

EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

Student Name: Erik Elliott

Institution where you studied: DTU

Semester of participation: Fall 2015

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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 decided to study abroad because I wanted to immerse myself in another culture. Prior to this past semester I had only very briefly been out of the country, and certainly had not experience other cultures in depth. I wanted to see other parts of the world, but more in depth than mere vacations.
- b. Why did you select the program/University?
I selected DTU because of its high academic status and Denmark's heavy involvement in renewable energies. My certificate is in Sustainability and Energy and attending school in Denmark allowed me to take classes I otherwise would not have been able to.
- c. What were your expectations?
I had very few expectations going into my semester abroad. I knew I was going to experience things I was unaccustomed to and things that I could never even imagine before living in Europe.
- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
Before departing for Denmark I made minimal preparations other than the necessities such as applying for my residency permit. Taking care of my permit before I left was very helpful once I arrived.
- e. How could you improve your preparations?
Before I left it would have been helpful to get familiar with the transportation system in Copenhagen. It was very simple and convenient once I became accustomed to it, but the first few trips were hectic. I would also recommend learning basic Danish. I did not take a class while abroad and was able to pick enough to get by but prior knowledge would have been helpful.

2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
My accommodation was ready upon my arrival so I have no experience in where to stay during the first few weeks. There were quite a few students who were still trying to find housing once the semester started. Not having to deal with finding housing upon arrival to Denmark was extremely helpful.
- 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?
The orientation week at DTU was amazing. At my home university we have a few days of orientation where we sign up for classes and get a tour. DTU's orientation was far superior to UW – Madison's. The fellow students in my buddy group became some of my closest friends throughout the semester and will remain very close friends into the future. During orientation week we were given all the information we needed and were given many opportunities to ask questions. In general I felt much more at home after orientation week.

2. ACADEMICS:

- a.** Evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:
- class registration
Class registration was simple and straightforward. The online process went smoothly and finding classes was easy.
 - classroom structure
Classes were run much differently in Denmark than I am accustomed to. Classes that meet once a week for 4 hours in Denmark compared to meeting 3 or 4 times a week for 50 minutes in Madison.
 - instruction
I found the instruction at DTU to be less formal than in Madison. Much of the instruction relied on group discussion and class participation while the classes in Madison are much more structured and rely more on professor lectures.
 - teacher/student relations
For the most part the teachers at DTU were more connected to the students than in Madison. This may be part due to smaller class sizes or that I was taking higher level masters classes so the teachers were often students thesis advisors.
 - grading/exams
I did not like the grading system at DTU. I am accustomed to grading being very strict and knowing how I am doing in the class at all times. At DTU grading was much less structured and seemed to be given by general opinions instead of specific rubrics or meeting specific assignment descriptions. As far as the exams, I enjoyed the length of the exams. The 4 hour exams let me relax more and feel less stressed about time restraints while taking the exam.
 - administration
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 - library, computer, and classroom facilities
The facilities at DTU were very modern and comfortable. They led to positive learning environments. I am used to much larger and more facilities in Madison, however DTU is a much smaller school so less facilities is to be expected. Overall I was impressed with the quality of DTU's campus and facilities.
- b.** Evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
The quality of instruction at DTU was mixed. I had fantastic teachers for a few of my classes and dismal teachers for others. In the classes with good teachers the quality of instruction was of the high quality I am accustomed to in Madison. The classes with poor teachers were abysmal courses. Information was poorly conveyed and lectures were uninformative and not engaging.
- c.** In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?
I enjoyed the more hands on approach with many of my classes at DTU. I felt that the teachers did a better job of interacting with the students and encouraging them to learn the material.
- d.** Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
I took Introduction to Statistics (course number 02402) with Per B. Brockhoff. Per is a wonderful professor and made the statistics enjoyable and engaging.

3. HOUSING:

a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?

I lived in a student house in downtown Lyngby, about a 15 minute bike from campus. My experience was very good. I lived with a very good group of international students and became very good friends with them. The house itself was not the nicest place but I enjoyed by housing situations and have nothing but positive experiences because of it.

b. How did you locate your housing?

The Accommodation Office gave me my keys and address of the house. I took a cab to the house the first time.

4. EXCHANGE SITE:

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

DTU's campus was quite pleasant. The facilities were modern and included everything I could want. There were plenty of good areas to study and socialize. Lyngby was also a very nice town to live in.

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 encountered no health or safety concerns while abroad.

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 met most of my friends abroad through school and my accommodation. DTU did a great job at introducing us to other international students, in fact most of my friends were not from Denmark. SCAN also helped me experience the local culture and meet new people. The events that SCAN coordinated were always enjoyable.

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

Many of the cultural differences I experienced did not present problems, in fact they usually sparked conversation and a learning opportunity to get to know details about other cultures. Something I had to get used to about Denmark was how everyone didn't seem rushed or stressed. People knew how they were supposed to contribute to society and seemed happy to do so, but rarely did more. Everyone seemed very content and lived their life as such. The hustle and bustle I am accustomed to was not present. Laws and social rules were also followed very strictly with the understanding that if everyone follows the rules everything will go smoother.

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 Scholarship did not influence my decision to study in Denmark, but was extremely welcome and made my time abroad much more enjoyable. The scholarship covered my entire tuition, which allowed me to travel and experience Europe in a way which would otherwise have been impossible. Many of the experiences that made my semester so special would not have happened without Scan Design.

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

I found using an ATM was the best way to access money. I mostly used my credit card instead of cash but the ATM was very convenient if I wanted cash.

- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
I found I was spending around \$600 per month on living costs. However most months I spend more because of trips throughout Europe.
- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
I found the cost of living in Lyngby to be a little bit higher than in Madison but comparable. However the prices in downtown Copenhagen were much more than I am accustomed to in Madison, which is to be expected.

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 help I was given through Scan Design was astounding. Jacob and Natalie did an absolutely amazing job with helping me feel at home in Denmark and exposing me to Danish culture. Both were genuinely interested in how I was doing and getting to know me, which was very comforting. I cannot say enough good things about my coordinators.

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.

I thoroughly enjoyed all of the Scan Design function I was able to participate in. I went to a Danish national football team game, the opera, and multiple dinners. All went extremely well and are some of the most cherished memories from the semester. I seemed that we had an event every few weeks which seemed like a perfect amount. I just wish I was able to participate in more events that I did.

Suggestions for activities we should add to the program

I was unable to attend the trip around Denmark with Scan. In fact I did not see much of Denmark other than Copenhagen. So I would highly recommend keeping the trip and I wish I could have participated.

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.

The experiences in Denmark are best suited to a student who wants to experience European cultures without a huge culture shock. There are distinct differences between Copenhagen and Madison, but overall day to day life was not drastically different. Class work still took a lot of time but the ability to meet people from around the world and explore Europe easily was well worth the exchange.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

- a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience?
I cannot be happier with the experience I had in Denmark. 10 out of 10 stars.
- b. How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?
I did not have very many expectations going into this semester because I knew so little about Denmark prior to the semester. I knew academically I would still have to work hard, which was the case, and I knew I wanted to experience as much as I could. Scan really helped me experience Danish

culture and get to know the country I was calling home for four months. Without the Scan Design Foundation I doubt I would have gotten to know Copenhagen and Denmark nearly as well as I did.

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

The biggest benefit to studying abroad was gaining exposure to different cultures that is not possible with short term vacations. Seeing new ways of doing things and different views really helped me to understand my own culture that much more. There were things that were much better in Europe and things that are much better in America. The biggest challenge will be to incorporate the things that Europe does better into my life now that I am back home.

FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.

Thank you so much to everyone with the Scan Design Fellowship. My semester was absolutely amazing and one that I will never forget.