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Scan|Design Fellowship Exchange Program Evaluation

Copenhagen Business School

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Why and Where

I first heard of the Copenhagen Business School from a friend who was pursuing his PhD at CBS' Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility and thought it sounded like an incredible place for someone with an interest in sustainable business. I also knew that I wanted to study abroad in graduate school, since I did so as an undergraduate and learned so much about both the world and myself. At the time, however, I did not realize that the UW MBA program offered an exchange with CBS and thought I would instead go somewhere very different such as Shanghai and Tokyo. Once I learned of the CBS exchange and talked with former Scan|Design Fellow Nic Vondrak, however, there was no question that CBS was where I wanted to be.

What excited me most about CBS was its commitment to business as an agent of social change—particularly its extensive course offerings in Corporate Social Responsibility. I also knew that learning first-hand from businesses and citizens in a country renowned for environmental, economic and social sustainability would allow for an exchange of knowledge, ideas and perspectives that one simply could not get in the US.

Arrival and Orientation

CBS arranges “buddies” for incoming exchange students, who meet you at the airport and accompany you to where you are staying upon arrival—usually even paying for your bus or metro fare. My buddy unfortunately had a last minute conflict so I was on my own when I arrived, but in general the Buddy Program is fantastic. Since I had already arranged housing before I left the US, I took a cab to my apartment and was met by the landlords, who gave me the key, walked me around the neighborhood and showed me how all the appliances worked (which I promptly forgot and later had to rely on Google Translate to figure out when it came time to use them). It was both exciting and nerve-wracking to be dropped off at an address that I had only seen via Google Maps and at which I would be living for the next four months.

In terms of arrival, I always try to travel with a little of the local currency and some way to make a phone call. Although there are usually ATMs and pay phones in airports, I've been in enough situations where they haven't worked to do my best to prepare. Danish kroner are not readily available at US banks but you can usually order them if you give the bank at least a week's lead time. I also put my iPhone on an international calling plan, which enabled it to work overseas. Although it was expensive, being able to

call the CBS office wondering where my buddy was and later meeting up with friends while traveling in Germany was invaluable. (I also got a Danish phone.)

CBS' orientation was a combination of information and social activities. It covered everything including the school facilities (classroom buildings, libraries, computer labs), teaching and exam styles, public transportation, inexpensive places to eat and buy necessities, and Danish culture. The information was very useful and much of it was presented by students, who were more than willing to answer seemingly silly questions. CBS also gave each of us a pay-as-you-go SIM card for our phones and had a representative from a local bank in case we wanted to open accounts. Because of the international nature of the school and the 800 exchange students who arrive each semester, CBS also has a fully staffed International Office with both students and staff to answer questions about housing, registering for classes and just about anything else. Overall, CBS does an excellent job of helping students settle in and adapt.

The orientation was also a fantastic time to meet the other exchange students. I think I met more people during orientation week than I met during the rest of my time on exchange. Pretty much everyone is in the same situation of not knowing anyone and having tons of questions and my best friends at the end of the program were mostly people I met during orientation. The Buddy Program organizes all sorts of social events and icebreaker activities designed to get students to meet each other, including small group dinners at the buddies' homes, Danish folk dancing and a scavenger hunt at the zoo.

In addition to the regular orientation week, CBS offers a Danish language crash course in the week prior. I was unable to attend, due to my summer internship, but, in talking with other students, I would highly recommend it. It's a great way to learn basic Danish as well as, again, to meet the other students and begin to settle in. Everyone I talked to who had taken the course enjoyed it and recommended it. It also gives you a head start if you choose to learn Danish throughout the semester.

Housing

Housing in Copenhagen is much more difficult to find than in Seattle and also somewhat more expensive. CBS students have the option of living in a dorm (collegium) or in private housing with a Danish student or family. They are also free to arrange their own housing. Regardless of one's choice of housing, the best advice is to start early. The dorms fill up very quickly and this year there was a 1000-person waitlist for housing for CBS students. For students interested in private housing, the university can help you find places with Danish students or families. If you register with CBS by the housing deadline and are willing to accept any accommodation you are offered, you are guaranteed a place in either a dorm or private housing, although the location may not be ideal. Students who want to live alone are on their own to find housing. I did the latter.

I was very lucky to find a single apartment owned by the family of an outgoing Danish exchange student through the CBS online bulletin board. The apartment was beautiful, ideally located (about 10 minutes by bike to school and 20 minutes by bike to the city center) and quiet. However, if I had to do it again, I would choose to live in one of the dorms. So much of the exchange experience is about meeting people

from other cultures and I definitely felt like I missed out on things like group dinners, spontaneous parties and late-night hallway conversations. This was especially true in the winter, when it was dark by about 3:30pm and people were less inclined to go out. I originally dismissed the dorms figuring that as an older student I didn't want to re-live the college experience of constant loud, late night parties but in retrospect, I would make that tradeoff.

I would definitely recommend against waiting to find housing until you arrive in Copenhagen. I had friends who spent upwards of three weeks living in hostels, which is expensive, stressful and takes away from the time you could be meeting people and attending orientation activities. Many of the housing websites are laden with scams, especially craigslist, which Danes really don't use. In addition to the CBS bulletin board, I had some luck with the Boligportal website, which was recommended to me by a number of people who had lived in Denmark. It cost about \$60 to join but seemed more trustworthy than any of the free sites. Listings can be a bit confusing, since Danes sometimes count the living room as a bedroom and most listings are in Danish. I would also recommend communicating several times with any potential landlords, especially via Skype. My landlords asked me to pre-pay half my rent and even though I was very nervous about wiring money overseas, I had communicated with them enough to know they were legitimate. They turned out to be wonderful people – both music teachers who live on a farm outside the city – and I have actually kept in touch with them since I returned.

I don't know a lot about dorms, since I did not live in one, but, unlike at universities in the US, they are spread out all over the city. CBS does have one dorm on site, with others anywhere from 10 minutes to half an hour by bike from school. Being near public transportation is key, as is the choice of neighborhood. CBS is located in Frederiksberg, which is a bit more upscale and residential than the more exciting city center. I lived in Frederiksberg and loved it; I could get to the city center quickly and easily and being close to school was especially nice once winter arrived and also allowed me to drop off my books before heading out for the evening, etc. Some of the dorms are located farther out in places like Amager, which don't have much of a neighborhood feel but can be a bit less expensive. Dorms vary considerably in size and some contain students from other universities. One other factor to take into consideration is whether the dorm rooms have their own kitchens, as it seemed like students who lived in dorms with common kitchens cooked together a lot more than those in which they had their own.

Academics

The academic system in Denmark is very different to what we are used to in the US, especially for a business school. My courses were more theoretical and academic than applied and, rather than having the seemingly endless stream of assignments that seems to characterize US business schools, 100% of our grade in a course was based on a single exam or paper at the end of the semester. Courses were also much more lecture-based than interactive; students generally sit in a large auditorium with the professor at the front. However, I did have one smaller class that was more interactive. Professors are willing to meet with students outside of class but I didn't see the close relationships between students and professors that we experience at the UW.

The quantity of reading material in Danish courses is much higher than at the UW and it can be difficult to stay on top of it without any assignments along the way to act as guideposts. It can be very tempting to put off reading in order to go traveling or sightseeing, but it is very difficult to catch up if you fall behind. You also get much more out of the classes, of course, if you've done the reading. Because there are essentially no assignments there is also very little team work – though some of us did form study groups to prepare for our exams. Finally, some of the courses have oral exams, which was a new concept for me. With oral exams, the professor has 15 minutes to ask you about anything in the course and you are not allowed to use notes. I was very nervous about my oral exam but I really enjoyed the experience. It really forces you to absorb as much as you can and allows you to express yourself in ways that are not possible with a written exam. In addition to that exam I had one four-hour written exam, one paper and one take-home essay exam.

I studied abroad specifically to experience things I could not get in the US, so I welcomed the different academic system. It was a pleasure to have the time to absorb and discuss the readings and lectures, rather than constantly having to churn out the next case write-up or problem set. Although I was less busy than at the UW, I feel like I learned a lot more in my classes at CBS.

In terms of facilities, CBS has three classroom buildings, several libraries and computer labs. All are quite modern and comfortable. My favorite place to study, however, was the Royal Danish Library (the Black Diamond). The CBS libraries were rather loud and filled up quickly; toward the end of the semester, if you weren't there by 8:00am, you would not get a seat. The Black Diamond is also a beautiful library, with an old reading room, windows overlooking the water, and a café that offers both healthy meals and tempting desserts that make for a nice study break.

The quality and content of instruction at CBS seems to be quite hit-or-miss. I loved all of the classes I took but I chose them as the result of sitting in on a large number of classes in the first week and also getting recommendations from other CBS students—both of which I would definitely recommend doing. Some of the other exchange students with whom I talked did not think their classes were well taught. Four of my five instructors were excellent teachers and the fifth class had great content even though the instructor was not very engaging.

I intentionally chose courses that I knew I could not get at the UW and would recommend all of them, in the following order:

- Managing in the Creative Economy (Professor Daved Barry and guest lecturers): explores innovation and entrepreneurship by looking at creative industries such as design firms, music groups, theater companies and restaurants. Includes a few small group projects on creative business models and historic vs. modern examples of intersections between design and business—including an art project! The course really stretched my thinking and as a lifelong musician, I loved the creative content and case studies. One of the best courses I have ever taken anywhere.

- CSR for Business Leaders (Professor Jette Steen Knutsen): an applied approach to Corporate Social Responsibility, using examples from both Europe and the US. This was the most interactive course I took and, based on the recommendation of past Scan|Design Fellow Nic Vondrak, was one of the reasons I originally chose CBS as my exchange location. The instructor was fantastic – I would recommend any course she teaches.
- Neuromarketing (Professor Thomas Ramsøy): a combination of neuroscience and marketing, looks at how the brain works and how we can use that knowledge to understand consumer behavior and inform marketing approaches. Though the class was rather heavy on the science side and not as applied as it could be, the topic was fascinating and the professor was excellent. The final exam is a paper in which you apply your choice of neuromarketing concepts to your industry or company of interest; my paper focused on how I might have approached my summer internship differently if I had known neuromarketing.
- Corporate Social Responsibility: Ethical, Social and Political Perspectives (Professor Steen Valentin): a very theoretical and academic approach to CSR. Half the students were pursuing a Masters degree in philosophy, making for a unique mix of students and very interesting discussions. This was by far my most difficult course and I would recommend taking an applied CSR course in conjunction (such as CSR for Business Leaders, above). I took it primarily because it fulfilled the UW MBA program's ethics requirement but I really enjoyed the high-level discussions and diversity of student perspectives.
- Retail Management (Professor Jesper Clementsen): traditional approach to retail management and marketing. The content is excellent for students interested in retail, even though the course is all lecture-based and the professor was not a good lecturer. Our semester focused on the grocery and fashion industries and as someone with a background in agriculture and the food industry it was a great fit for me—though I wouldn't recommend it for anyone without a specific interest in retail and/or food or fashion. The guest lecturers were very good. I believe the final paper is group-based, which can be quite challenging (I only audited this course, so did not do the final paper).
- Danish (Professors from language school IA Sprog): Although taking Danish is optional, I would highly recommend it. I think you learn much more about a culture by understanding some of the language and also personally feel it is a matter of respect to try to learn the language of a country in which you're living. It also came in very handy once I joined a Danish choir and simply for talking with people outside the exchange student community. The class is pass/fail but does require a fair amount of work. It is also very interactive and quite a lot of fun. That said, you can easily get by in Copenhagen without knowing Danish.

The thing I liked best about CBS was its interdisciplinary approach to business education. Taking courses with philosophy students and reading about string quartets to learn about teamwork and leadership are things that just wouldn't happen in US business schools (but which I would argue absolutely should). I

loved this approach so much that I actually tried to stay on for a second semester at CBS. (Unfortunately the UW MBA program only allows credit for one semester abroad and financially I could not afford to do an additional semester purely out of interest.) I also loved the international nature of the school. CBS has full-time students from around the world and the number of course offerings for non-Danish speakers is incredible. Many Danish students actually take their courses in English in order to prepare themselves for international careers.

The only somewhat negative aspect of CBS was the fact that most of the Danish and other European students were very young and did not have much, if any, work experience—which made discussions of real-world applications of course concepts rather difficult. MBA exchange students are part of CBS' masters programs, not its MBA program. However, given that CBS' MBA program is very similar to American programs I would not have learned anywhere near as much if we had had the option to enroll in CBS' MBA courses. The interdisciplinary classes and the amount I learned about different cultures and perspectives far surpassed the challenges of going to school with students just over half my age.

My study abroad coursework was directly related to my studies at the UW. My overarching goal in coming to business school was to learn how to creatively use business approaches to address social challenges. Prior to entering the Foster School of Business' MBA program, I spent eight years working in the sustainable agriculture field and my passions very much lie in sustainable business. The courses I took at CBS addressed both sustainable business and creativity and innovation and provided me with knowledge and experience that I had hoped to gain in pursuing in MBA but was unable to find at the UW.

Exchange Site

CBS is located in Frederiksberg, a residential urban neighborhood. It comprises three buildings, about three blocks from one another, and is surrounded by many local businesses including grocery stores, banks, restaurants and pubs—all of which are within easy walking distance. The city center is about 10 minutes away by metro or 15 minutes by bike. Overall, Copenhagen is a small city and very easy to get around by public transportation, by bike and on foot.

Health and Safety

I felt safer in Copenhagen than in anywhere I've ever lived or traveled. Most people thought nothing of taking the metro at 3am and not once did I feel uncomfortable biking around the city. There are a few streets in Nørrebro I wouldn't recommend biking down at night and I've heard Valby isn't the safest neighborhood, but as long as you stick to the major streets most places seem fine. The most prevalent crime in Copenhagen is bike theft, which is easily avoided as long as you have a good lock. I fortunately did not use the medical system, but exchange students are covered by Denmark's national health program.

Cultural Aspects

Thanks to the advice of former Scan|Design Fellow Nic Vondrak, I made a point of getting involved in activities outside of school. I attended the weekly meetings of CBS' Copenhagen School for Entrepreneurship, which featured speakers and networking events for both CBS students and local businesspeople, and participated in several events put on by CBS' Center for Corporate Social Responsibility. I also attended the monthly gatherings of Green Drinks, which is an international network of professionals working in environmentally related careers. I had previously attended Green Drinks in London and Seattle, so specifically sought this group out when I arrived in Copenhagen. The attendees were a mix of Danes and international professionals who had relocated to Copenhagen, and I made some great professional connections. I also attended CBS' weekly Friday Bar (which is actually on Thursday), but I found it a bit crowded and rowdy for my tastes.

To pursue my musical interests I joined two choirs – CBS' International Choir and a local Danish choir called Musica Viva. Both were very different but very fun. The CBS International Choir sang popular music songs by the likes of Michael Jackson and Bjork, performed at a local prison, and put on Christmas concerts at the local mall and at the school pub. The choir also had numerous social events, which were a great way to meet Danes, international full-time students and other exchange students. Musica Viva, on the other hand, sang more traditional and religious songs, performed in churches and was composed primarily of Danish retirees. I was invited to join the choir by Scan|Design's own Marianne Stoelen and it turned out to be the most fun thing I did during my time in Copenhagen. We sang in a number of different languages and I learned a lot of Danish chatting over the tea and cookie break. I also got to know a number of Danes and had the thrill of performing in Copenhagen's annual Kulturnatten (Culture Night).

I really didn't have any major cultural challenges in Copenhagen. On the contrary, my biggest "culture shock" actually occurred when I returned to the US. There were so many things that I liked about Danish society – the bicycle culture, the extensive train system, the fact that you frequently saw men pushing baby carriages – that I had a hard time adjusting to being back home. I recall spending the first couple of weeks commenting on how everything was better in Denmark.

The one time I felt somewhat uncomfortable was in discussing immigration issues with some European exchange students, who were much more closed-minded about people different from themselves than I am used to. In response, I simply shared my views and talked with some other American students who had noticed the same thing amongst our mutual friends. Other than that, although Denmark is obviously different from the US I didn't find it that different – especially in comparison to other places in which I've traveled. The fact that I grew up in a heavily Scandinavian part of the US (Minnesota) may have contributed to my lack of cultural challenges. For example, I had been warned that Danes can be hard to get to know at first, but I was quite used to that, as it is also a pretty accurate description of Minnesotans.

Financial

My semester in Denmark would not have been possible without the Scan|Design Fellowship. I spent eight years in the non-profit sector before attending business school and even with generous scholarship support graduate school has been a major financial challenge for me. Having my fall tuition covered helped make it possible for me to live in a city as expensive as Copenhagen and to take advantage of opportunities to travel on school trips and socialize with my international friends. I did take out additional loans and was fortunate to have a well-paid summer internship, without which I still would not have been able to afford to study in Copenhagen.

In terms of accessing money, I relied primarily on my US ATM card to withdraw cash and my credit card for bigger purchases such as textbooks and plane tickets. I tend to pay for most things with cash while abroad both because I still get nervous using my ATM card at institutions with which I'm not familiar and because it gives me a better idea of how much I'm spending—e.g. I allow myself to take a certain amount out of the ATM per week and when it runs low I know I need to reign in my social activity. I was very lucky to be a member of a credit union that does not charge any fees for international transactions or ATM withdrawals.

I did, however, open a Danish bank account through which to pay my rent. I paid my rent monthly and the easiest way was to transfer money from my Danish bank account to my landlord's account at the same bank (Nordea). Nordea did not charge for these transfers, as long as both parties had accounts there. I did, however, encounter some challenges getting money into my Danish account. I had assumed that I could withdraw cash from the ATM and deposit into my account but did not realize that Danish banks limit the daily amount that can be withdrawn with foreign ATM cards. Rather than constantly withdrawing cash, I wired money from my account in the US to my Danish account.

One very important piece of advice I would give is to set up a power of attorney before leaving the US, which enables someone else to do things like wire you money from your own bank account. My bank only allowed international wire transfers in person, unless I had set up a recurring transfer before I left. Thankfully my dad had set up power of attorney and thus was able to go to my bank back home and wire me money from my account.

Copenhagen is a very expensive city and I would not plan to buy much besides souvenirs over there if you can avoid it. I usually travel light, but this is the one time I wish I had brought more. Shampoo costs about \$12 per bottle and a basic bike lock about \$50. It is also easy to underestimate the number of warm clothes you'll need when you're packing in August, but Copenhagen gets very cold, windy, wet and snowy. Waterproof shoes are a must, as are waterproof pants and gloves if you plan to bike—all of which are very expensive to buy once you're there. Ditto on sweaters and a winter jacket.

How much spending money to recommend really depends on how much you plan to socialize and travel while in Denmark. In total I spent about \$15,000, including housing, food, transportation, books, social activities and travel (but not including tuition). My housing costs were approximately \$1500 per month and I purchased monthly metro passes for approximately \$65 per month. I also purchased a bike for about \$200, which I can't recommend enough, since the bike infrastructure is incredible and nearly

everyone bikes. Food-wise, I ate breakfast at home and usually ate either lunch or dinner at the school cafeteria, which was subsidized and thus about the same price or even cheaper than going to the grocery store (about \$10 per meal). I also ate out a bit more than I probably should have, though I saw it as an opportunity to socialize and meet new people. I probably would have cooked more if I had lived with other people with whom to share meals. I took four international trips – to Oktoberfest in Munich with some other UW exchange students studying in Europe, to Berlin on a CBS trip, to Amsterdam with some CBS friends and to Prague with a friend visiting from the US – as well as a number of day trips throughout Denmark. Trains can be a bit expensive but they are also free on the first Sunday of the month, which is a good time to go further outside the city.

I did not have any unexpected expenses but I did find the amount of up-front costs to be a challenge. CBS started in mid-August but the UW financial aid did not kick in until the beginning of the quarter, which was more than a month later. Plane tickets, housing deposits, textbooks, etc., add up quickly. It is possible to receive some of the Scan|Design Fellowship funds early, but this complicates financial aid because it is attributed to the previous spring quarter and can result in changes to your aid package.

I did not experience any complications with my UW financial aid for the quarter in which I was abroad. I was surprised that the Scan|Design Fellowship was direct deposited by the UW into my bank account, from which I then made an electronic check payment for my tuition. It was not a problem but I had been expecting the Fellowship to be applied directly to my tuition account. I did make a Request for Additional Expenses to the financial aid office, for which I had to get an estimated budget from the IPE office and which increased the amount of loan money for which I was eligible.

Exchange/Scan|Design Fellowship Administration

The services provided by Scan|Design were incredible. I cannot express how wonderful it was to have a community abroad and to learn about Danish culture through the many activities hosted by Marianne Stoelen. Biking through the countryside near Marianne's summer cottage, cooking Thanksgiving dinner together and visiting the deer park are some of my best memories of Copenhagen and although I vowed not to hang out with too many Americans while abroad, the Scan|Design Fellows became some of my best friends. Marianne was also incredibly generous in letting us know about events around Copenhagen and joining her for things like Grundtvig's birthday celebration and her brother's orchestra concert were some of my best times in Copenhagen.

The Scan|Design services at the UW were also excellent. I felt incredibly honored to be recognized at the Scan|Design gathering on campus and to meet the staff of the Foundation. The enthusiasm and compassion that both Scan|Design and the Department of Scandinavian Studies have for Denmark, the exchange program and the Fellows are infectious and it was obvious that we had become part of something special. I also really appreciated the opportunity to meet the other Fellows before we departed. In addition to being able to share information and help each other prepare for going abroad, it was refreshing to meet students from other areas of study and learn about the many reasons they were choosing to go to Denmark. I am very excited to continue engaging with the Scan|Design community back in Seattle – and perhaps back in Copenhagen as well!

The Scan|Design Fellowship administration was very good. I especially appreciated the in-person information meeting and detailed to-do list with which we were provided. A little more information on the visa application process would have been great, as this was quite confusing. I would also recommend having an information session about the Scan|Design Fellowship program that includes recently returned alumni, if possible. The MBA program hosts such a session for all of its exchange programs and it's a great way for students contemplating going abroad to learn more about their country of interest and ask questions of students who have been there.

I did not make much use of the IPE Office, as the MBA exchange program is different than the rest of the UW exchange programs and the MBA program's Global Business Center takes care of most of the necessary interactions with IPE. The Global Business Center administration was not great, but this was likely because both staff members were new this year.

The services of CBS were very good. As mentioned above, CBS has a huge exchange program and an International Office to deal with anything and everything related to international students. The initial registration, housing and course selection process is quite confusing, although this was the first year that CBS had made this process available online and they did warn that there would likely be glitches. They were, however, very good about communicating with incoming students and were very quick to respond to emails and phone calls.

With so many organizations involved in the exchange process, it does get a bit confusing as to who needs what information. I am planning to write up a summary of the preparation process, particularly for the UW MBA Global Business Center, so that it will be clearer for future students.

One thing I do wish IPE were able to provide is more information about health insurance. The UW study abroad insurance only covers students while abroad and the regular UW health insurance did not start until the first day of winter quarter – thus leaving students with no health coverage if they returned home over winter break. I ended up getting a short-term individual plan through an outside provider, but only because I had thought to inquire about coverage periods. This gap in insurance is not obvious but is likely faced by many students.

Program/Student Type

The CBS program is especially suited for self-motivated, curious, open-minded students who really want to get to know a country and its culture. CBS is definitely a place where you get out of it what you put in to it. One could easily just show up to lectures on traditional subjects, do a few readings and pass the final exams – but that sort of person would get so much less out of the experience than the one who is willing to take interdisciplinary courses that encourage them to think differently, join one of the many student groups and engage with the numerous international students.

Denmark itself is a small country and well worth getting to know. Although Copenhagen is cosmopolitan, it's not Paris or Madrid or Hong Kong (other cities with which the UW MBA program has exchanges). It's also not very touristy. I think this makes for a more authentic experience in terms of really getting to know a country and its people. Those who will most enjoy Denmark are the ones who really want to get

to know it. Otherwise, even Copenhagen can seem quite small. I had friends who complained that they had already seen the whole city in a weekend, whereas I felt like I hardly knew it after four months. Although I did travel to a few other countries, my favorite trips were those to small Danish towns – including a road trip along the coast to the northernmost point of the country.

To those ends, my best advice to future students going to Denmark is to dive in and absorb and experience as much as you can. Appreciate Denmark for what it is, and get to know as many Danes as you can, especially older ones. Study hard but don't forget that much of the learning comes outside the classroom. Join a community group. Take a train to the end of a line. Leave your computer and phone at home. Buy foods you don't recognize. Ask international students you've never met if you can join their table for lunch. Walk as much as possible. Learn to bike in the snow. Explore.

Overall Experience

Overall, I can honestly say that my experience both studying abroad in Copenhagen and with the Scan|Design Fellowship program was phenomenal. Although I wasn't able to stay for a second semester, I am actively looking for opportunities to return to Copenhagen as soon as possible—preferably in a professional capacity but possibly in an academic capacity as well. So much of what I experienced just “clicked” with me and I can definitely see myself living there at least for a short time.

Academically, my expectations going into the program primarily concerned learning more about sustainable business and Corporate Social Responsibility. Personally, I hoped to gain additional international perspective from a part of the world I had never visited. Those expectations were certainly met and exceeded. Scan|Design made both possible and was particularly integral to the latter, as much of that international perspective came as a result of the Musica Viva choir and other activities in which I participated with Marianne Stoelen. I had no idea how strong and important the Scan|Design community would be, nor how much I would fall in love with Denmark. In pretty much all respects, my expectations were far exceeded.

The greatest benefits of studying in Denmark were the interdisciplinary academics and the ability to really get to know a place – both of which I've already discussed above. The greatest challenge of studying in Denmark was the pervasiveness of English. I learn so much more about a country by learning its language but because it was so easy to default to speaking English I had a hard time committing to speaking Danish. I think it's easiest to learn a language when you have no choice but to do so, and especially when you're surrounded by international students who don't speak the language either.

Conclusion

I cannot thank the Scan|Design Foundation enough for the opportunity to spend four incredible months in Copenhagen. I came to business school to pursue sustainable business and there is no better place in the world to do so than in Scandinavia. But I had no idea how much more I would get out of this experience. I hope that I am able to return to Copenhagen in the near future and look forward to staying involved with the Scan|Design community far into the future.