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To be honest, before this last year I probably couldn't have pointed to Denmark on a map of Europe. I also hadn't even given much thought to studying abroad but one morning I woke up and I thought 'If not now when?'. After a bit of thought and a conversation with my parents we came to the conclusion that the timing was right so I scheduled an appointment with the study abroad department. I found a few programs that seemed intriguing in Ireland, Prague and New Zealand but I eventually decided that DIS in Copenhagen was the best fit for me.

As an Environmental Studies Major I decided to study abroad in Denmark due to their global recognition as the leading force in sustainable practices. From their recycling programs, amazing transportation system and their green energy initiatives, Denmark is really ahead of the curve and is serving as a role model for other countries to look to for guidance. I chose to study at DIS because I was really impressed by their Sustainability in Europe Program. I also loved that DIS sets aside time for students to travel with short and long study tours, adventure and cultural trips and a few weeks free to travel on personal trips. Being able to travel was a priority of mine, as I'd never traveled to Europe before and wanted to have the opportunity to see a number of places while abroad. I didn't really have an expectations going into studying abroad, as I said, I'd never been to Europe before, the only information I had to go on was the research I had been doing on the web and reading on the DIS site. Before I arrived I signed up for the Culinary Trip to

Southern France where we ate and drank and cooked for five blissful days in the sun. I would highly recommend signing up for at least one trip, activity or group.

Once it was set in stone that I would be studying in Denmark I had quite the internal debate over where I should live. For me it was between a host family and living in the Green House which is a living learning community full of people that are devoted and have a passion for things like eating locally, recycling, conservation and so on. Eventually I arrived at the decision to live with a host family, I figured that if I'm going to study abroad and really want to be immersed in the culture then a host family is going to be my best bet. I'm so so so happy I chose this over any other housing. DIS did an amazing job of matching me with my family. My host family consisted of my host parents, two host sisters (19 and 16 years old) and a beagle named Walter. Being with a host family exposed me to the local foods, day-to-day routine, going to cool museums and events, weekend trips, hearing and practicing the language and spending a ton of time with some amazing Danes. I really never thought that I would someday travel to Denmark and leave feeling like I had found another side of my family. It was truly one of my favorite aspects of my term in Denmark and cannot imagine experiencing Denmark without them.

I arrived a day earlier than orientation which worked out alright but I would recommend that you either arrive on the date of orientation or a week or two early. If at all possible I think it would be the best to come earlier so that you get a feel of the city on your own and don't need to worry about a schedule and getting back to the airport (where orientation began) right away. It was kind of stressful to fly in (found out my bagged was lost), try to figure out transportation, wander around to find the hostile, sleep for a few hours and then wake up early and try to get back to the airport on time. Orientation started

at the airport and lasted for a week. We were spilt up based on our living situation and learned some of the basics about Denmark and what we should and shouldn't expect, how transit works, and we played a few games such as a scavenger hunt. It was a good chance to meet people that had host families near me and make a few new friends to wander around the city with for the first few days.

Signing up for classes was easy, as there were a lot of options and all of my classes, barring Danish, were applicable to my major requirements. Once, I arrived in Denmark I found that classes focused around group work, and the grading was a bit harder but the classes were more relaxed. Something I really enjoyed DIS that you do not have any classes on Wednesdays. Wednesday are designated for to be field trips, which were often connected to what we were learning about in class. We would visit a company, museums or in my case, because I'm an environmental studies major, a farm or brewery or winery (bummer huh?).

As for specific classes, I took Danish Language and Culture, Sustainability in Europe, Environmental Economics, and Impact of Plants on World History (surprisingly awesome class!). I really recommend taking Danish or a class focusing on the history of Denmark. It was really helpful to gain the skills to have a very basic conversation and be exposed to parts of Denmark that I wouldn't have been otherwise. It's also just really great to be able to order a coffee without announcing to everyone HEY I'M NOT FROM HERE! I also really enjoyed my core course, it was great to travel and learn. My class went to Ærø, a small Danish island, for our short study tour and then we traveled to Hamburg and Berlin for our weeklong tour. It

was a wonderful mix of learning, great food, free time and fun tours such as the Berlin graffiti walk.

All in all, I really loved the classes I enrolled in and learned much more than I had expected to. Honestly, being apart of a new culture was my main goal this term but I never expected the classes I took to give me a whole new perspective on how to approach class work and group work at my home university. It was a welcomed bonus.

The DIS campus doesn't have much of a campus feel to it. The DIS buildings are spread out over a few streets and there is not a center campus but really DIS is geared toward one-term students and a campus feel isn't really necessary in this setting. DIS is located In the middle of the city and really close to everything: food, all transit, cool churches and museums, parks and magical Tivoli.

While at DIS I joined a few clubs in hopes of meeting people that liked to do the things I like to do. I joined the Buddy Network, which turned out to be a bust. My group got together once all term and I was out of town. On the bright side joining a Buddy Network won't cost you anything so I you ought to just sign up, hope for a fun, active group and if anything comes up that sounds fun tag along and meet some Danes and fellow Americans, it can't hurt. I also signed up for an advanced culinary class, which met bi-monthly. You really don't need to be an advanced cook to be in the class which was actually kind of a bummer because I didn't learn anything new but I did meet a few really awesome girls and got to cooking and drink wine with them every time we had class so that was fun. On the side note, I heard that the Danish cooking class is really great and when you come home you can bet someone,

be it you family, friends, significant other, are going to ask if you can make them an awesome Danish meal. Plus, when you're back in the states missing Denmark, which you will, you'll want to be able to whip up some Smørrebrød and sip on some gløgg to dampen your heart's yearn to return. I also went on one of the daylong rock climbing trips to Sweden, which was fantastic, there were great lines ranging from beginner to challenging and the view is just amazing. DIS is what you make of it, if you have a host family and live way out of town it is going to take some extra effort to get involved and make some good friends but I think DIS understands this and tried to make it easier for students by providing many options to get involved.

One of the largest challenges I faced was financial. I was told many times that Denmark was expensive but it didn't really click until I spent the equivalent of 30 US dollars on a really subpar sandwich. I learned quickly to bring lunch to school everyday. I lucked out and my bank was really awesome and reimbursed me for all foreign transaction fees and withdrawals, if I did not have this bank I would have brought a large amount of cash with me to exchange when needed. I heard the way to get the best rate is to go to your host family's bank and exchange currency there. Without Scan Design I don't think I would have been able to afford to study in Denmark. There were so many awesome things I was able to experience because I wasn't broke such as art museums, plays, castle tours ect.

Scan Design was really such a blessing to have been involved with. It was really nice to meet this entire other group of people from The States that were doing so many awesome things in Copenhagen. I didn't go to any pre-trip meetings or anything in Portland with Scan Design. I was the only student from PSU so I mostly

communicated with my study abroad advisor before leaving. DIS is also an all-encompassing program so living, transportation and supplemental activities were all covered by DIS. I wasn't able to attend all of the gatherings but I did go to the welcome dinner, Copenhagen Culture Night and the bike trip to Hven, Sweden. Every gathering I went to was great. I was just so pleased to be surrounded with so many Pacific Northeasterners (most of DIS pulls from the East Coast) and sometimes you just need to talk about how much you miss those glorious San Juan Islands with someone who can relate.

I think that studying abroad takes a bit of independence and drive expand and test your comfort zone. Anyone with the means and determination to study abroad should absolutely go for it. Studying abroad exposed me to so many new things such ways to approach people, new situations, obstacles and definitely made me more comfortable getting lost. I really grew as a person during my stay in Denmark and could not have done it without all of the avenues of support. Being away from home and living in another part of the world seems like an intimidating commitment but it was an experience I wouldn't trade for anything. I cannot wait to go back.