

EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

Dear Fellowship / Scholarship Recipient:

The Scan|Design Foundation requests that fellowship / scholarship recipients submit an evaluation report concerning their experiences and the services provided by the institutions that manage grant programs funded by the Scan Design Foundation. This report has a dual purpose: to help us evaluate our current programs and to help us inform and orient grant seekers who will be future recipients. We ask you to reflect on your experiences in the US or Denmark. Advice or comments on other topics are also welcome.

- Use this form and fill-in your answers.
It is not necessary to answer every question.

- Send a copy to:
 1. admin@scandesignfoundation.orgAnd to your University
 2. UW-Seattle: ScanDesign@uw.edu
UW-Madison: jkallen@wisc.edu
PSU: goffra@pdx.edu

Thank you for your cooperation. We appreciate your time and effort.

Student Name: Bianca Sinfield
Institution where you studied: Danish Institute for Study Abroad
Semester of participation: Spring 2015
E-mail address (if possible not University email): ccrush3@gmail.com

1. Pre-Exchange. Why and Where:

- a. Why did you decide to study in the US or Denmark as an exchange student?
 - One of the biggest factors in my decision to study in Denmark was the customizability the DIS program offers. Students are able to make the most of their time in Denmark and Europe without being too restricted by a generalized curriculum. Specifically, DIS offers many courses I am interested in the area of my minor, gender and sexuality studies. It is well known that Denmark is one of the more advanced countries at protecting the legal rights of LGBTQ individuals in the Western world, so the opportunity to take courses on a subject I am truly passionate about from a Danish perspective was something that I absolutely wanted to be a part of.
 - Another factor was that most Danes can speak English. While this was not a deciding factor at all, it did serve as incentive.
- b. Why did you select the program/University?
 - I chose DIS because of both the interesting course choices as well as their slogan "Europe as your classroom." Opportunities for study tours and travel, while also offering rigorous coursework was exactly what I was looking for in a study abroad program and I couldn't be more glad I found DIS.
- c. What were your expectations?

- Learn about Denmark and Danish culture first hand, learn about LGBTQ issues in Europe, explore Denmark and Europe, make new friends, have life changing experiences.
- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
- I picked up some Danish language CDs and listened to them.
 - Did further research about both major sights in Denmark and more about the school.
- e. How could you improve your preparations?
- I should have looked up some major cultural holidays that would be happening during my time in Denmark. I knew I would be there for the Queen's birthday, but aside from that I was rather clueless and it would have been cool to have more background.

2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
- I arrived several days earlier than we were required for orientation to get my legs for the city. I stayed in an Airbnb for the first couple of nights over in Amagerbro, a twenty minute walk to the DIS campus and on the other side of Copenhagen harbor. Since I was going to be living in DIS housing it was great to see where real Danes lived, even if they were not present. The night before we were required to meet at our new housing I stayed at the SKT. Petri Hotel a couple blocks away from my housing and the DIS admin buildings. I would recommend this hotel. It was very nice and not far from the Nørreport Station; easy to get to from the airport.
- b. Comment on the orientation and activities offered at both your home University and the host University, what did it cover and how did it help you prepare / adjust after arriving?
- Wonderful. I believe I went to four different orientation gatherings. The main one where the director of DIS and several others gave us invigorating speeches and advice (for adjusting and what to expect), an extracurricular fair - please do not miss this! - and then the two for my housing. As a part of a living learning community, we did an ice breaker outing with our RA and then one with our LLC coordinator.

2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Evaluate the instruction you received. Compare the following to your home institution's system:
- class registration
 - Class registration was not difficult in comparison to my home university, however it was slightly different. The concepts were all the same, in terms of prereqs and conflicting timetables. The hardest part was definitely picking the courses themselves, because basically all of them seemed like they would be fascinating.
 - classroom structure
 - Varied from lecture to more seminar, which were like a dialogue.
 - instruction
 - Some were more involved than others; differences went hand and hand with the classroom structure. Lectures were more laid back, if you had questions it was the student's responsibility to bring it to the instructor's attention. If it was your core class or a seminar than the instructors were more hands on and expected more participation from every student. Also this depended on class size, obviously.
 - teacher/student relations

- Great. All of my instructors were inquisitive about their students. Really cared about them and how they were getting on their academics in DK but also how they were doing socially, mentally, and physically.
- grading/exams
 - Fair. Depends heavily on the instructor. All of the one's I had were pretty upfront with their expectations. Of course, I can only speak to the humanities courses I was enrolled in.
- administration
 - Quite helpful, willing to answer my questions with what they knew or could find out and get back to me on.
- library, computer, and classroom facilities
 - DIS's school library is rather small, but because you are going to the center of Copenhagen for classes most every day anyways, it's not hard to pop into one of the city's many other libraries. I'd definitely suggest visiting them, at the very least, if not utilizing them for either study spaces or their resources.
 - The classroom facilities were appropriate for each course.
- b.** Evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
 - Good. Very interesting content, but as with most courses some are better than others be that class curriculum or quality of instruction.
- c.** In general, what did you like best and least about the academics?
 - Best: Great instruction on fascinating subjects! Garden Design in Europe? Pornography in Scandinavia? Perform Hamlet in Hamlet's castle?? A Venice history course where you then actually go to Venice? Where else would you be able to take these courses? They were great!
 - Least: Despite DIS being on semesters, I still did not feel like we were able to dig into the material we were engaging in! We accomplished what was set out in our syllabi, but the coursework was all terribly interesting and while the course titles and descriptions sound very directed towards one subject - there is always more to learn once you get into a subject and that was obvious by the end of the term.
- d.** Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
 - Carsten Pape's History of Copenhagen was invaluable. Carsten is a delight to talk to and such a resource for the history of the city. This class helped me view Copenhagen in a new way and I learned things about the city I likely wouldn't have otherwise.
 - My core class was LGBTQ in Europe and it was the most wonderful experience. I met some of the best people and we covered a breadth of theory, politics, media/social issues. One of the best courses I have taken in my academic career.
 - Pornography in Scandinavia was fascinating. A great deal of theory and history and, of course, had an accompanying screening session in addition to the standard class times.

3. HOUSING:

- a.** How would you assess the housing arrangements?
 - I opted to apply to stay in one of DIS's Living Learning Communities. I cannot recommend the experience enough. I had to answer a series of special application questions to see if my goals matched what DIS wanted their students to get out of living in an LLC. I am a Film major so I applied for the Arts and Culture LLC, however that was a very popular choice and full. But the DIS administration wanted me to get my first choice of housing and since I had spoken of writing as my main passion in life in my application answers, they asked me if I wouldn't want to be in the Creative Writing LLC. I was

initially hesitant, but I went ahead with their suggested placement and it was truly wonderful. Couldn't imagine having felt as comfortable anywhere else.

b. How did you locate your housing?

- As I arrived in Copenhagen a few days early, my RAs didn't collect me from the airport like the rest of my housemates. But the hotel I was staying at wasn't far from the DIS offices and I was able to inquire specific directions from them and luckily literally ran into my RAs on the street outside our building bringing another group of housemates from the airport.

4. EXCHANGE SITE:

In general, please describe your impressions of the host University campus and its location and surrounding community.

- The DIS campus is located in the heart of Copenhagen. It's a quick walk to public transit and some of the coolest sights Copenhagen has to offer. Expect to be surrounded by beautiful city streets right outside your classroom and beautiful parts a short walk in nearly any direction.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study.

- I was never really worried about unsafe districts when I happened to be walking around at night, even in the "sketchy" part of CPH.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the host country culture and meet members of the community? (e.g., mentors, clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

- In a Living Learning Community, you're typically staying with a bunch of other Americans and two Danes acting as your RAs, with another Dane who is your LLC coordinator and you will take you on outings and events but live elsewhere.
- I signed up for the DIS Film Club which some Danes also attended. We would screen films, both at DIS and in local cinemas, and then go to a local bar to discuss our thoughts on them.
- From the contacts I made in the Film Club, I became a volunteer with the CPH PIX Film Festival. Amazing experience. I felt very welcomed even though I spoke no Danish.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

- The Danes don't smile at strangers and are suspicious of those who do. SO the total opposite of an American's initial instinct, for the most part. And I never realized how hard that would be to break until I tried. (Oh and reverse culture shock to the US was interesting on that front as well hahah.)

7. FINANCIAL:

a. Describe how the Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.

- My admittance to the fellowship program meant that I didn't have to take out a private loan to cover my semester abroad's costs. I don't think I need to go into detail on how that allowed me to really focus on my time in Denmark when I was in Denmark and not wasting time thinking of what I would need to do in the future to settle that debt. I cannot thank the Foundation enough for this.

b. What is the best way to access/transfer money?

- I'm not sure what the best way to transfer money would be. Before I left, I looked into what banks available in the US were also accessible in Denmark.

From what I could tell there weren't any. So I ended up doing was just to take a fair bit of cash with me. Obviously, it is important to remember one cannot bring more than 10,000 US dollars into the EU without declaring it, though I don't know why a student would need that much. I brought dollars and would just exchange small increments as I needed more kroner. This helped me keep track of my budget as I was very aware what money I had with me and ensured that I wasn't exchanging money twice when I needed Euros or pounds for study breaks abroad. Down side of this, I was carrying around a great more cash than most people would likely feel comfortable walking the streets with.

- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
- As I stated previously my LLC was literally across the street from DIS main offices, so I wasn't given a transit pass nor did I pay rent outside of DIS's tuition. Furthermore, I was able to stretch the \$600 food stipend DIS gave me over the four months I was in Copenhagen for all of my groceries and other necessities, like laundry detergent and shampoo. Having said that I would recommend setting aside/bringing at least \$250-300 per month, for going out, museums, and other attractions. Keep in mind if you aren't given a transit pass, trips outside of the city center can be rather spendy.
- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
- My home university is also in a city center, where I also live, so the cost of living wasn't too different for me. Someone who doesn't live in a city center will not find it to be the case. Copenhagen was more expensive, but for basic groceries a comparison wouldn't show too much difference.

8. EXCHANGE/SCAN | DESIGN FELLOWSHIP COORDINATORS AND ADMINISTRATION:

Coordinator team

Comment on the assistance by the Scan|Design Fellowship coordinators and administration before your departure, upon arrival, and during your stay. What worked and what could be improved or changed?

- They were wonderful when we spoke before and towards the end of my stay in Denmark. However through some oversight, neither I nor the other selected recipient of the SCAN fellowship the semester I went were contacted by the Danish administration till half way through the term. And by that time there were not many activities that remaining during the semester. Most were trips I would have needed to plan for in advance and had only heard about at too short notice for me to take part in or were scheduled for times I already had DIS activities I needed to partake in.

Activities

Comment on the number and type of activities arranged by the coordinators. What worked and what would you like replaced with some other activity.

- As I stated earlier, one of a student's' biggest challenges will be on prioritization of what activities they can/need to part-take in. Having reiterated that I was not able to part-take in any activities organized by the Scan|Design Fellowship, I will say that four months goes by awfully quickly and you won't be able to do everything that strikes your fancy, but you can certainly do a lot and I wish I had been able to meet up with the Scan|Design Fellowship coordinators in Denmark.

Suggestions for activities we should add to the program

- Not Applicable.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Describe the type of student for whom this exchange is best suited and what advice would you give to future students.

- The type of student that would be best suited for this program is someone who can work well in a fast paced learning environment and doesn't mind switching from academics and studying to social and extracurricular activities.
- Advice for future students: There is always something happening in Copenhagen. It's terribly cliché to say take advantage of those opportunities, but you really should. The biggest problem for students will likely be they have too many events they want or need to go to all happening on the same day.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

- a. How would you rate the quality of the overall experience?
 - It was excellent and I would recommend it to anyone who is able to go.
- b. How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?
 - DIS is not a free-for-all travel base. Their courses are, for the most part, rigorous. You will need to study daily to stay on top of the course load. Falling behind is really not an option. I went into the program assuming I was going to be doing a fair amount of studying, as I was very interested in all of the courses I registered for, so this was not much of a shock. But these are college courses and you will have theory based texts and difficult reading from time to time, if not for most of it.
 - Unfortunately, as I wasn't able to make contact with the Scan|Design Fellowship in Denmark, the main difference the fellowship program made for me was financially. However, there was a road-trip to Bornholm which they had planned that sounded amazing and the island is now on my list of places I want to visit when I return to Denmark!
- c. What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying abroad?
 - Challenge: Not allowing yourself to get into a rut once you establish a routine and get more or less acclimated to the life abroad. Those first weeks/months, I was eager to explore and take chances, but as the term wore on, whether it was my concern for academics or something else, it was very easy to just chill instead of making the absolute most I could of my time in Copenhagen. Of course, on the flip side of this you don't want to wear yourself out! One needs to find a decent balance of avaricious exploration and chill.
 - Benefit: It is exactly as DIS claims: "Europe is your classroom." You can literally take a study break to visit other cities abroad. Copenhagen's proximity to the CPH airport make it a breeze to see other parts of Europe. Again on the other hand, don't forget to explore Denmark as well! As tempting as it may be to jet off for weekends in other European cities that are right there, Copenhagen and the rest of Denmark have a lot to offer as well and deserve your attention too! Denmark's public transit and trains make it easy to zip around the country and there's so much to see!

FEEL FREE TO ADD OTHER COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE.

Other Comments:

It might also be an good head's up for students who come from a university on the West coast to realize that a majority of your future classmates in Denmark, at least at DIS, will be from East coast schools. Of all of my classmates and housemates and DIS acquaintances only a handful were not from New England universities. Even fewer were

from the West Coast, which certainly created an interesting dynamic, but of course it is harder to see all of the friends I made when I returned to the States.