

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: Mackenize Woodward

Institution where you studied: Aarhus University

Semester of participation: Fall 2017

E-mail address (if possible *not* University email): kenziek829@gmail.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 Denmark because I was interested in learning more about Scandinavian life and culture.
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- b. Why did you select the program/University?
 - I selected Aarhus University, because I wanted the best cultural exchange opportunity. I heard that in Copenhagen there are a lot of American students, and exchange students tend to stick with each other, and don't interact with Danes. In Aarhus, I lived with 15 other Danes and made several close friendships. I felt like I was truly living in Aarhus, rather than a student visiting on exchange.
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- c. What were your expectations?
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- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
 - I applied for my Visa, researched the area and how to get around, packed, learned simple Danish, and budgeted my finances.

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- e. How could you improve your preparations?
 - Although it was still a shock arriving, I don't think there is any avoiding that. I think it is was an experience that taught me to adapt quickly and be flexible.
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2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
 - University-Organized housing, if available. It is very difficult to find housing on your own (but not impossible). If what you are offered by the University does not seem ideal, or far, I recommend to still take it. There will be other university and exchange students in the same boat, and you will not miss out. I lived kind of far from the city center, but ended up loving it once I got used to biking and public transportation.
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- 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?
 - Orientation for the School of Arts at Aarhus University was not great. BSS students (Business, Social Sciences), received a lot more comprehensive and fun orientation as well as a Danish "Buddy". Those of us in arts had a lecture style orientation and we got a mentor, however they were not as involved or helpful as BSS student's buddies. However, I managed and so did other students. I recommend taking classes through BSS for this reason, but if you are in Arts, you will figure it out and there are people available if you have questions regardless.
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2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:
 - class registration
 - Very simple, you choose classes you want, and the University arranges the registration.
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 - classroom structure
 - In the School of Arts there are small lecture and discussion style classes, around 20-35 students.
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 - instruction
 - Great teachers in the school of arts. Knowledgeable, and casual. Professors in Denmark are your friends.
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 - teacher/student relations
 - Very casual! Formalities are not relevant in Denmark, as teachers and students are "equals", so most will have you call them by their first name, and never professor. They are available when you want to talk, and are very receptive to questions and feedback.
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 - grading/exams

- All of your grade is based on one final exam. This can be a 8-12 page paper, or an oral exam. In order to do well on the final and not be overwhelmed at the end, it is important to stay engaged/ do your work and readings (even though it is not graded), and go to class.
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- administration
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- library, computer, and classroom facilities
- People in Denmark don't study past 5 or 6, this is very uncommon. Therefore libraries close at 6. However, if you want to study after hours in classroom building, you simply need to request access and your Student ID will get you in to the buildings. Nice, modern, campus and building.
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- b.** Evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
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- c.** In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?
- I liked how if you want to do well, you need to be responsible for yourself and your learning. Teachers don't hold your hand, you are responsible for your own education. I didn't dislike anything, it was just different from what I was used to.
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- d.** Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
- Line Hassel Thompson is a fun and engaging teacher! I took Danish Perspectives and Communicating in The City with her.
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3. HOUSING:

- a.** How would you assess the housing arrangements?
- Housing is not university owned- but partnered with the University. Most students live in dorm style apartments- sharing a communal kitchen and possibly bathroom. I had my own bathroom and room, and shared a kitchen with 15 others (mostly Danish students who have lived there for several years). I loved my housing.
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- b.** How did you locate your housing?
- The University arranged housing for me, and I accepted the offer.
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4. EXCHANGE SITE:

- In general, please describe your impressions of the host University campus and its location and surrounding community.
- Aarhus University is in a student city, much like madison is a student city. It is a lively city, beautiful campus, and small enough to bike nearly everywhere (within 20 minutes).
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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.

- I felt very safe in Aarhus. My bike helmet was stolen which was unfortunate, but I think I left it in my basket instead of locking it, so that was my fault. Using common sense is important, as although it is very safe, theft and crime, are still present. When I first arrived I was told I lived near the "ghetto" of Aarhus and was concerned. However, I quickly learned that this is just an area with a higher concentration of refugees, and a "ghetto" to Danes is not what Americans would consider the same word. Crime is still very low, and I never felt unsafe.
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6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

- 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 lived with Danes so it was (relatively) easy to forge relationships if you put in the effort. Floors often hold events like common dinner, Christmas lunches, movie nights, Tour de Chambre (annual dorm party), and other things. It is important to participate and make an effort, it may take a month or so but I ended up making amazing friendships with Danes. I also frequently went to pubs in town, the student center bar, and took Danish lessons.
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- Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)
 - Americans are stereotyped in Europe, but easy to overcome after just a little talking. I had many Danes ask if I voted for Trump, and once they realized my revulsion for him, and my love for the Welfare State, this wasn't an issue. If you are a republican I couldn't necessarily say the same, although they are very open to debate and discussion, in a friendly and civil manner. There is also issues with immigration/refugees in Denmark right now and a strong sense of Danish Nationalism. There is no real hostile racism, but there are prejudices/stereotypes present, which I was surprised about as I always thought Denmark was the most socially progressive. This is everywhere though, and not generalizable to the entire population, just like in the US.
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7. FINANCIAL:

- Describe how the Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.
 - The Scan|Design foundation fellowship made it possible for me to study abroad. I would not have been able to go without the scholarship, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity.
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- What is the best way to access/transfer money?
 - I obtained a travel credit card before I left, and almost exclusively used this, because international processing fees were waived. I used my debit card to get kroners from the ATM when needed. It was very simple.
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- How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
 - \$450-500 a month for rent. A one time \$200 for a bike (can sell before leaving) will cut transportation costs. Otherwise the bus is about \$2 per ride, I only used the bus in adverse weather. Food costs are similar to what you spend at home. I would estimate \$200 a month.
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- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
- "Luxury Items" are very expensive and heavily taxed. This includes makeup, clothing, hair care ect. Drinks can also be pricey, stick to beer (Danes love their beer!). Fruits and Vegetables are a lot cheaper than in the U.S, and groceries in general seem to be similar.
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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?

- Molly was the coordinator in Aarhus, and I loved her! She was very helpful, and always available for questions. I had issues with my residence permit, and she helped me get it sorted. It may be nice to receive info/tips from the coordinators BEFORE we arrive in Aarhus. The school didn't provide much assistance, so it would be nice if ScanDesign could help. Getting from the train station to my apartment was difficult, as was immediately having to find my way to a store for room essentials like bedding, and towels. It was a very stressful and overwhelming first day. However, overall ScanDesign was great.
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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.

- There were one or two activities a month, which was great. We experienced Aarhus. On one activity, we visited Molly at her home in Ry, and hiked Denmark's tallest "mountain" which was beautiful. We also went to an apple fest in rural Denmark, and this was great to see, and had traditional Danish open faced sandwiches. We attended a play in Danish as well which was fun. The activities were all like casual hangouts, because we all became friends and it was a great time.
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Suggestions for activities we should add to the program

- More exploration of Denmark if possible. Many places are only accessible by car, and renting a car is difficult with age restrictions. I only saw Aarhus, Ry, and Copenhagen, but would have loved to see Skagen for example, or the islands in southern Denmark, or Odense.
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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.

- A student open to new experiences and growth is ideal. Having the ability to adapt and be flexible is crucial. If you want to make friends with Danes, you always have to initiate first. It can be hard, but being open minded and friendly will get you far.
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10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

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

- 11/10. I had the best four months of my life. It was hard for the first week or so, and I had issues with my residence permit (they lost my application),

so this was scary/ frustrating. By the end, I felt like Denmark and Aarhus was my home, and I still feel it is my second home. I am so glad to have experienced this, and made life long friendships.

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- b.** How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?
 - My academic and personal expectations were exceeded. I expected to meet new people and have fun, but I didn't expect to meet the quality of people I did, who changed my life. I met my best friends, Danish friends, and other exchange students. I also had fun in my classes, and found the content interesting. I ended up doing very well in them as well, which was a plus. ScanDesign helped because I went in with the mindset of wanting to meet Danes and forge relationships, and this is what I set out to do.
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- c.** What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying abroad?
 - The greatest benefit is the experiences and relationships you make. The greatest challenge is the initial culture shock, you may not think you will experience it, but you will. Once you get used to everything, it is entirely worth it.
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FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.