

I decided I wanted to study in Denmark as soon as I saw last year's presentation of the former student's time there. It looked like an amazing way to get a feel for another culture. I worked hard all year with the Denmark trip in the back of my mind; it helped keep me focused and gave me a goal to work towards. I knew from the presentation last year,(and after being accepted this year) that the trip was not a vacation, but an cultural exchange; with that being said I expected to see historical sights and landmarks and to be immersed in the Danish community through the host families. I found it a little challenging to prepare for a trip that was so far away. I already had a valid passport so my next priority was getting money squared away, and figuring out converters and adapters for my electronics. I think back now and wish I would have spent more time asking the previous grantees more questions, I feel that would have cut my prep time down dramatically.

The Cabin Inn hotel we stayed at in Copenhagen was "cozy" but more than adequate for what we needed. It was clean, close to everything (walking distance from train station) and had all the amenities we needed. I would definitely continue to recommend that hotel to others, with the expectation of calling ahead if you are arriving late so they continue to hold your room. We settled right in at our hotel rooms the first day in Copenhagen and then rented bikes and explored the city. Our days there were a mix of seeing the destinations recommended by previous years (round tower, diesel house) and points of curiosity (little mermaid, canal tours). Once we reached Esbjerg our hosts along with Euc Vest instructors had a wonderful list of activities that kept us very busy. Local sights, historic sights, small and large business tours workshops and job shadowing it was all such a wonderful way to learn about Denmark.

We were given an itinerary when we arrived, and although it changed a few times during our two weeks, we were never left in the dark about anything. We didn't participate in the school side of the exchange in the classic way (registration, classroom assignments etc.) but were more treated like guests with added perks of being able to have some private instruction and get some hands on learning from the very impressive tech school. We attended workshops and got to try our hands at everything from cooking to brick laying. We also were granted access to the school resources (books, computers) to help us with our presentation which we gave to some of their students about our school and education system. All of our time spent at EUC Vest was educational and fun, the staff and students are very knowledge and friendly and it was great getting to experience technical skills that we wouldn't get to experience here at BTC.

My housing accommodations were generous, I actually got the pleasure of staying with 2 host families during my two weeks there. The moving back and forth felt a little chaotic at times, but it was all worth it. I shared a room with two other students from my school and one house, and had my own room at another. Both families were welcoming and bent over backwards to make me feel comfortable and at home (which i did).

I was never concerned about my health and safety while in Denmark. I on the advice of everyone involved in this exchange purchased travel insurance, which would have been useful if anything had happened. Our host were very considerate and never put me in a position where I might have come to harm. Even in the larger cites like Copenhagen I really never had the feeling I was in danger at any point.

The Danes are some of the nicest people I've ever met, and they were very curious about Americans and American culture. I had lots of conversations with my host family about, education, politics and health care (just to name a few). But because American culture is so saturated all across the world, they had a very strong grasp on what I was talking about. I found the Danes I hung out with quite similar to my friends and family back home. Perhaps the only time I could see a culture divide was at school and when I job shadowed at my hosts work.... In the class rooms where we were, it was primarily all men, and in the work shop as well. I came to discover that the Danes are still just more traditional in the realm of the work force. Most women had jobs or training in health, beauty or administrative, and most men held or were pursuing labor and tech skill positions. I may have only noticed this because I am a woman in a somewhat nontraditional trade here at BTC but I know that it is changing rapidly as this year alone the number of women in the welding program here has dramatically increased. When I asked about the lack of women in the welding or mechanical programs at their school they just explained that it's just not a common thing. There have been women in the past, and they are treated and do as well as everyone else. I never got the sense of discrimination; I think it's just a difference in cultures.

Financially I would have never been able to afford this amazing trip I had, if it was not for the generous contribution by Scan Design. Essentially the money Scan Design provided paid for my entire trip. I was able to take the check I received and put it on an e card, or a credit card for use in Europe. It was very easy to use, accepted just about everywhere I went and was very safe (pin code credit card). I made all the money exchanges and transfers at my bank prior to my departure, and that way I didn't have to worry about trying to make phone calls or find a local bank in Denmark. I was told before I left that Denmark was expensive compared to the US, and it was. I believe that everything was two or three times more costly over there but I understand the purpose. When health care and education are free to all citizens, the money has to come from somewhere. It would be really hard to put a dollar amount on what I spent on a daily or weekly basis; and I know my co travelers expenses differed from mine, some spent more, some less. I know that my scan design money ran out in the Amsterdam airport on my flight home, and that cup of coffee came out of my own pocket, and that was the best \$7 dollars I ever spent ;)

I can only imagine the amount of time and effort that were involved in making this trip happen for us, and the staff and admin here at BTC where phenomenal in keeping all of us up to date and on track for this trip.

I feel almost anyone can greatly benefit from this trip. If BTC, Scan Design and EUC Vest continue to work together I can't imagine any student here at the college who wouldn't get something out of this. EUC campus and facilities were amazing and any program at BTC could walk in over there and learn something, and have something to share. The individual I believe needs to be someone who can adapt quickly, perhaps someone who has traveled at least a little bit. I am an avid traveler (previous to my full time enrollment at BTC) but this was my first time to Europe and it was a little challenging at times. The long flight, the time change, the language barrier was a bit daunting at first, and if someone isn't quick to adapt and work with the co travelers, I feel they would have a very difficult and perhaps not so pleasant experience.

Overall this was one of my biggest life accomplishments and it was such an amazing journey. I left Denmark wondering how long it would take me to save so I could return, and if Danish language is really that difficult to learn; because honestly, I would immigrate. I fell in love with the people and the country and culture. This trip thanks to the help of Scan Design has opened up my eyes to the possibility that I can take my education and go anywhere with it; because that hard work and an open mind is a universal quality.