

## EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

**Student Name:** Will Fantle

**Institution where you studied:** Copenhagen Business School

**Semester of participation:** Fall 2014

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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 strongly believe that anyone who does not travel or attempt to expand their knowledge beyond their immediate surroundings is both missing out on personal growth, and failing to acknowledge the global society in which we live in. Denmark, a socialist state, and a very successful one at that, was the perfect opportunity for me to see a different national system in action and get a broader understanding of the interaction between business, society, and government.
- b. Why did you select the program/University?
  - I chose Copenhagen Business School because it was the only option that Foster School of Business at UW offered in Denmark, but it also came highly recommended from friends and accreditations.
- c. What were your expectations?
  - My only expectations were to broaden my perspective and probably feel very uncomfortable at times. Beyond these, I tried to keep as open minded as possible.
- d. What preparationns did you make prior to departure?
  - I took five or six Danish lessons during the summer before my arrival
  - I also researched places I wanted to travel and sights in Denmark I wanted to see.
- e. How could you improve your preparations?
  - I could have done some more planning for trips beforehand to get better deals on flights or been more efficient while traveling, but in all honestly the spontaneity worked out very well.

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

- a. Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
  - I stayed in Katherine Kollegiet, which worked well enough. It's only downside was that it had no common room so meeting people and socializing were restricted to the hallways and rooms. I would recommend trying to find a place in either Tietgen, which was nationally recognized for its architectural design, Porcelaenshaven (PH), or Holger Dansk.
- 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?

- My home University had a meeting or two beforehand to go over the basics of what to expect when studying abroad. I personally didn't find them too helpful, but they did have some useful info for people who perhaps hadn't travelled before.
- CBS's orientation was a bit more comprehensive, as it went over the logistics of being a student at their University, as well as tips and tricks for life in Copenhagen. In general, most of the stuff they covered you could read about on the website or on travel websites.

## **2. ACADEMICS:**

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

- class registration
  - This was quite different from UW, as instead of it being a first-come-first-serve, they have it as a priority system where you send in your top four picks for courses, and then your top four backup courses, and the university places you in a schedule that hopefully meets your requirements. This method was much less stressful, but gave less freedom when deciding time-schedules or trying to customize your courses around professors.
- classroom structure
  - Roughly the same as UW. Courses took place in either larger lecture halls with terraced seating, or in smaller classroom settings with tables facing the front.
- instruction
  - Very hit or miss. I had one great professor, and three that were average or below. You pretty much just have to deal with it as your options for switching courses are pretty limited.
- teacher/student relations
  - Very informal. Everyone addressed the profs by their first name, and students, particularly native Danes, were not shy about openly criticizing or challenging statements made by profs or other students in class. It was a very liberal environment in this regard.
- grading/exams
  - Adapting to this was perhaps the hardest part of my exchange experience. The grading system is very different from the US, where your entire final grade is based off of one final exam or assignment. This could take the form of either a research paper, an oral exam, a four-hour sit-in exam, a 48-hour 10 page essay or a 72-hour 15 page essay. The final three weeks of the semester for me consisted of eight to twelve hour days in the library catching up on the readings I had yet to do, or working on the assignments.
- administration
  - Very friendly and helpful.
- library, computer, and classroom facilities
  - There were three libraries on campus, but seating was very limited. However, you do have the option to reserve seats, so I would recommend doing this- especially when finals roll around.

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

- It varied quite a bit. I learned a lot in one or two classes, but two of my professors were pretty awful. To get a lot out of the classes, at least in my case, you have to complete and really absorb the reading assignments (and there are a ton of them).

- c. In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?
- I liked how liberal the classes were, and how approachable most of the professors were. However, I didn't like that the lectures ran three hours, and that the grading system was based on just one assessment of your knowledge gained from the class.
- d. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
- The only class I would recommend taking is logistics and transportation, but I think I recall the professor saying my semester was the last time it would be taught... So I would just scan through the course listings and look for topics that interest you.

### **3. HOUSING:**

- a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?
- Varied. I was placed in Katherine Kollegiet, which as I mentioned had no common room or common kitchen which made socializing challenging. However, we did have personal bathrooms and kitchens in our rooms which was nice, and the location was great: a five minute walk to the metro station, and a 10 min bike ride from main campus. Other dorms, such as Svenvej or Holger Dansk had better social environments, but were slightly less convenient.
- b. How did you locate your housing?
- I got my room through the CBS housing department.

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

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

- The CBS campus was beautiful and very modern, but also spread out and somewhat disconnected. Most of the buildings were centered around Solberj Plads (SP), but others were located in various places throughout Frederiksberg. Nonetheless, as long as you planned for the commute it was little more than a nuisance. Also having a bike definitely helped cut down the time from class to class. It was also pretty cool having a bar in SP which turned into a club on Thursdays.

### **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

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

- The only health concern I would say is the water is very hard and can mess with you if you have sensitive skin and hair. Myself and several friends had some issues with this, however it was a great chance to check out the Danish Healthcare system. Compared to the US, their medical system is splendid (and free!!)

### **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 spent most of my time with people in my dorm and really didn't get to meet too many locals, but several friends joined the CBS running club and met some cool locals that way. Definitely look into joining a club of some kind if you want to meet locals and aren't in a dorm that has Danes.
- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)
- The biggest difference for me was that I felt underdressed nearly everywhere I went. Personally, I didn't mind and didn't do much shopping to class up my

wardrobe but I knew people who did. Just depends on how badly you want to look like you belong. Everything else was very easy to adapt to in my opinion.

## **7. FINANCIAL:**

- a. Describe how the Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.
  - Scan|Design made a huge difference in my abroad experience. By funding almost my entire tuition, I was able to afford travel and experiences I never would have been able to do otherwise. I got to travel to eight countries, rent a car with friends to go to Lego Land, and not have to worry about eating out or going to the bars every once in a while. Scan|Design also was my connection to a much more localized Danish experience, providing tickets to the Opera, a tour of the National Art Gallery, and a very memorable trip to Aarhus. I can say without a doubt my time in Denmark would have been markedly less interesting and exciting without the support activities provided through the Fellowship.
- b. What is the best way to access/transfer money?
  - I got a student travel card from Bank of America which gives you cash back on travel expenses, and used this card as much as possible. I also took out cash whenever needed from ATMs. I would stay away from the currency exchange counters unless you have extra currency from your travels outside of Denmark, as I found the ATMs gave a good conversion rate. Also, try to avoid the ATMs in the airport and if given the option in the ATM, choose not to convert the exchange rate on the spot, but rather let your bank do it. I heard this gives you a better deal.
- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
  - I honestly can't remember too specifically as it has been some time, but I probably spent around \$350-\$400 on food and beer per month, and minimal variable transportation costs as I purchased a bike for 950 dkk (~\$150). Rent is a lot, but depends on which dorm you get or if you live in an apartment. Mine was over \$1000 a month. Travel is of course dependent on how much you do. I did a lot and probably spent around \$500 per month on average.
- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
  - As in either it depends on how much you go out, eat out, travel, and shop. I found Copenhagen to be a good deal more expensive, but that could also be because I went out more and travelled more than I would in Seattle. The meals on Campus were very reasonably priced, as was food at the grocery stores (in general, depends on which one). If you're trying to save money, just keep this in mind.

## **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?

- Once arriving the assistance was terrific, and the people extremely helpful. However, once returning, I found it difficult to get in contact with admin to fill

out this evaluation and had no word or reply for two and a half months. I would make sure the proper info goes out either just before the program ends or right after people return, because for me this got pushed to the backburner after I had been back in the states for three months.

### **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 was only able to go to a fraction of the organized events because my travel plans got in the way, but the ones I went to were excellent and far exceeded my expectations for what would be offered. The Aarhus trip was especially great.

Suggestions for activities we should add to the program

- Trip to Lego land
- Kayak trip
- Tour of Parliament (they might have done this...)
- Local concerts

### **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.

- Being generally independent is good but not required. The transition to living in Copenhagen is definitely tamer than that of living in much of the rest of the world. I would say the only thing a student absolutely needs is an open mind and a willingness to try new things and occasionally step out of your comfort zone.

### **10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

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

- Very good.

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

- I always try to keep my expectations to a minimum, but in general they were pretty realistic. I wanted to around average in all my classes, travel as much as possible, and meet as many cool people as possible, and which the coursework was definitely a bit harder than I expected, I would say I met all of my expectations.

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

- Benefit: The knowledge that you can survive and even thrive on your own in an unfamiliar environment.
- Challenge: Convincing yourself to say yes as much as possible. Most people are wired to be cautious, but studying abroad is a chance to stretch the limits on this and do things you wouldn't do at home.

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