

EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

Student Name: Saralynn Chen

Institution where you studied: Aarhus University

Semester of participation: Fall 2018

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1. Pre-Exchange. Why and Where:

- a. Why did you decide to study in the US or Denmark as an exchange student?
 - I wanted to learn more about Scandinavian culture, and compare it to my own personal experiences growing up in the US.
- b. Why did you select the program/University?
 - I knew I wanted to study in Denmark, and my selections were either universities in Copenhagen or Aarhus.
- c. What were your expectations?
 - Learn more about Danish culture
 - Meet new people and make new friends!
- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
 - Visa Application at the Danish Embassy in San Francisco
 - Packing for rainy/cold weather
- e. How could you improve your preparations?
 - Plan earlier to apply for my visa. The SF embassy gets booked really quickly for appointments!
 - I packed way too many jackets. Denmark doesn't actually get as cold as other countries in Scandinavia, but it is really windy and does rain heavily!

2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
 - If your dorm isn't ready yet, some of the hostels in Aarhus are: Wake Up Aarhus and City Sleep-In
- 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: At my freshman orientation, they showed us how to use our class website and planned activities so we got to know our campus and other students better.
 - At Aarhus, they did much of the same things and also talked about different sites of interest around the city and how to get acquainted with different methods of transportation.

2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:
 - class registration
 - For the Arts faculty at Aarhus, our academic advisors emailed us and had us look through the course catalog for classes we wanted to take amounting to 30 ECTS. After we decided what classes we wanted, we emailed our advisors back our selection and they would register us into

them. At UW, we look through our course catalog and register into our classes ourselves on our given registration time, usually at 6am.

- classroom structure

- At Aarhus, the classes I were in were about 40-60 students, all lecture style. Classes were a bit longer than I was used to at UW with each one being about 3-4 hours long, but we always got ~15 minute breaks every hour and a half or so. At UW, the lecture classes I take are huge with average class sizes being about 200-300 people. They're also usually only about 1-1.5 hours long.

- instruction

- All of my classes at Aarhus were lecture classes, with the professor talking for 3-4 hours about a given topic. Sometimes we would break off into smaller groups and do a small activity with other students about what we were learning. At UW, I also have lecture classes in addition to labs. In lectures we also have polling questions for participation.

- teacher/student relations

- In Denmark, teachers and students form very close relationships because the teachers value input and the opinions of students! Danes really value the concept of equality, which definitely shows in the classrooms. All my professors chose to be called by their first names. At UW, a lot of my classes were larger, lectures so I haven't had a chance to really experience these kind of intrapersonal relationships. Americans are also much more formal, and we often have to address our professors with a title (e.g: Dr., Mr., Mrs. Etc.).

- grading/exams

- The only work I had for my classes throughout the semester was reading before lectures. No graded work until our final paper at the end of the semester, which is what our entire grade is based upon. My papers had to be about 8-12 pages long for each class. At UW, I usually have reading quizzes or small assignments due each week for each class in addition to midterm exams every other week or so. Each class usually ends each quarter with a final exam or project.

- administration

- I didn't have too much contact with administration with my time in Denmark, but they often emailed me with reminders and updates and made it clear that they were accessible if I needed them. Same at UW.

- library, computer, and classroom facilities

- At Aarhus, we needed a library card to be able to check out books and use the computers at the library. At UW, we use our NetID to log on to school computers and load money into our student account to print.

b. Evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

- Overall, the instruction was very good and I enjoyed learning about new topics outside of my major. Although class sizes were longer than I'm used to, we got longer breaks which helped a lot!

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

- I liked how relaxed and informal the instruction was, and the intrapersonal relationships students and teachers formed with each other. I personally wish though that we had more assignments due throughout the semester so that we could get a feel for what the grading was like and so that our entire grade wasn't based off one final paper.

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

- Danish Perspectives with Line Hassall Thomsen
- Introduction to Environmental Humanities with Peter Mortensen

3. HOUSING:

- a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?
 - I lived in a dorm on the ground floor with all international students. There were about 13 of us and we all shared the kitchen and bathrooms. We were responsible ourselves for keeping our kitchen clean!
- b. How did you locate your housing?
 - When we were choosing housing we could only list our preferences (e.g: dorm, apartment, house), but we couldn't choose the exact building we wanted, we were randomly assigned.

4. EXCHANGE SITE:

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

- My building was a little bit outside of the city center, and from my dorm it took about 20-25 minutes to get there by bike or bus. It was close to the Uni Park, which is a great place to go when the weather is nicer. The building itself though was really nice and modern with a café and cafeteria downstairs.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

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

- I never felt unsafe at all during my time in Denmark. I went to the doctors once, and it was a really easy process and all they needed was my CPR card.

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.)
 - Activities at the Studenterhus! They have activities and events catered for international students all throughout the semester, and the really popular ones happen on Tuesday evenings.
 - Our dorm had a common room with a TV and games, so I met other people in my building that way.
- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)
 - Danes tend to be a bit more closed off than Americans, so you really have to make an effort to get to talk to them and get to know them

7. FINANCIAL:

- a. Describe how the Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.
 - Scan Design helped me with rent, grocery money, and paying for transportation.
- b. What is the best way to access/transfer money?
 - Get an international credit card to avoid transaction fees. If you have an iPhone you can load your credit card onto your phone and use Apple Pay which makes transactions a lot easier so you don't have to sign a receipt each time!
- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
 - Rent: ~\$400/month
 - Food (groceries): ~\$150/month
 - Transportation: If you're taking the bus, the season pass is ~\$60 a month. If you want to bike, I recommend a company called Swapfiets which charges you about ~\$25 a month (first month is free!) and you don't have to worry about selling your bike back at the end of the semester.

- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
- My dorm in Denmark was much cheaper than what I pay in Seattle! In Seattle, I'd pay around \$850 a month at least for housing. Groceries in both places are pretty comparable in price. At UW, a bus pass is free with tuition, but at Aarhus you have to pay for bus tickets.

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?

- Molly planned some really fun activities for us and was really accessible for us throughout the semester. I just wish there were a couple more activities!

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.

- Around 3 activities. Trip to ARoS, a board game night, trip to Copenhagen
- I really enjoyed the board game night! It was a fun way to connect with other people in the fellowship.

Suggestions for activities we should add to the program

- Day trip to Skagen

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.

- Someone who is independent and wants a fully immersive and integrative experience
- Some advice that I would give is to keep an open mind and be sure to try new things even if it might be out of your comfort zone!

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

- a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience?
- EXCELLENT QUALITY!
- b. How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?
- My goals were very realistic and Scan Design helped me get to know the city better and help to fund a lot of my time in Denmark!
- c. What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying abroad?
- Benefit: You become a lot more independent as you learn more about yourself.
 - Challenge: Homesickness

FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.