

EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

Dear Fellowship / Scholarship 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 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.

- Use this form and fill-in your answers.
It is not necessary to answer every question.

- Send a copy to:
 1. admin@scandesignfoundation.orgAnd to your University
 2. UW-Madison: scandesign@international.wisc.edu

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

Student Name: Carolyn Hamburg

Institution where you studied: Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS)

Semester of participation: Spring 2018

E-mail address (if possible *not* University email): carohamb@aol.com

1. Pre-Exchange. Why and Where:

- a. Why did you decide to study in the US or Denmark as an exchange student?
 - Denmark was one of the few countries that offered a homestay option and I have always wanted to live with a host family during my study abroad experience.
 - I decided to study abroad in Denmark because I am an environmental studies student and since Denmark is regarded as one of the most "green" countries in the world, I thought the best way to learn about their environmental practices is by studying there.
- b. Why did you select the program/University?
 - I chose to study at the Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS) because as mentioned earlier, they offered the homestay option.
 - I selected DIS because they offered hands-on learning opportunities through study tours to different countries and guest lectures from experts in my field of interest.
- c. What were your expectations?
 - I expected to enjoy my study abroad, since my older siblings had loved their own experiences.

- One of my biggest expectations was that I would grow to be more independent person.
- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
 - I contacted my host family through email, I made a packing list, and I bought more winter clothing since Denmark is quite cold!
 - I also bought a Copenhagen/Denmark guide book and began to make a list of things I wanted to see while I was abroad.
- e. How could you improve your preparations?
 - Nothing – I felt pretty prepared!

2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
 - I remember that my first night was really lonely and I felt like I had made a mistake by studying abroad/coming to Denmark. My advice for future students is that you should prepare yourself that the first night will most likely be very hard, but after the first day it will only get easier.
 - If future students are staying in a homestay, don't forget to bring a gift for your host family! Not only is it a nice gesture, but it helps break the ice and allow for conversation to flow.
- b. 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 prepare / adjust after arriving?
 - Home University: We had a pre-orientation about safety in Europe. There were also optional workshops offered on different subjects, but I did not attend. The safety orientation was somewhat helpful and just made you more aware about the dangers of travelling in general and how-to be safe. A DIS representative came to my home university to give a pre-orientation before I left for Denmark, and that session was extremely helpful for my preparation. I highly recommend attending the DIS session for future DIS students.
 - Host University: Had a week of orientation with several different sessions about: academic life/rules at DIS, living in a homestay, and commuting around Denmark. There were also optional orientations for sessions about LGBT+ life in Copenhagen, Sustainability in Denmark, Going Out in Denmark, and more. I would recommend attending at least some of the optional orientations, I found them to be really helpful for the beginning of the semester.

2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:
 - class registration
 - DIS class registration was straight forward and not difficult to figure out. In comparison to UW-Madison, DIS registration is first-come-first-serve, so if you decided to go on the program later in the semester, you will have less course choices.
 - UW-Madison registration is more complex, mostly due to having way more classes and schedule options.
 - classroom structure
 - Many of my classes at UW-Madison are large lectures (sometimes nearly 300 people) with smaller discussions every week. In comparison, DIS classes are 30 people at the most.

- instruction
 - At DIS, instruction is a lot more informal than UW-Madison. Teachers request that you call them by their first name and overall classes feel less intense/serious in comparison to UW-Madison.
 - At DIS, teaching is more focused on hands-on learning and group work. There are fewer lectures than UW-Madison, but more group projects and field studies.
- teacher/student relations
 - Teachers are more informal at DIS, but they also are less available than at UW-Madison. They do not hold office hours and they have other jobs outside of teaching at DIS. However, they are super receptive to students and always willing to help, but you have to reach out first (this reminds me of UW-Madison teaching style).
 - What is nice about DIS is that your instructors are not professors, they are working professionals in their field. If you are very interested in what your teacher does for a living, it is a great way to build a future professional connection as well as gain guidance in your field of interest.
- grading/exams
 - Since DIS is only for American students, the overall grading/exam structure is similar to UW-Madison. However, there are some notable differences. DIS has fewer assignments throughout the semester and most of your grade comes from two big papers/projects/exams (though this depends on the class you're in).
 - There are grades for participation, which is similar to UW-Madison. However, I would say exams and papers are relatively easier at DIS than UW-Madison – but you still have to put in some time to study. I would also say DIS teachers are easier graders than at UW-Madison.
- administration
 - At DIS, administration is usually always behind-the-scenes. You never really interact with DIS administration that much unless seek them out for a specific reason. I would say this is similar to how UW-Madison administration operates.
- library, computer, and classroom facilities
 - DIS has one small library, a few computer labs, and the classrooms are equipped with smartboards. There are a few small lounges available to do work in as well. The library is small – so there is not that much space to work – but they have a great selection of books.
 - DIS facilities are much smaller than UW-Madison, but of course there is the Copenhagen Library and the Black Diamond if you need other spaces to work. There were 6 computers in the library if you needed them. I never used the computer lab, but people said they were good.
- b. Evaluate the quality and content of instruction.**
 - I loved my DIS classes! They were all very interesting but not too hard – a perfect mixture for study abroad. I feel like I learned a lot about Denmark through my classes and all my teachers were intelligent and engaging.
 - In comparison to UW-Madison, I thought my DIS classes were just as interesting, just not as academically rigorous, though still required time and effort.
- c. In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?**
 - I liked most that there was a lot of hands-on and experiential learning. I feel like I am lacking those opportunities in UW-Madison classes and it was refreshing to meet professionals in my field of interest and visit companies/nonprofits with my class.

- I liked least the emphasis on group work. I found it frustrating, especially since some students' grades don't count back at their home universities, so they put in minimal effort.
- d. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
- Danish Politics and Society with Martin Rasmussen! He's a fantastic teacher and I think the class is really informative and important to take as a student in Denmark.
 - Urban Livability with Bettina Werner. She's so intelligent and the class allows you to explore Copenhagen – almost every class is a bike tour/walking tour. You also learn a ton about urban planning and what makes cities livable. It is not an easy class, but it is definitely worth it.

3. HOUSING:

- a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?
- At DIS you have six different housing options. You then apply to three of the six options. I narrowed down my choices to the ones that allowed me to live with Danes. As mentioned before, I already knew I wanted to do a homestay because I believe that is the best way to truly immerse yourself in the country and get to know the culture.
- b. How did you locate your housing?
- My host family picked me up from the airport.

4. EXCHANGE SITE:

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

- DIS is right in the middle of central Copenhagen. There is not really a campus, but it is in an ideal location.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study.

- There were really none – of course you have to be aware of pickpocketing, but I never felt unsafe in Denmark.

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.)
- I lived with a host family, so every day I was integrating with the community. However, if you are not living with a family, or not living with Danish university students, I think it can be challenging to immerse yourself into the Danish culture at DIS since it is an American program.
- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)
- One of the biggest cultural differences I encountered was how reserved and quiet Danes can be. It is not normal for them to strike up a conversation with you on public transportation or other settings. However, they always respond nicely if you start a conversation with them, but they will never begin one themselves.

7. FINANCIAL:

- a. Describe how the Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.
 - The Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship made a huge difference in my decision to study abroad. DIS is an expensive program, but I knew it was the one for me and I felt strongly about studying abroad in Denmark. The Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted me study abroad by making it easier financially to go DIS and to Denmark.
- b. What is the best way to access/transfer money?
 - Credit card is taken almost everywhere in Denmark, so I would suggest getting an international credit card (no transaction fees).
 - There are ATMs around to access/transfer money.
- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
 - Since I lived with a homestay, all my meals were covered. My transportation pass was also already covered through DIS. I also rarely went out to eat and most of my expense came from activities, like museum entrance fees or travelling out of Denmark. Therefore, I would recommend about \$100-200 dollars per month for someone living in a homestay.
- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
 - For me, my "cost of living" at DIS was much lower because I was in a homestay that provided my meals. However, living in Denmark in general is much more expensive than the United States, so I spent more when I did buy things. At UW-Madison, restaurants and activities are much cheaper, as well as transportation.

8. EXCHANGE/SCAN | DESIGN FELLOWSHIP COORDINATORS AND ADMINISTRATION:

Coordinator team

Comment on the assistance by the Scan|Design Fellowship coordinators and administration before your departure, upon arrival, and during your stay. What worked and what could be improved or changed?

- I think the assistance by the Scan|Design Fellowship coordinators before leaving for Denmark was fantastic and helpful. The dinner in November was a nice way to get to know the Danish exchange students at UW-Madison, other scholarship recipients, and the Scan|Design coordinators before leaving for Denmark. Upon arrival, the "Denmark helpful hints" sheet was definitely useful. I also loved the first dinner in Denmark with everyone, I thought that was a nice way to be welcomed to the country.
- However, during my stay, I felt like the administration was distant and did not do that much to assist students throughout their semester. There were never any check-ins and the only contact was about events occurring. I feel like it would be nice to have more opportunities to get to know our coordinators one-on-one, perhaps through coffee get-togethers.

Activities

Comment on the number and type of activities arranged by the coordinators. What worked and what would you like replaced with some other activity.

- There was at least one activity every month. I really liked the first dinner – that should be kept as an activity. I also loved the skiing idea (even though it did not happen due to lack of snowfall in Sweden).
- I think a weekend in Aarhus would be a fun Scan|Design activity. I also think a Scan|Design trip to a Copenhagen futbol game or handball game

would be a great activity. A trip to one of the castles, such as Christianborg or Amielaborg, would also be a good Scan|Design activity.

Suggestions for activities we should add to the program:

- As a DIS student, our semester ends May 12. It was really upsetting to find out that the end of the year Scan|Design activity was going to occur at the end of May/beginning of June. I understand why it is placed then, but it made me feel less part of the group and sad that I would be unable to participate. Even more so, I was upset that I could not go on the Mons Klint expedition. That was something I had been looking forward to since coming to Denmark, but the activity occurs once DIS students are gone. Another example is the Alumni event, an event I really wanted to participate in, took place during my DIS spring break in April. While it makes sense why the end of the year event cannot be changed, I definitely think the Mons Klint weekend should be placed during the semester so that all students can participate (even at the beginning of May).
- Another suggestion I have is asking Scan|Design students at the beginning of the semester what they would like to experience in Denmark. I think that could increase turnout and interest in the activities because students would be more invested in what the activities are.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

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

- I think this exchange is best suited for students who are willing to step outside of their comfort zone and genuinely want to engage with Danish culture.
- The advice I would give to future students is to spend time in Denmark! You are studying abroad in this country for a reason. Do not spend every weekend traveling – it is worth it to truly engage with the Danish culture. I would also advise students to do a homestay. A homestay is such a special experience to connect with a Danish family and immerse yourself in Denmark. Living in a homestay was the best part of my study abroad experience!

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

- a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience?
 - My study abroad experience was absolutely amazing. I would not change anything about it – I learned so much and grew enormously as a person.
- b. How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?
 - I think the Scan|Design Fellowship Program made a difference because it allowed me to experience activities that I would not have participated in without the program. Additionally, the Scan|Design Fellowship Program made my academic expectations for study abroad more feasible.
- c. What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying abroad?
 - Greatest benefit: The chance to immerse yourself in a new culture, live with a host family, and learn about that country. You grow both academically and personally through studying abroad.
 - Greatest challenge: Being okay with doing activities by yourself, stepping out of your comfort zone, and being in new situations often.

FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.

Overall, the Scan|Design Fellowship has been an amazing experience and I am extremely grateful for its assistance during my study abroad in Denmark. However, I would suggest that Scan|Design take into account DIS's semester

schedule more when planning activities. I would also suggest adding measures to help develop a closer relationship between participants and the coordinators, because I think that would make the overall activities better.