

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: Mads Vandborg
Institution where you studied: College of Engineering
Semester of participation: 5th semester
E-mail address (if possible *not* University email):
mads-vandborg@hotmail.com

1. Pre-Exchange. Why and Where:

- a. Why did you decide to study in the US or Denmark as an exchange student?
 - I have always wanted to go to the US to experience the culture and to practice my English. An exchange semester was the perfect opportunity for me.
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- b. Why did you select the program/University?
 - I heard a lot of good recommendations about UW-Madison from previous exchange students. UW is well respected within engineering and I was able to find a lot of courses that matched my interests.
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- c. What were your expectations?
 - To speak English a lot.
 - To meet new friends both from America but also from the rest of the world
 - To learn a lot from the interesting courses that I had chosen.
 - To do a lot of social activities (travel, go on trips, watch sports).
- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
 - Did all the paperwork (a lot!), found my courses, applied for scholarships, etc. (Nothing unusual here).

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- e. How could you improve your preparations?
 - I would have bought Badger football student tickets in advance if possible (they can get really expensive to buy second hand)
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2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
 - Live with Americans if possible. This is a good way to meet the locals.
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- 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?
 - At DTU, only 1 meeting was arranged in December. We needed to do a lot of the preparation without assistance.
 - At UW, there was 1 introduction meeting which covered all of the practical stuff (visa status, course structures, etc). Amanda, the UW engineering exchange coordinator, is really helpful and answers emails really quickly.

2. ACADEMICS:

- Evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:
 - class registration
 - At UW, some classes will fill up quickly since the class registration is 'first come, first serve'. Therefore, be prepared to register for the classes in the second that class registration opens (for the Fall semester, this date is in April).
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 - classroom structure
 - At UW, the lectures are usually 75 minutes two or three times a week. There is no in class problem solving, but instead there are weekly assignments for most of the courses.
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 - instruction
 - At UW, the professors have office hours where you can get personal instruction on the course work. You can also access the professors by mail.
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 - teacher/student relations
 - At UW, a few of the professors prefer a formal relationship to the students. However, for the most of the professors, the relationship is very informal (as at DTU).
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 - grading/exams
 - At UW, each course typically has weekly homework, 1-4 midterms and a final exam. The final grade is based on all of that.
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 - administration
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 - library, computer, and classroom facilities

- UW has a lot of libraries with a lot of computers and study spaces. Better facilities than DTU. I liked to study at the Steenbock Library since it was quiet and since there were always empty study spots.
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- b.** Evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
 - UW likes tests. Personally, I had a total of 16 tests (midterms/exams). Furthermore, there was weekly homework in most of the courses. That combined made the workload at UW higher than at DTU. (Don't take more than 12 credits if you plan to do a lot of social stuff.)
 - As for the quality of the professors, there is not a big difference between DTU and UW. Some professors are fantastic, some are definitely not.
- c.** In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?
 - I liked that there is usually 2-3 short lectures a week at UW, as opposed to DTU where the 2 hour lecture is too long (in my opinion).
 - I missed in class problem solving at UW.
 - I disliked all the tests and all the homework.
 - I liked the variety of courses that you can take at UW (there is a lot).
- d.** Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
 - In general, use www.ratemyprofessor.com to check out professors. This site provides reviews of the professors.
 - I liked CS412 (Numerical Algorithms, instructor Amos Ron), ECE447 (Applied Communication Systems, instructor Marcos Martinez) and ECE431 (Digital Signal Processing, instructor Andreas Velten), which I can all recommend. In these courses, the instructors were great and I definitely learned a lot of useful stuff even though the workload was high.
 - I disliked ECE342 (Electric Circuits II, instructor William Hitchon) since the syllabus was too narrow and specific on something not very useful, and the professor didn't put a lot of effort into the course.

3. HOUSING:

- a.** How would you assess the housing arrangements?
 - I lived with a family in Shorewood Hills in Madison. That was a great opportunity to live with Americans, eat American food and experience American traditions from inside (eg. Thanksgiving, Halloween).
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- b.** How did you locate your housing?
 - I had a contact who knew the family.
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4. EXCHANGE SITE:

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

- UW is beautiful. All the buildings are beautiful and well preserved, the surroundings with the lakes and the green areas are beautiful, especially in the fall. People in Madison are very friendly and used to international students. In Madison, I really felt welcomed and since Madison (and especially downtown) is mainly a college city, you will feel that you are a part of a community that you belong to.
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5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

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

- Madison is a safe city compared to other US cities. I never felt unsafe and I never heard of any safety issues among my friends during the semester.
- You need to pay for UW's Health Insurance, SHIP, no matter if you have private travel insurance. SHIP costs \$580 a semester.

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 joined an intermural soccer team (recommendable). This is a good way to make friends.
 - I joined BRIDGE (recommendable). This is a program where you are paired with an American student who acts as a mentor. I had a really good time here, and I ended up spending Christmas with my BRIDGE partner's family in Colorado.
 - I joined Hoofers, the university's outdoor club (recommendable). They arrange a lot of hiking, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking.
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- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)
 - Public transportation is bad in the US compared to Denmark. Rent a car, if you want to go on trips!
 - The food is different (No rugbrød!), but you quickly get used to it.
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7. FINANCIAL:

- a. Describe how the Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.
 - I didn't know of ScanDesign before I was accepted to UW. If I knew of it before, it would only have been a plus on my decision to go to UW.
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- b. What is the best way to access/transfer money?
 - I opened a bank account (US Bank). It is free and very easy. By opening a bank account, I saved some money on fees.
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- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
 - \$1000 as a basis for rent, food and living necessities. Add more, if you want to travel. (The price level is generally not very different from Denmark prices, so you can make a rough budget based on Denmark prices).
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- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
 - Housing is typically \$500-\$800 a month.
 - Public transportation is free in Madison.
 - Food prices in grocery stores are comparable to Denmark prices.
 - Restaurants are cheaper.
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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?

- The coordinators were very helpful during the stay. They could answer practical questions like: Where do I buy a bike? How do I open a bank account? Etc. That was really valuable.

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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.

- The number of activities was about right.
- The Lake Geneva trip was disappointing.

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Suggestions for activities we should add to the program

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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.

- Undergraduate students who like sports and like to party. You should also be willing to use a lot of time doing homework and preparing for midterms.

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10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

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

- Fantastic. 5/5

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

- ScanDesign helped me to find friends and helped me to go to interesting places.

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

- Benefits: I met a lot of new friends, my English is better now, I have visited a lot of new places and I have tried to live in a foreign country.
- Challenges: The workload at UW.

FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.