

EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

Dear Grant Recipient:

The Scan|Design Foundation requests that fellowship / scholarship recipients submit an evaluation report concerning their experiences and the services provided by the institutions that manage grant programs funded by the Scan Design Foundation. This report has a dual purpose: to help us to evaluate our current programs and to help us inform and orient grant seekers who will be future recipients. We ask you to reflect on your experiences in the US or Denmark. Advice or comments on other topics are also welcome.

Thank you for your cooperation. We appreciate your time and effort.

EVALUATION OUTLINE:

Instructions:

- It is not necessary to answer every question
- Use this form and fill-in your answers.
- Send a copy to:
Admin@scandesignfoundation.org and to your University

UW – Seattle ScanDesign@uw.edu
UW – Madison jkallen@wisc.edu
PSU goffra@pdx.edu

Student Name: Nick Monfeli

Institution where you studied: University of Copenhagen

Term(s) of participation: Fall 2014

E-mail address: nickmonfeli@gmail.com

1. WHY AND WHERE:

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

- I decided to study in Denmark on exchange for a variety of reasons. I am partially of Danish descent, and I was excited by the opportunity to visit and meet distant relatives of mine, and I also had Danish friends whom I'd met at UW-Madison that I hoped to see again. On top of that I'd been told my credits would transfer easily for the Political Science department, and had heard very good things about Copenhagen in general. But on top of all that the financial assistance from ScanDesign was a determining factor, and the opportunity to receive that aid as well as participate in the program abroad swayed me strongly towards Denmark.

b. Why did you select the program/University?

- I think I mostly covered this in my first answer.

c. What were your expectations?

- I had heard Copenhagen was a very clean city where everyone bikes, and that it has a nice combination of both old and new cultures and styles.

d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?

- I made plans to get together with my Danish friends who were already there, and I had secured housing for September to December but was still looking for a place for August when I left.

e. How could you improve your preparations?

- Overall I felt well-prepared, and my one issue of not having housing for August was just a matter of circumstance.

2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

- I stayed with a Danish friend who'd been a part of ScanDesign on exchange in Madison when I first arrived, so maybe get in touch with fellow ScanDesign students.

b. Please comment on the orientation and activities offered at both your home University and the host University, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

- The orientations covered essentially everything, from healthcare and housing to academics and travel, and I felt they were very helpful when planning and wondering what to expect.

2. ACADEMICS:

a. Please evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:

- class registration

- Slightly more difficult, but it was just a matter of getting used to KU's online system.

- classroom structure

- The same as Madison

- instruction

- The same as Madison

- teacher/student relations

- The same as Madison

- grading/exams

- Two of my classes placed the entire weight of grades in a final exam or paper, which was very different from what I'm used to, but one spaced grading out in five papers plus attendance over the course of the semester.

- administration

- The same as Madison

- library, computer, and classroom facilities

- The same as Madison

b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

- Two of my classes were great, and one not so much, but you really get that anywhere. If there are every any Environmental Studies or Political Science students looking for a class to take I highly recommend Professor Ian Manners. He taught a seminar course on environmental governance and made it clear that he not only wanted us to be actively engaged with the material but also with each other. He made discussion amongst students a priority and some of my very good friends in Copenhagen were a result of that.

c. In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?

- I loved the international aspect of the courses, and how everyday you could meet students from all around the world. I did not like how certain classes place the entire grade for the course in one final assignment, as I felt this gave the class an all or nothing style of teaching and learning.

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

- As I said above I would highly recommend Professor Ian Manners, and his Glocal Environmental Governance course in particular. I would also recommend Isabel Bramsen's course International Conflict Resolution, Violence, Peacebuilding, and New Media. Both courses are within the Political Science department.

3. HOUSING:

a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?

- My housing arrangement was very nice, I rented a room in a house in Østerbro along with another exchange student from Wisconsin (Mike Wleklinski), and a student from Poland. The house was owned by an elderly Danish couple who rent the ground floor out to three international students every semester.

b. How did you locate your housing?

- Through the Housing Foundation website.

4. EXCHANGE SITE:

In general, please describe your impressions of the host University campus and its location and surrounding community.

- I really liked the multiple campuses at KU, especially how they varied in structure and style and were placed throughout the city. I spent the majority of my time at the central campus, but also studied at the Amager campus for the pre-semester language course in August. Each campus had its own appealing attributes and was easily accessible via bike or public transportation.

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.

- None!

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the host country culture and meet members of the community? (e.g., mentors, clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

- The pre-semester language course was very helpful for meeting other students. Through that I not only met other internationals, but became a part of a group for playing soccer each week at Fælledparken, and through that group met Danes as well. I also met Danes through Danish friends I'd made when they previously studied abroad in Madison. Some of my best friends however came from ScanDesign, and the trips and excursions also helped me learn a lot about Danish culture.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

- There were no differences I encountered that negatively impacted my experience.

7. FINANCIAL:

- a. Please describe how the Scan|Design Foundation fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.

- The ScanDesign Foundation fellowship was a deciding factor in me being able to study abroad. It made it possible for me to afford the experience by covering tuition expenses and the cost of my plane ticket. This meant that while abroad I had more funding available to travel and experience other parts of Denmark and its neighbors, and I am not financially strained upon returning to Madison.

- b. What is the best way to access/transfer money?

- I had a Mastercard debit card with low international fees that I used for practically everything. I used that to withdraw kroner about once a month for most purchases, and then used the card itself for anything else.

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

- My budget in Copenhagen was fairly similar to mine in Madison. I paid 3400 kroner for rent per month, but learned that prices vary widely depending on the living situation. Grocery store food mostly cost the same as it does here, and I rarely ate out because restaurants are significantly more expensive. For transportation I purchased a handful of klippercorts during my semester, each costing 120 kroner, but I primarily used my used bike, which I got in August for 600 kroner.

- d. Please comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.

- As I said above it was about the same, approximately \$500 per month.

8. EXCHANGE/SCAN|DESIGN FELLOWSHIP ADMINISTRATION:

- a. Please comment on the assistance and activities by the Scan|Design Fellowship coordinator before your departure, upon arrival, and during your stay. What worked and what could be improved or changed?

- The ScanDesign activities were great, and something I looked forward to every month. As I said before some of my best friends from my semester abroad came from these experiences, and I felt I experienced a lot of Danish culture from them as well. My favorites were the trip to Dyrehaven, the Thanksgiving dinner at Høst, the end of the semester trip to Tivoli, and of course the trip to Aarhus. Each activity was well-rounded with a lot to do, great company, and really great leadership.

- b. Please evaluate services and effectiveness of the University administrative offices.

- I didn't have to engage with these really, outside of trouble with the Housing Foundation before I left. That was really the one blemish on my whole experience, as I just got simply lucky finding the room I did, and even so did not have a place secured for August until a friend generously offered me his room temporarily when I arrived. The Housing Foundation in Copenhagen was no help during this process and simply said please keep checking. They unveiled a new website this year which routinely shut down and kicked students out, and many ended up without a room through no fault of their own. I turned to Danish friends of mine for help, and they sent me links for Facebook groups and other websites for renters, but it wasn't until a week before I left that the elderly couple in Østerbro put up their ad on the Housing Foundation

site. I heard many similar stories from other students, who had to stay in hostels or AirBnbs for their first days or weeks, and this added a great deal of stress to the already difficult process of moving to a new country, making friends, and starting classes. An established home-stay program, or even an exchange/assistance housing network between Danish ScanDesign fellows coming to the US and American fellows going to Copenhagen would be very helpful for students. Some get lucky and get a dorm room through the Housing Foundation, but on their website they say they only have enough rooms for a third of all students arriving, the rest of whom are left to fend on their own. As I said this was my one bad experience, and it would be very helpful if ScanDesign had a program to help students in similar situations in the future.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this exchange is best suited and what advice would you give to future students.

- I think this program is for any open-minded student looking to experience more of the world. Copenhagen is a fantastic cultural center with a rich heritage and strong vision, and I would recommend fully embracing that while studying there in whatever way interests you. I would also recommend getting out and seeing more of Denmark, as it has a number of beautiful places and towns that will give you a much stronger appreciation for where you are than if you just stay in the capital the whole semester.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience?

- I had an excellent experience overall.

b. How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?

- I think my expectations were very realistic, and ScanDesign helped me exceed them by making more cultural experiences possible than I could have done on my own.

c. What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying abroad?

- The greatest benefit from studying abroad for me was the friends I made, and their stories, world views, and experiences that they've shared. This helped me learn a great deal more about the world, and prior to leaving I never expected to meet as many people from as many places as I did while in Copenhagen. The greatest challenge to studying abroad was finding the ability to say yes to new ideas and experiences. It's easy when sitting comfortably at home in Wisconsin to picture yourself going places and trying new things and meeting new people, but it is much harder to say "you know what yes, let's plan a trip to this city we've never been to" when you're actually in the moment. Everyone says those situations are most rewarding and that's very true, but learning to put yourself in them and embrace what they are is a difficult process.

FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.