

Student Name: Samantha Ruth Brown

Institution where you studied: University of Copenhagen

Term(s) of participation: Academic Year 2014-2015

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1. WHY AND WHERE:

- a. Why did you decide to study in the US or Denmark as an exchange student?
I'm working on my master's thesis in Scandinavian Studies and I wanted to go to Copenhagen as a way to take more courses that fit my interests and do some research
- b. Why did you select the program/University?
I studied at UCPH before and loved it.
- c. What were your expectations?
That the courses would be easier than in Madison and connecting with Danes would be slightly difficult
- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
I went earlier to find housing and a bike. Otherwise I didn't need to prepare because of my previous experience
- e. How could you improve your preparations?
Potentially emailing professors in advance about course material that I could purchase for much cheaper in the US.

2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
I lived in RHK (Rigshospitaletskollegium) and would HIGHLY recommend it. I lived with all Danes and my monthly rent was only 3097DKK.
- b. Please 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 adapt?
I would have to say that orientation in Madison is quite superficial, and UCPH orientation is also poor.

2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Please evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:
 - class registration
complicated
 - classroom structure
equal
 - instruction
bachelor level courses can range drastically. master level courses similar to Madison
 - teacher/student relations
less communication than at home
 - grading/exams
easier to pass, harder to get an A(12)
 - administration
slow!
 - library, computer, and classroom facilities
limited
- b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
I think I was really lucky with my instruction. I really enjoyed all of my professors (one I was less enthusiastic about, but otherwise they were all great).

c. In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?
I thought the readings were great. It was a good combination of theory and case studies, etc. The part I liked least was understanding expectations from professors.

d. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
Ethnographic Approaches to Migration Issues in Scandinavia (HIGHLY RECOMMEND; Anthropology)
“Os og dem” Indvandrings- og Integrationspolitik i Vesteuropa (also HIGHLY recommend; Political Science)
Birgitte Romme Larsen, Karen Fog Olwig, Thomas Hindkær, Stine Laursen, Peter Abrahamson, Kirsten Thisted

3. HOUSING:

a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?
Through the University Housing? Stressful, limited, expensive

b. How did you locate your housing?
I was lucky and went to Copenhagen in early June to find housing. I posted signs up in different dorms and found one that way. It's also possible to do in Facebook groups from the US.

4. EXCHANGE SITE:

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

The campus is really great. I studied at CSS and KUA and thought they were both great in terms of location, food options, buildings, etc.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

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

none

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 had Danish friends before, and I also lived solely with Danes.

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

I would say there are a lot of bad stereotypes about Americans, which makes it hard making Danish friends. There is also often a problem of well if someone is only moving there temporarily then it's not worth putting the time into becoming friends with them and that's definitely hard. Language is another obvious barrier. I just often had the impression that Danes in Denmark are want to be friends with other Danes whereas the Danes in the US are much more open to making new friends. This sounds negative, but I had a positive experience with my roommates and then one girl from my studies, and I've heard lots of good things from people who join sports teams abroad or take part in more department organized social events.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. Please describe how the Scan|Design Foundation fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.

First off, I always thought it was nice to see Sara Line, Jacob and Natalie and they were great coordinators with good ideas. The events were good ways to reunite other fellows and alumni and I think that's the most positive part about it.

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

Directly to tuition.

c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

I used about \$1,000 per month, not including weekend trips. If the person is planning on doing lots of trips, I would say set aside a lot more, but if you can

find a reasonable dorm, it's still possible to live for \$1,000/month. Rent textbooks, buy a bike, get a cheap phone plan, don't eat out too much, etc.

- d. Please comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.

Generally it's more expensive, but as said above, it can be done cheaper. It tends to be luxury things that really add up (going out to eat, alcohol, trips, etc.).

8. EXCHANGE/SCAN|DESIGN FELLOWSHIP ADMINISTRATION:

- a. Please comment on the assistance and activities by the Scan|Design Fellowship coordinator before your departure, upon arrival, and during your stay. What worked and what could be improved or changed?

They were all easy to get in contact with and helpful.

- b. Please evaluate services and effectiveness of the University administrative offices.

UW-Madison: super! fast, helpful, etc. UCPH: very poor—don't expect much from them

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

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

Not sure. Everyone, really. Bring Vitamin D (absolute must) and if you want to make Danish friends, be willing to put in a lot of extra effort)

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

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

Top quality

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

I think they were very realistic, ScanDesign helped by being the cherry on top and hosting events that were fun, helped fuel friendships, etc.

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

Despite all the similarities between the US and Denmark, there are still a lot of differences, and I would say navigating the social realm in Denmark and people being more introverted/self kept was the hardest to learn to appreciate and deal with.

FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.

I'm super thankful to ScanDesign for everything they've done for me. I think ScanDesign is an absolutely amazing organization and does a great job in its goal of bringing together Danes and Americans and helping them understand and appreciate the other culture more! I'm excited to get back to Madison and act as a coordinator again. 😊