

## EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

**Student Name:** Trine Søgaaard Kristensen

**Institution where you studied:** UW-Madison

**Semester of participation:** 5<sup>th</sup> semester

**E-mail address (if possible *not* University email):** trine-zipper@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 decided to study in the US because they are advanced in the field of psychology and because I wished to explore more of the US and the culture.
- b. Why did you select the program/University?
  - Because it is a very good university academically and offer some great classes in the department of psychology.
- c. What were your expectations?
  - I expected a very different way to study and go to school.
  - I expected to get a lot of new experiences and to meet a lot of new amazing people, Americans and exchange students
- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
  - Finding a place to live
  - Apply for visa
  - Get my subjects approved by my own university
  - Do research on the city and the school
  - Get all the required and needed insurances
  - Went to the reception in Copenhagen where I met students from UW-Madison that could give some good advice
- e. How could you improve your preparations?
  - Start looking for housing earlier

### 2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
  - I already had a room upon arrival and therefore don't have any qualified recommendations.
- 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?
  - AU only had a single meeting for all the students going to the US which was very general.
  - UW-Madison did a lot to help adjust after arriving. They made a lot of events for international students that provided information and helped students meet each other.

### 2. ACADEMICS:

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

- class registration

- It was a little stressful because there is a limited amount of spots in all classes
- It was great that there is so many different and interesting classes to choose from

- classroom structure

- It was a mix of bigger lectures and smaller discussion sections
- In the bigger lectures you mostly listen and take notes and in the discussion sections you have a much more active role as a student and do more group work/projects
- Greater focus on attendance

- instruction

- The professors lead the lectures and the discussion sections are typically led by a teaching assistant (TA)
- The professors and TA's were all really good

- teacher/student relations

- All of my professors were pretty informal, but you have a closer relationship with the TA or professor that leads your discussion class.

- grading/exams

- There were 2-3 exams or quizzes in all of my subjects through the semester
- Grading was based on attendance, assignments, projects and exam/quiz results.

- administration

- n/a

- library, computer, and classroom facilities

- There was good access to big libraries on campus site
- Almost no students made use of computers for note taking
- The quality of classroom and lecture hall facilities differed a lot – some very new with very good facilities whereas others were old and less comfortable. But they all had the necessary technology.

**b.** Evaluate the quality and content of instruction.

- The quality of instruction was very high. All of the professors were researchers and experts within their field.
- The instruction was clear and understandable and all students were encouraged to take an active part and to think for themselves.

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

- I liked the discipline a lot, but all the exams made the studying a little bit inflexible

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

- I would recommend all of my courses; PSYCH401, PSYCH 521, SOC357 (methodology) and POLI SCI 170 (methodology)

### **3. HOUSING:**

**a.** How would you assess the housing arrangements?

- I should have started to look for housing earlier because a lot of students come to UW-Madison in the Fall and it can be difficult to find a room
- It is especially difficult to find a room just for a semester
- I lived off campus downtown by the lake and loved it. I can definitely recommend finding housing yourself and not live in dorms.

**b.** How did you locate your housing?

- I joined a Facebook group for people renting and subletting rooms and apartments in Madison. I wrote to a lot of people before finally getting a room.

### **4. EXCHANGE SITE:**

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

- The UW-Madison campus is big and really beautiful! There is a mix of nature and old and new buildings.
- Madison city is cozy and has a nice size and good location. The terraces by the lakes are absolutely amazing, especially during summer time.
- It is close to both Milwaukee and Chicago and it's easy to get there.

### **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 any time during the day or in any parts of the city.
- The medical facilities on campus were great. It was easy to schedule an appointment, and they were professional, thorough and very sweet.

### **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 mostly spend time with other exchange students, but there were plenty of opportunities to integrate into the host country's culture.
- It was possible to join buddy programs, sport clubs, organizations etc.

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

- I did not really meet any challenges, but I had to get used to Americans' more open attitude and how they talk more to strangers and always ask "how are you?"

### **7. FINANCIAL:**

**a.** Describe how the Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.

- ScanDesign offered a nice opportunity to meet others and to explore the local area

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

- I had some troubles paying rent because I only had a Danish account, so I had to pay cash every month
  - I know some of my fellow exchange students opened an American account but I did fine with just having my Danish cards
  - Bring more than one credit card
- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
- That is a very difficult estimate because it really depends on expectations and choice of living standards.
  -
- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
- My rent in the US was much higher than my rent in Denmark but it would have been easier to find something cheaper if I had looked for something earlier.
  - Grocery shopping is a little more expensive, but eating out is a lot cheaper.
  - A lot of gym and sport facilities are free on campus

## **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 got offered to ask any questions I might have and to ask for help if I needed anything. This provided a very nice feeling of safety.
- ScanDesign has been more than helpful and also offered a lot of opportunities.
- In my opinion nothing could really be improved.
- 

### **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 a nice diversity in the selection of activities, and it gave us the opportunity to really explore the local area together. This enhanced our knowledge but also brought us all closer together as a group of friends.
- I participated in a great deal including the football game, the cave and theater, dinner/lunch, banquet and the weekend with cranberry stamping and hiking.
- Even though a lot of people go there alone I think it could have been fun to go to Chicago together.
- But the number and type of activities, the ones I participated in, seemed very good to me.

Suggestions for activities we should add to the program

- Chicago trip
- Another type of sports event

## **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 can only speak as a bachelor student and felt that this exchange was very suited. I matched most students age wise and UW-Madison is a great university no matter what field you are studying in, and I can only recommend going.

**10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

- a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience?
  - Excellent, I had a very good overall experience
- b. How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?
  - I think my expectations was pretty realistic, but the ScanDesign program made the whole exchange experience exceed my expectations. It gave me many great experiences and helped me meet some amazing people.
- c. What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying abroad?
  - Learning how to adapt, getting another perspective on academics and making new friends.

**FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.**