

After entering the Diesel Technology course at Bellingham Technical College I learned about the Danish exchange program. I immediately set yet another goal for myself to compete for the opportunity to go to Denmark. I researched the country and spoke to prior scholarship winners about their experiences. I also found that of the technical colleges, Bellingham Technical is the only college I found that offered this type of opportunity.

One common statement from the exchange students I talked to was “opportunity of a lifetime”. After applying, I was fortunate to spend a lot of time with the students from Denmark when they traveled here. Getting to know them and taking them all over to see the many sights was a great adventure for not only me but my fiancé as well. We so enjoyed the students and quickly became friends with them all.

Having over 40 students in our Diesel class, I felt very privileged when I was selected as one of the two students to travel to Denmark. I was also excited that my instructor, Jeff Curtis, would be going on the trip as the advisor, as he has been there before, has area knowledge and many friends and contacts in the country, which would undoubtedly make the trip a lot smoother, more educational and interesting.

Arriving in Esbjerg was very exciting and full of adventure. The people there were very friendly and accommodating. My expectations were completely blown away. I am very interested in history and my sponsor Jacob Molholm and his wonderful family made sure I took in all the historical sights and experiences they could, besides feeding me very well.

I spent every day learning more and more about Denmark, the history, the people, and the culture. I cannot put into words how enjoyable this experience was. I was also able to meet the instructors at EUC Vest, who were very professional and genuinely happy to have us there. The instructors and students did an amazing job at setting up educational experiences at local companies, of which a lot were in the diesel marine field, which is of interest to me as I am currently working for a diesel marine company based in Bellingham Washington as well as different companies involved in clean power generation.

For one week I was able to go to work every day with my sponsor Jacob who also was working for a diesel marine company. I met many of his co-workers and was able to talk at length with many of them. These workers were very experienced and readily gave advice and technical tips on certain aspects of the profession, which have been very helpful to me in my new career. I quickly found that the people of Denmark are very self sufficient, especially when it comes to doing their job. We in the United States are so dependant on other distributors to complete our projects and while somewhat the same in Denmark they also do a lot of thinking outside the box and manufacture a lot of their own parts out of necessity due to availability. I have always subscribed to this way of thinking but working with many of the technicians in Denmark really reinforced this way of working and the mindset.

I honestly believe that this was an opportunity of a lifetime and the experience has and will continue to assist me with my future career and goals. I am a huge supporter of this exchange and the diesel program at Bellingham Technical College as I believe the instructor and the program are top notch and do an incredible job of preparing students for their new career, making them valuable future employees.

In closing I would like to personally thank the Scan Design Foundation for their involvement in this amazing opportunity. Without support like this, especially with budgets these days as tight as they are, an educational experience like this may be just a “we use to” scenario. As stated before, this was absolutely a lifetime opportunity and an amazing educational and personal experience. I still communicate with the students from Denmark and plan on vacationing there with my fiancé in the very near future so that she may experience the beautiful country and people of Denmark and so that we can visit our new friends there.