to my relatives' upbringing and current lifestyle. Dialectical differences also factored into my decision, in that there exists differences between "københavnsk" and "jysk" Danish, with my family speaking the latter. I therefore chose to study in Århus to be able to better converse with family members. Academically, Århus University is considered one of the best political science institutes in Europe, drawing students from participating Erasmus countries and professors from many abroad institutions. I felt that this rigorous academic setting, coupled with a strong international presence would create a challenging and interesting setting for study. Furthermore, the setup of the university, with its large campus (as compared to Copenhagen University's, which has a more spread out campus, similar to NYU) and the large student population in Århus (about 25% of the total population is

between the ages 18-24) would create a stimulating and pleasurable living and study experience.

## 2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION

- a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
  - i. My arrival and orientation was probably one of the hardest things for me to deal with when moving to Århus and probably very dissimilar from the experiences many other exchange students have. I spent time with family during the first month of my stay in Denmark, to acclimate to living and help with the cultural adjustment. However, I doubt many students would be able to share in a similar experience, and therefore what was helpful for me in this regard may not be to others. However, upon moving to Århus and being on my own, I had considerable trouble adjusting to living in Denmark. I did not partake in introductory programs offered by AU, such as "Denmark Today," feeling I did not need introductory Danish lessons or an introduction to Danish culture. However, I found out from other students who did take part that these introductory programs and organized events were a great way to meet other international students and create a social circle. I had hoped to make primarily Danish friends, and living with three Danish students helped immensely. I had planned on living in a private apartment in Denmark, but due to a fluke in the housing allocation system, I was given a dormitory room, which at first I regretted, grew to appreciate as it gave me a group of friends.
- b. If your host institution had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?
  - i. As mentioned above, I did not partake in the general international student orientation. However, I did participate in the political science department's orientation, which provided a nice overview of the Danish educational system and an introduction to the school's facilities and how to become acquainted. This also provided me with my first opportunity to meet other international students and university professors.

## 3. ACADEMICS

- a. Please evaluate the instruction you received in Denmark. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:
  - i. Classroom structure
    1. I appreciated the small classroom size at the University of Århus. I am unsure as to whether this was particular to the political science department or if it is to be expected throughout the university. On average, I had 15-20 classmates at Århus. This is comparable to my course of study at the UW, as I am in the journalism program, which admits about 15 students a quarter,

therefore keeping classes small. This may be dissimilar to other students traveling to Århus, who may be coming from much larger classes at the UW.

ii. Instruction

1. In my opinion, the style of instruction at AU differed greatly from that at the UW and was the hardest aspect of my study abroad educational experience to adjust to. Focus is put primarily on independent instruction, with the majority of time spent reading at home a sizable course packet that a student receives at the beginning of the quarter. The course packet is made up of scholarly articles, which I found less stimulating and rather dull in comparison to a more literary approach offered at UW. Although I knew what was expected of me each week, in terms of the amount of reading to be done and how to prepare for class, I found it difficult to feel it necessary to stay up-to-date. Class periods lasted only two hours once a week and acted only to summarize readings. There were no graded assignments throughout the semester (however one class had three mandatory essays due, not graded) Therefore, it was hard to stay current as there were not the same facets of instruction in place as at the UW that require a student to stay current. However, the level of instruction at AU was top-notch, housing some of the best political scientists in Europe and pulling from many of the best universities in the world. Many articles read were the instructors' own and their specializations were often emphasized in class.

iii. Teacher/student relations

1. Small class sizes helped create better teacher/student relations. Questions were answered when brought up in class; teachers were available to meet outside of class time; and frequent help was given to acquaint oneself to university facilities. I met a number of times with teachers, particularly as exam deadlines neared. Further, one teacher made himself available for counseling regarding future study options at AU for myself.

iv. Grading/exams

1. As was said, there was a decreased emphasis on assignments throughout the quarter and therefore the final exam was used as the sole indicator of a student's performance. I had three different types of exams, giving me a clear overall picture of the Danish exam process.

2. The **oral exam** was the hardest to prepare for and the most dissimilar from anything a UW student may have had before. A student is given six questions to prepare for, and when taking the exam will cast a die to decide which question to answer orally in front of the instructor and an outside auditor. Therefore it is imperative that a student prepare for each question and have a clear understanding of each. It was for this class that we were required to write six essays throughout the course and it was these essay questions that were asked during the exam period. It is unusual of the Danish system to prepare for an oral exam throughout the course of the semester, but this greatly aided those coming from other countries unfamiliar with oral exams. I would suggest that students who find themselves taking an oral exam without having first written required essays pertaining to each question, to do so on their own accord once they have received the questions.
3. For **The Seven-day exam**, a student is given a week to complete a 4,000 word essay, wherein a prompt is given at the beginning of the week and must be turned in a week from that date, usually by 2 p.m. NO LATER. The prompt is of the instructor's choosing, who may hint at certain aspects they are looking for in an essay prior to handing out a prompt. I split up my time during the week into an initial information gathering and basic outline formation, took time in the middle to work on another exam, and spent about three days writing the actual essay.
4. For **The 6,000 word essay**, a student is given a period of circa two months to complete an essay of his/her choice pertaining to the topic of the class. This equated to less class time and more independent research time. I found it hard to manage my time with a far-off deadline and while I still had work and exams for other classes.
5. For both types of written exams, the essay is sent to external auditors who provide an additional opinion and grade. Word count is taken very seriously, and a student may not go over the maximum. There is no minimum requirement, but I was told that a good reference is to take 10 percent off the total word count as a minimum (i.e. max=4,000 words, min=3,600).

v. Administration

1. While I had limited interaction with administration, there were a few experiences that stood out as

exceptional. The head of the political science department welcomed all incoming students during a breakfast information session and provided a tour of all the department's facilities. Also, Birgit Kastrup (sp?) provided invaluable services in helping pick and register for classes.

vi. Library, computer, and classroom facilities.

1. The facilities at AU are top notch. Each department has its own library in addition to the large state library. Students have access to their department day and night, providing a space to work and have access to technology. The political science department has a couple computer labs with printing facilities (at a cost). Every classroom has computer and projection equipment. The self-service website allowed for easy course lookup, email and class services, however I found it to be not as intuitive or streamlined as MYUW.

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction

i. I found the quality of instruction to be quite excellent but found the content and type of instruction to vary based on instructor (similar to UW or any institution). One instructor came from a university in Canada, and although he had to work within the University's and Denmark's education structure (having type of exam dictated, for example) he brought a style similar to what he would use at his home university. For instance, class periods were spent discussing relevant current events, student presentations and even viewing relevant film shorts. I think this can be expected of guest professors and should be considered when choosing a non-Danish professor. I was also enrolled in a mandatory class for incoming exchange students that I found to be a little basic, in terms of the rigor of the coursework and the interest of my classmates. I think that having a number of students coming from different universities and differing educational systems created uncertainty in the professors regarding how best to educate each individual student. Coursework was taught in English, but students had differing language proficiency (those coming from Southern Europe having particular trouble), causing difficulty properly communicating. I experienced this problem most when required to do groupwork with my peers. My third class was taught in Danish and I felt that I had similar problems to those struggling with English in my other class, in that much of the coursework was highly technical and difficult to comprehend in a foreign language. The course subject was in the instructor's area of expertise and I found this to mean she was both highly competent and passionate about the course

subject. She proved a valuable asset when working on the essay exam.

- c. In general, what did you like best and least about your exchange institution?
  - i. While I have expressed some discontent with the difficulty I originally had adjusting to a new social setting, during my time in Denmark I came to appreciate the great amount of opportunities to socialize. The university itself would arrange group excursions, specifically geared toward exchange students. These trips took students to all corners of Denmark, from Copenhagen to Skagen and provided an understanding of the culture and history. Each department would also have a Friday bar, or sometimes even a Thursday bar, when the cafeteria would be opened at night for students to drink and socialize and listen to live music. Every Tuesday night was international students night at the Studenterhus downtown. These and other social events helped me adjust to living in Denmark and I look back on them as the thing that I liked best about me exchange. The thing I liked least was how infrequent class periods were, which I felt created a disconnect between students and teachers and required too much independent work of students.
- d. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
  - i. I would recommend instructors Mark Eaton and Carsten Daugbjerg. Eaton is a visiting professor from Canada and I am unsure how long he was planning to stay at AU. I enjoyed his style of teaching that employed a more interactive and engaging approach. I did not find Daugbjerg a particularly effective teacher but I would recommend him as a resource for anyone interested in Danish or Scandinavian environmental policy.
- e. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?
  - i. While I am not majoring in political science, I focus on political journalism and European politics at the UW. Two classes I took, Danish politics and Welfare Management made use of particular themes that aided my study of environmental politics. In Danish politics, we focused for two weeks on environmental policy that provided me with an understanding of the role of interest groups and corporatist bargaining regarding regulation. It will be fairly easy for me to transfer credits received at AU, as I am minoring in political science at the UW which requires only that a number of credits be above the 300 level, and not mandating specific classes. I can imagine it to be harder for those seeking to study in Denmark in the major area of study, in terms of finding specific classes that

qualify for credit at the UW. On the other hand, it is important to ensure that your coursework at AU is pertinent and relevant to your home study and I feel as though I accomplished this by choosing courses that complimented my area of interest.

#### 4. HOUSING

- a. How would you assess the housing arrangements in Denmark compared to those in Seattle? What housing options were available to you? Which did you choose, and why? What would you recommend?
  - i. The housing situation for students in Denmark is quite different from that at the UW. While not considered a viable option at the UW after a student's freshman year, student dorms tends to be the best option for students in Denmark. As was said before, I had originally planned to stay in a private housing arrangement but was changed to a student house (kollegium) due to complications with the landlord. This however worked out in my favor. I was put in Nørre Alle Kollegium, which is right in the center of Århus, near the shopping and commercial district. It was within walking distance to the university, but I (as most Danes do) tended to bike to school and elsewhere. I lived with three Danes which greatly helped during my transition period and turned out to be the friends that I did things with most. The residents of dorms in Denmark tend to be much older than in the US and my roommates aged from 24-27 years old. This is because dorm housing is a much more viable and attractive option in Denmark. It is unheard of to have to share a room and most often residents have their own bathroom (as was my case). Kitchens are usually shared, with about 4-20 students sharing. I was surprised to find that rent was actually much cheaper than what students pay at the dorms or for private housing in the u-district. I paid 2400 dkk (~\$430) a month, which is toward the lower end and some could pay as high as 3000 dkk or more. I was told that Nørre Alle was one of the best kollegiums in Århus and had a two year waiting list. It has about 50 rooms with four rooms reserved for international students. There are many dorms on the outskirts of town and many of the international students end up in these as well. Their facilities are nice but the location makes it hard to get to school or to social events downtown at night. Most similar to living situations for students at the UW, there are a number of shared houses available for international students, with about 7-10 students in each house. While many of my friends said this was a great option in terms of always have a close social circle with other students, it was also hard to find ones own space as well as keep common spaces clean. Overall, I found the housing options to be far superior to that offered at the

UW. The international secretariat helped greatly in finding a place to live and there were really no flukes at all regarding making arrangements for housing and moving in (apart from my initial change of housing).

## 5. EXCHANGE SITE

a. Describe the campus/location of your program and surrounding community.

i. The AU campus is located centrally with Århus, the second largest city in Denmark, that has a thriving student and young professional community. Located on the East coast of the Jutland peninsula, Århus provides access to coastal areas as well as more rural tracts inland. Many people call it the “world’s biggest small town,” as it has only a population of around 300,000 but the amenities and feeling of a much larger city. It is the ideal place for an exchange student to study as it creates a feeling of connection to the community and doesn’t overwhelm the student. Simply put, Århus offers the best of many different worlds. Having a campus greatly aids in creating a collegiate experience, something that UW students can attest to. However, the campus is quite different from the UW in that it is much more departmentalized and students rarely go outside their own academic department. Most classes will be in the department’s building and most of a student’s social group will be within the department as well. Social events occur within the department alone, with some crossover with like departments (such as political science and law or economics). Also quite different from the UW is the amount of events that occur within the university itself, as was said when discussing the social atmosphere of Århus. The UW is primarily used solely for education purposes and most students leave after classes end. I felt that AU had effectively combined work and leisure to create a stronger community for students. The surrounding community does not have as strong of a connection with the university as in the u-district but does offer a number of services that I took advantage of. I joined the Fitnessworld that is located down the street from the university. There are also two parks in the immediate vicinity. Riis Skov provides excellent trails for running and the Botanisk Have provides a nice green area to relax and the May Day celebrations that are held there are particularly fun.

## 6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

a. Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g. quality of medical facilities, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

i. I didn’t at any point of time during my stay in Århus feel unsafe or experience health problems. It is quite comical however as my Danish family warned me on a number of occasions about

living in Århus, but I quickly found out that their concerns were largely exaggerated due to a preponderance of violent incidents given attention in the Danish media. The only questionable district is Gellerup with its large immigrant population. Clashes between immigrant youth and police, targeted assaults and other violent incidents are somewhat rampant in the area. There are a couple of student housing options in the area and I would suggest requesting something closer to the center of Århus. However, I visited the Gellerup area a number of times and I would recommend a number of opportunities that shouldn't be missed during a student's stay in Århus. Bazaar West is an immigrant market in Gellerup that offers probably the best fruits and vegetables in Århus, as well as hot food and cheap household items. Also, there is a nice lake in the Brabrand area, south of Gellerup. The health care system is top notch in Denmark and exchange students receive a health insurance card, that provides free health care, upon registering at the Folkeregisteret.

## 7. CULTURAL ASPECTS

- a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?
  - i. As I said before, integration in Denmark felt like the most difficult thing for me to do. I was at a disadvantage in comparison to other international students who had a number of orientation events upon arrival in Århus. My mentor provided me with an excellent introduction to the city and went far beyond my expectations in terms of her commitment to making my transition easier. She oriented me with the university's facilities, helped explain ways to adjust to a Danish education facility and what to expect, and helped throughout the semester when problems arose. My mentor and I would also meet up often at social events, such as at the department's Friday bar or go out to coffee on occasion. Otherwise, I already mentioned before the other social events that helped my integration and helped to meet members of the community. I think the best way to get to know other students, especially Danish ones, is over a beer at a pub downtown or at the bars on campus. I developed a close group of Danish friends, most of them from my kollegium, by going to a pub every Thursday with them as well as the Friday bar in the political science department. While I didn't join a sports club, a number of my friends were members of teams that helped to create a close community. A number of the international students even created their own soccer team and held impromptu pickup games.

- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them.
  - i. The biggest cultural difference, and the one that is most noted upon by visitors to Denmark, is how reserved Danes tend to be. This probably helps explain why I initially experienced trouble integrating, as I was hoping to primarily make friends and socialize with Danes. I can imagine that it would be hard for a Danish student to feel like becoming close to an exchange student that will only be around for one semester, but it was the initial connections that I found hardest to make. The only recommendation I have to deal with this cultural difference would be to put oneself out there and try to be as open as possible. It is quite easy to revert to being closed yourself, and I feel as though this is what I did initially in Denmark and why I had problems feeling integrated (This advice is probably best heeded with regards to local Danes, as international students tend to be much more open and everyone is in the same boat, so to speak, with regards to making friends and integrating). However, Denmark is a very open country with regards to freedom of speech, sexuality and opinion. I did not have any difficulty adjusting to this, but I would suggest that any student going to Denmark should go with an open mind and be willing to accept other ideas and people (as I am sure is the case for any country an exchange student might visit). However, out of all universities in the U.S., I think that UW students will probably have the easiest time adjusting to whatever cultural differences there may be in Denmark, as Seattle is in many regards similar to Denmark.

## 8. FINANCIAL

- a. Please describe how the ScanDesign Fellowship support assisted you/made a difference.
  - i. The ScanDesign fellowship covered my day-to-day living costs and without it I could not have studied abroad in Denmark. Living costs in Denmark are quite high and one could not live on the same budget or source of income as one might use in Seattle. This made it necessary that I receive additional aid from ScanDesign and am grateful for the assistance received. The fellowship allowed for an extended stay in Denmark, something that is necessary in order to integrate as well as accomplish educational goals. The stipend also provided additional resources for group cultural trips to North Sjælland, Oslo, Norway, as well as a number of meetings in Copenhagen for dinner with Marianne Stoelen. These excursions helped gain understanding of Denmark and Scandinavia as a whole as well as provide a base to touch back to and in a way “grounded” my experience in Denmark.

- b. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?
- i. I would suggest opening up a Danish bank account once an exchange student has received his/her CPR number (equivalent to a social security number) and transferring the entirety of the Scan/Design fellowship at the beginning of the students sojourn in Denmark. The only way to transfer money internationally is by wire transfer. I incurred a \$35 fee when transferring, which is reasonable and will only have to be done once. In order to transfer, a student will need the Danish banks IBAN number and Swift code as well as the account number and address of the receiving bank. I would also recommend keeping an eye on the exchange rate and waiting for it to be relatively high before transferring money. For instance, I exchanged my fellowship when the exchange rate was around 5,8 dkk to 1 usd, and by the time I left it hovered closer to 5 dkk. I therefore "made" close to 8000 dkk by transferring when the exchange rate was higher. By opening a Danish bank account, a student can receive a Dankort debit card, which allows for quick payment at all types of businesses. A Dankort credit card can also be obtained for use outside of Denmark, as I received for my trip to Norway.
- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
- i. A budget depends entirely on a person and their priorities. My lifestyle may not work for other exchange students, but here I will describe how I created a budget and allocated weekly spending money upon arrival in Denmark. I created a budget in Microsoft Excel starting with money variables that I knew for certain. I knew how much money I would be starting with from ScanDesign. I also knew what my monthly payments would be, such as rent and telephone bills, and what my one time payments would be, such as a security deposit (which was somewhat hard to factor in, as the money is returned well after a students return to the U.S.). As is often the case when moving, a person spends quite more the first month after moving into a new place than the months following. For this reason I included these initial expenses in my one-time costs category (for instance, a bike I purchased upon arrival was considered as a one time cost). Thereafter I considered the remaining amount, after one time costs and monthly payments (projected over a 6 month period), to be my personal expense funds. I estimated I would have approximately 6.500 dkk for personal monthly expenses, and then estimated how much I would spend on certain expenses, such as food, drink, transportation and other leisure activities. These figures depend entirely on an individual student. I would recommend however that an

exchange student in Denmark eat out rarely, as a bill can easily cost upwards of \$30 or more.

- d. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.
  - i. I cannot recall having any unexpected expenses during my stay in Denmark, only that a number of expenses were higher than I expected. For instance, I had to buy a new bicycle to use in Denmark (as I could not find a suitable bike at the monthly police auction) which cost more than I would have liked to pay.
- e. If you used Financial Aid in addition to the ScanDesign Fellowship to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications? If so, how did you address/resolve them?
  - i. I did not use additional financial aid

#### 9. EXCHANGE/SCANDESIGN FELLOWSHIP ADMINISTRATION

- a. Please comment on the effectiveness of the ScanDesign Fellowship services at the UW and activities in Denmark. What worked and what could be improved or changed?
  - i. The entire process to go on my exchange in Denmark, from the application process to the transition and living abroad, was quite streamlined and effective. During the application process, expectations of students were made clear and were further elaborated upon by Anni Fuller. I did not receive the fellowship the first time I applied, but Anni helped me during the reapplication process when I was considered as a runner-up and aided in explaining how I could better my application. Once accepted, Anni and Marianne Stecher-Hansen met with us to tell us what to expect when living in Denmark and how to prepare. Also, the distribution of monies, set up through UW direct deposit, transferred flawlessly. Once in Denmark, Marianne Stoelen helped immensely upon arrival by offering her apartment as a place to stay in Copenhagen before I moved to Jylland. Furthermore, she helped during my stay by organizing group events, such as dinner at her apartment or excursions in Denmark and Norway. I do not believe that anything should be changed, as I found that the entire process provided the right amount of guidance and preparation while allowing for a large degree of independence while on the trip as well as a number of cultural experiences.
- b. Please evaluate services and effectiveness of the UW International Programs and Exchanges Office.
  - i. Most of the services needed to prepare for my study abroad within the IPE were closely linked with ScanDesign personnel and therefore there isn't much more to say in addition to the last question. However, I will add that I was quite pleased with certain IPE services, such as concurrent enrollment that made my exchange non-disruptive to my educational plan.
- c. Please evaluate services and effectiveness of the host institution.

- i. As has been said, I found the host institution, AU, to be an excellent university that provided me with exceptional educational services. There were a couple of things that made study at AU difficult for me, but were in no way fault of the host institution, but rather due to my adjustment to a new system. For instance, I had trouble adjusting to the sheer amount of independent work required and was at a loss for how to adequately prepare for a single exam at the end of the semester. AU is one of the best universities in Europe for studying political science and classes are primarily taught in English, making it an excellent choice for exchange programs.

#### 10. PROGRAMS/STUDENT TYPE

- a. Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited and what advice would you give to future students going to Denmark?
  - i. A very independent and motivated student is needed to participate in a ScanDesign supported direct exchange in Denmark. It differs greatly from say, a UW exploration seminar, in that a student will not be traveling with a group of other students, will be primarily on his/her own, and an itinerary and educational plan will not be provided for a student. Granted there is much to gain from an experience such as an exploration seminar, but I think that such an experience should almost be considered a mandatory precursor to a direct exchange. I say this because of the differing things a student could get out of different travel abroad options. For instance, cultural experiences come easier when planned by a group leader or tour guide than they would if you had to seek them out yourself. Also, a certain degree of common sense is required that I feel can only come from prior travel experience, and while I did say prior that Denmark is not inherently an unsafe place, common sense is required to avoid trouble. A student must also be academically motivated and up to rigorous requirements. Classes are taught at the graduate level with little room for accommodation in terms of a lack of prior educational experience.

#### 11. OVERALL EXPERIENCE

- a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience in Denmark?
  - i. On a scale from 1-10 I would give my experience in Denmark a 7. I think I was disappointed by expectations that I held going into the exchange, which will be elaborated below.
- b. How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal and how did the ScanDesign Fellowship make a difference?
  - i. My academic expectations were for the most part realistic and I feel as though I met them and accomplished what I had hoped to during my study at AU. I say for the most part, because I had

hoped to be able to more pertaining to my area of interest, environmental politics. However, I feel as though many of my educational expectations were exceeded in that my classes also provided a basic understanding of the Danish political and welfare system, which I felt I had hitherto been lacking. This newfound understanding in many ways greatly complemented and expanded my comprehension of the Danish environmental political system. Further, I felt as though many of my personal expectations were not met, causing my relatively low ranking of my study abroad experience. I do not feel as though this was the fault of anything but my unrealistic high expectations before going to Denmark. I had not lived in Denmark before and I feel as though I was searching for an experience that I may have had if I had grown up in Denmark. I had an ideal situation planned that included becoming fluent in Danish, making primarily Danish friends, getting to know my family better, and retain my citizenship. Although I feel now that I accomplished many of my goals, I was constantly judging my experience while in Denmark based on my expectations and felt as though I wasn't accomplishing what I had hoped to. For example, as I have said, it was somewhat hard to seek out Danish students and make friends. As I was hoping to make primarily Danish friends, I didn't take advantage of many opportunities to meet and befriend international students, which I feel led me to miss out on an important socialization process that many exchange students have when moving to Århus. However, ScanDesign helped me by simply allowing for an extended stay in Denmark that showed me how I could both realize my goals and understand how they could also be unrealistic. After about four months, I felt as though I was finally prolific in Danish, speaking all the time outside class time and time spent with international students. Also, language proficiency helped me get to know my family better, as we had always had considerable difficulty communicating before I was able to speak Danish fluently. After about five months, I had received my letter from the immigration office informing me that I had extended my citizenship the rest of my life. And after about six months, I finally felt as though I had integrated and felt comfortable with living in Denmark as I had a close group of Danish friends. I say that ScanDesign helped by giving me an extended sojourn in Denmark, because I feel as though if I had only stayed over for a shorter period of time, maybe supported by a smaller stipend that wouldn't allow for a long stay, I would have come out feeling more discontented and feel as though I hadn't assimilated. It feel as though it takes about six months

for a student to get used to a new exchange experience, and ScanDesign allows for this.

- c. What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying in Denmark?
  - i. I think the greatest benefit to living in Denmark is living within one of the most socially progressive societies in the world. I found it particularly fascinating as a political science student to understand how many of the social welfare institutions that are currently being discussed in the U.S., such as healthcare came to be mandated in Denmark. It is also interesting to see how these ideals bump heads with conflict ideas and pressures from things such as immigration and the subsequent rise of rightist politics. However, as my evaluation has testified, it is precisely the Danish society that presents some difficulty for assimilation, presenting a challenge for exchange students trying to adapt to living in Denmark. But as I found, it just takes a little time to adjust.