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I have always wanted to study in the states both because of my fascination with the country and culture in general but also because within my fields of studies - political science and public affairs – the US is generally a good place to study. My reasons for choosing Madison was primarily based on the fact that my university in Denmark, the University of Aarhus has an exchange agreement with UW-Madison and secondly because of the courses offered within political science and public affairs at UW-Madison. Furthermore while looking through different options I read very nice evaluations from former Danish exchange students at Madison, who all commended both the university and the city as a great place to study and live. Therefore my expectations for my stay in Madison were fairly high before leaving Denmark.

Although I originally didn't intend to find a place to live before arriving in Madison, I ended up having found a room at the international COOP (ICH) in Madison. Which ended up being one of the best decisions I made in relation to my stay! I can highly recommend this place since it is very friendly and open minded and also you get the chance to interact with both international students like yourself but also studying and/or working Americans. I think this house has a great mix of people and it certainly contributed to my stay having had the opportunity to live and get to know people from all around the world but also to live and get to know "real" Americans living "real" American lives. I got in contact with ICH through information from UW-Madison and had been told from fellow students having studied in the US that Coops are a great place to live and I can only agree, especially if you're time is limited as is the case when only exchanging for a semester.

I only got a room in Madison just a few days before leaving Denmark, why I had already made arrangements with Madison Friends of International Students (MFIS) which is an organization who offer free accommodation (home stays) for up to 3 nights after you arrive in Madison. This is a great offer and I would recommend everybody going to Madison to take up the offer no matter if you've already got a room or not. This is a great way to get to know people who know Madison and for me it was a great help in relation to getting a lot of practical things sorted (opening a bank account, getting a bike, buying a computer etc.). I ended up making good friends with my host and stayed in touch with him throughout my stay and we actually still Skype now and then. I celebrated thanksgiving with 6 other Danes at his place and he took me to different activities and was a great source of information and great talks about everything from Wisconsin history and politics to beers and food. The greatest challenge studying abroad is coming to a new city, a new university with all new people and only having such a short time to get to know this place and these people. Making new friends and being in a completely new and unknown environment is both a challenge but also a great opportunity for you to make the most of it while you're there. In this regard MFIS is a great opportunity to meet people when you arrive and to have somebody to talk to and help you when you arrive. You can find them on the Internet and if going to Madison it would potentially be huge loss not to contact them!

Until a couple of weeks before coming to Madison I actually didn't know ScanDesign existed, so except for an email stating that we as Danish student were going to get a lot of free experiences while in Madison I really didn't know what to expect or what ScanDesign had to offer. Upon arrival we had a casual information meeting where activities and purpose of the ScanDesign foundation was presented and this was of course a very pleasant surprise!! The introduction

from UW-Madison was also pretty good, although I didn't really attend any of the social activities apart from the introductory day, which was mostly information on different practical issues regarding life in Madison as a student and in general.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison is a great place to study. Things are really organized so it is pretty easy to get settled. Class registration is really straight forward and fairly easy when coming as an exchange student. Only problem can be getting accepted in courses that have prerequisites for enrolling, since the UW doesn't recognize the specific courses in your education you are bringing with you. This minor obstacle is relatively easy overcome by showing up in class at the beginning of the semester, which is quite different from what I know from my studies in Denmark.

Regarding health and safety I really had no concerns. Madison is a pretty safe city and I never experienced anything unpleasant or anything that made me feel unsafe. Having to pay for the compulsory health insurance is pretty expensive though. On general the facilities (computer, library classroom etc.) at UW-Madison were at the same level or slightly higher than in Denmark. Student/teacher relations are closer than I am used to and it seems that teachers/professors are more engaged (and even interested) in students than what is the case in Denmark. Exams were easier and less important than in Denmark, not saying that they aren't important at UW, just that in Denmark your exam is basically all you're graded on for the semester, while more work is done and graded during the semester at UW than in Denmark. Classroom structure is pretty relaxed and informal and in many ways resembles what I was used to from Denmark. The best thing about the academics is that everybody contributes and joins in on discussions since this is very much encouraged (often also because of grading incentives I guess). On the other hand academics seems to be less theoretical and sometimes discussions tend to become filled with too many "I think" claims or arguments without empirical or theoretical support. But overall I found the instruction I received very good and satisfying.

The cost of living is generally lower in the US than Denmark, but then again you are probably inclined to spend a bit more while abroad since you can easily feel there's a lot of once in a lifetime opportunities and things you just have to do while abroad. The cost of living is probably around \$1000 pr month (food, rent, transportation etc.) depending on what kind of accommodation you can find.

As mentioned I didn't know the ScanDesign foundation until a couple of weeks prior to my arrival in Madison, why the fellowship didn't have any influence on my decision to study abroad. That being said the fellowship ended up being a very important part of why my stay in Madison was such a great experience! The scholarship from ScanDesign was a great contribution to my stay and gave me the opportunity to go see other parts of the country after the end of the semester at UW. I ended up road-tripping about a month from end December to end January experiencing other great parts of the US besides Madison and Wisconsin.

The activities and excursions arranged by the ScanDesign coordinator were really amazing and gave all of us Danes many unforgettable moments and experiences not to say a really great network and connection amongst us. We went to a baseball game, a football game, a weekend trip to Chicago, canoeing on lake Monona, skiing and all in all we got to do things that many of us probably wouldn't have done if not for the ScanDesign Foundation. In this regard I feel it is very important not only to thank ScanDesign for making all of these amazing experiences

possible but also a big thanks to ScanDesign coordinator Julie Allen and Karen Bien who were truly great in making everything work on a practical level. I know others have mentioned this and I also think that bringing both American and Danish ScanDesign Fellows together would be a great improvement of the contribution ScanDesign is making to promote Danish American relations. These activities are great moments for interacting with people and instead of just meeting fellow Danish exchange students (although pretty cool people :0) having had American students as well I feel would have been a great contribution.

My overall experience is probably best described as the time of my life! Living and studying in Madison has been one of the best experiences in my life and I feel both privileged having had this experience and also a bit sad that it is over. I feel I owe so much to so many people for having made my exchange experience an absolutely fantastic time and part of this naturally goes out to ScanDesign for their contribution.