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EUC Vest Esbjerg Denmark – 2012  
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I applied to study in Denmark because I have interest in other cultures. When speaking with former students, who had made the trip in the prior year it sparked an even greater interest. My expectations were to learn about the Marineteknisk program at EUC Vest. I prepared before the trip on researching the geographic area of Denmark and visited numerous websites such as Denmark's official website which helped me learn about the trip I would be taking. I learned quick facts, society and lifestyle of the Danes. I definitely recommend this site for anyone who is planning a trip there. I could have improved my preparations if I would have taken a short class on speaking and understanding the Danish language. I have intentions of learning the language for my return trip in the future.

The arrival in Copenhagen was very late at night, we took a train from the airport to Copenhagen Central station, where we walked to the Cabin Inn Hotel which was about 3 blocks away. I learned that I should have packed a backpack and not luggage it would have been easier than to roll my suitcase through the streets of Copenhagen. Although the Cabin Inn Hotel was very centralized the rooms were like consolidated matchboxes with the basic amenities. The bonus was the free breakfast which was very good. I soon realized that our American style breakfast were not in fashion there. I definitely enjoyed the Danish cuisine, which was very delicious. I do recommend a huge appetite for those traveling to Denmark. When we arrived at Esbjerg we were met at the train station by the host families and then taken to their homes where we would stay for the duration of the trip. The orientation at school was very informing along with the tour of all the programs of study there. I was presented to the staff and students who were very welcoming and thoughtful of the language barrier. Many Danish students have minimal broken English but they were very happy to speaking with me and they mentioned it was good practice for them.

While at EUC Vest the activities were very hands on, such as working on the engines at the shop with the students. I was shown the different diesel engines and was able to help work on one. I learned that their program is a four year program involving internships with a sponsor company, which hires them during the 4 year term. I was also given the opportunity to see what the internship was like so I spent two days learning on the different jobs a marine diesel tech did during the internship required by the program. I was given the tour at Dong Energy and presented as an exchange student from Bellingham Technical College. Dong Energy was very welcoming and taught me the process of generating electricity by burning coal. The coal produces steam which powers a 520,000 horsepower turbine and in the process captures all the contaminants to recycle them to sell as marketable products such as fly ash, gypsum, acid and they also sell hot water for heating. I learned very much and adapted very quick because I was submerged into the actual requirements of the program. I truly was able to engage in what a Danish student is required of them in the diesel tech program. The classroom structure is set up similar to the one at BTC other that BTC is more specialized in Diesel while their program adds welding and machining and is a 4 year program. They have 3 instructors while BTC students have one. Both are primarily hands on teaching methods. The library is very well equipped with computers and literature. We also have the same at BTC. I liked that the instructors would show the students hands on how to do it step by step and made sure no one was left behind. I would recommend to future students that they be communicative and open to learning new ways and techniques.

The housing arrangements were excellent, staying with a host family gives you the opportunity to learn the culture hands on and experience the true Danish way of life. My host family and I took turns cooking for each other. We enjoyed each other's variety of food. The house was very comfortable and the company was delightful. I know I have made friends for life.

The host college is very centralized and has many programs being taught from diesel to hair dressing. The city of Esbjerg is a port which has many manufacturing companies specializing in the oil industry.

I was very open and communicative while in Denmark. I tried making conversation with whoever was available. In turn I found most people to be just as interested in my culture and country. The biggest cultural difference I noted was the legal age of drinking alcohol. It seemed very strange to me to see young 16 year old teenagers drinking. Other than that they cannot have guns but have free educations. We are similar in most other ways.

If it wasn't for Scan Design I would never have been able to study abroad. My appreciation for this company is great and I hope that others will also be able to experience what I have. Using a credit card with the Visa / MasterCard logo is the most convenient way to purchase items or get cash with the best rate. I would recommend anyone to have at least \$500.00 US spending money per week for all necessities. The prices of items seem to be slightly greater than what we are used to.

The biggest suggestion I would like to make is students should be very willing to communicate and participate in the entire program whether having the exchange students here or being aboard. I became very close with my exchange student while he was here in Bellingham and developed a better understanding of who he was. That in turn helped me be more comfortable while I was with him in Denmark.

Overall, I had one of the best experiences of my lifetime. There is nothing I would do differently. This entire experience is all because of the scholarship that Scan Design provided to us. I am very grateful to the Scan Design foundation and always will be. Because of this my children have also set goals to one day go to Denmark and experience what I did. My greatest benefit studying aboard was learning about the Danish technologies and how they are leaders in Green Technology. The amount of information that I learned was the greatest benefit for me. I was able to experience EUC VEST and learn new technologies from different Danish companies such as SEMCO MARINETIME, Babcock and Wilcox Volund and Dong Energy. The largest challenge of studying aboard was the language barrier. I will always be grateful to Scan Design and will tell as many people that I can what Scan Design did for me.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Raul Soto