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Spring 2013

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I chose to study with The Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS) in Copenhagen, Denmark because I knew I wanted a well rounded opportunity to learn while abroad, and DIS offered a wide range of courses and experiences, as well as additional travel and cultural outings. As a person interested in Scandinavian Studies, especially medieval and Viking Age, I was able to take courses on Nordic Mythology, as well as Icelandic Sagas in addition to coursework that would apply to my major specifically.

I tried not to expect a lot, as I was just coming from a semester spent in Beijing, China and I knew things would be quite different. Still, I expected your usual set of fears when moving to a new place. Things like, how will I get around? How does the bus or train system work? Will I be able to talk to people? How do grocery stores work here? The parts of daily life a lot of us take for granted, suddenly become challenging when you're in a new country. Since I learned that the previous semester, I was expecting it as well in Copenhagen. Now, as for academia wise, I expected challenging course work and a possibly stricter educational setting. When it came to preparing for going abroad, I packed my winter coat, sweaters, t shirts and jeans, and I made sure my SIM card and international phone were all set up and ready to go. I had learned a bit of Danish before going, so I tried to review, and that was about it.

When I arrived in Copenhagen, DIS had a welcome staff waiting at the airport. From there, we all met and attended a short orientation before being picked up by our host families or roommates. I had a roommate, so after we met he drove me to the apartment. There was no real opportunity to learn about visiting accommodations or anything after arrival. The orientation was spread out over a few days. Since

DIS is almost a thousand students and staff, the program was enormous. We had to travel the city ourselves to reach destinations where orientation events were being held. Which was terrifying, in a jet lag haze and the freezing winter wind, but it all worked out. For Scan/Design's involvement, I never met anyone from Scan/Design. There was a lack of communication between my university advisor, and Scan/Design, so I didn't know there were staff on site until May.

For Academics and course registration, all of that was handled on the DIS website before departing the states. Once I had my login, I registered for everything online like I would at my home university. The classrooms themselves at DIS varied. All DIS buildings were old, multiple level buildings in the historic city center. So some classrooms had wood and plaster walls and a very Danish feel to them, while others were remodeled and very modern. The structure of classes was a mix, but overall, the professors were incredibly casual. Almost always we called them by their first name, and most classes were heavily discussion based or hands on. Essays were common but as a humanities student, that was expected. I think, all in all, the course load was similar to my home university, while the professors seemed more welcoming and sociable. Computers were also readily available, much like at my home university.

The best classes I took were the ones that focussed on Danish or Scandinavian culture. My course on Hans Christian Andersen with Janis Granger was phenomenal, and a lot of fun when we took walking tours to see where he lived. My other favourite course was Nordic Myth with Morten Warmind, a professor who usually teaches at the University of Copenhagen. The courses DIS offered were a great balance between classroom learning, and actually experiencing Denmark and Danish culture.

My housing was probably my least favourite part of studying abroad. Not because the location was bad, it was a very nice building, but after a few weeks I just did not get along with my roommate. He refused to speak Danish with me, and I felt like I could have had a better immersion experience if I had a host family instead. Otherwise, DIS provided everything I needed. I got a card with money on it for groceries, and a travel pass so I could use the train to get to class. Initially I chose a roommate in place of

a host family because I wanted to be independent, but looking back, I sacrificed many potential learning opportunities.

In regards to the campus at DIS, there is none. Our buildings were in the historic city center, with Danish business in half the building, and our classrooms in the other half. To get between classes, we had to walk down the busy Copenhagen streets. If you did not know better, no one would have thought there was an educational institution there. Still, I enjoyed it. The DIS campus was close to the University of Copenhagen, so there were frequently Danish University students in the area.

Any and all health concerns were easily remedied. Upon registering formally and getting our Danish ID, we got an insurance card to participate in the Danish healthcare system. I never had to use it, but everything was explained to us, and we were able to choose a doctor to use etc. Pharmacies work different there, as to get throat lozenges I had to go to a formal pharmacy and get a number to meet with a pharmacist, then they would get me a pack of throat lozenges from behind the counter. Very little medicine is available over the counter in Denmark.

For overall safety concerns, Copenhagen is a very safe city. I saw general teenage graffiti artists on occasion, and drunken Danish college students and Americans shouting in the streets late at night, but otherwise it always felt very safe around the campus and my apartment. I heard some neighborhoods were less safe, like Norrebro and over near Christiania.

I had some problems integrating into Danish society due to my somewhat difficult rooming situation. I don't usually party, so I never went out much or fell into a normal socializing atmosphere where I could interact with Danes. I would go to the coffeeshop a lot, and spoke to a Barista there, as well as a Thai restaurant and the Studentehuset, which was a place for local students to go and hang out on the main road. Though my experience was a bit limited, I enjoyed it and wish I had put myself out there more.

The Danes first appear very closed off. They give a feeling of being cold but not unapproachable. Quiet, and they keep to themselves for the most part on public transportation. However, if you stay out

until sunset, that changes. They like to be social, and drink, and laugh, just mostly with other Danes. That's not to say as a foreigner you'll never be able to talk to them, but it means you have to try a bit harder. They don't like small talk, which worked for me since I don't either. Otherwise, I got the impression Danes were very warm and relatively down to earth. Gender there is equal, or not an issue at all, which was nice. Though if you're the type to go to a bar and hit on someone and expect them to cater to you, don't. Its rude in the United States and its rude in Denmark, they'll just be more blunt about it.

The Scan Design scholarship allowed for me to go to Denmark in the first place. Had it not been for the scholarship, Denmark would have been unaffordable, plain and simple. I understood why DIS was so expensive, they take us on numerous outings each class, food is expensive, transportation is expensive, just living there can be quite costly. So, while I completely understood the reasoning, it would have still been impossible for me to attend without Scan Design's help. That being said, when I did have funds to take out of my account for food, or trips and souvenirs, it was easy enough. Not every machine there will take credit cards, so most students used the ATM to withdraw funds. Sometimes they charge about 3% per transaction, or five USD, so I found it helpful to withdraw once every two or three weeks instead of every few days. I found if I tried and was mindful of my money, I could make 50 USD last me per week, 75 if I wanted to splurge on coffee. During trips we went to EU states, so we could use the Euro, which had a better exchange rate. With DIS they pay housing, and give a food stipend on a card to be used at Netto, a grocery chain. If you're in a host family though, you don't get the card. By the end of my semester, I had about two hundred kroner left on the card, so I think the stipend was certainly enough.

There were some hiccups between my University and the Scan Design Fellowship, in the sense that while I knew I had received the scholarship, I had no idea they were supposed to offer support, or have events. I never met anyone associated with Scan Design during my time there, and when I finally did receive an email regarding a cruise to Norway at the end of the term, I had already booked my ticket back so it was impossible to attend. So I cannot really comment about Scan Design's helpfulness during my

time in Denmark.

Overall, I think the DIS program is ideal for a student who wants to experience what its like to live in Scandinavia, and Europe. DIS makes sure to not limit you to just Denmark, though it is certainly the focus. The program is well rounded, and enjoyable for people from any major. Students from Pre-Med, to Art History, Philosophy, and Psychology all studied there, so it made for a great community. The program is huge, with about a thousand people total involved between staff and students, so its a lot like a small University.