

## EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

**Student Name:** Cale Wilber

**Institution where you studied:** Dorte Mandrup Architects

**Semester of participation:** Spring 2015

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### 1. Pre-Exchange. Why and Where:

**a.** Why did you decide to study in the US or Denmark as an exchange student?

To learn and experience Danish architectural practice through an internship.

**b.** Why did you select the program/University?

I chose the internship program because I was interested in working abroad in Copenhagen more than studying abroad.

**c.** What were your expectations?

I expected to be working on a lot of competition work as an intern and to learn about Danish culture and lifestyle.

**d.** What preparations did you make prior to departure?

Applied for an internship visa and secured housing for the first month.

**e.** How could you improve your preparations?

My start and end dates for my internship were not filled out on my visa causing me to reapply half way through my internship. I had assumed my employer would provide that information as there was not an option to specify on the visa application form. The area to specify this information is on the danish architecture association internship form and I left it blank for my employer to fill out. I didn't double check to make sure it was completed before I submitted my application and thus my visa dates started as soon as my application was processed (two months before my arrival) and ended two months before my internship contract ended.

Also, I would have done more research on where and how to buy a bike in Copenhagen.

### 2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

**a.** Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

I used airbnb for the first three months and then found a place through a friend

**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?

There was a head intern at Dorte Mandrup Architects that gave me an orientation on my first day.

## **2. INTERNSHIP:**

I participated in the University of Washington Master of Architecture Intern Exchange Program. I was an intern at Dorte Mandrup Architects for 6 months beginning in January of 2015.

### **b. Evaluate the quality and content of the internship.**

The quality of the internship was exceptional. It was a completely different internship experience from others that I have experienced. I primarily worked on two different ongoing projects. The first three months I worked on a competition proposal for a mixed use public housing development and kindergarten in a new developing neighborhood. My team and I won the competition and the project is now in development. The second three months I worked on an adaptive reuse proposal for a 1960s coffee roasting factory tower in a Copenhagen suburb.

### **c. In general, what did you like best and least about the internship?**

During my time with Dorte Mandrup Architects I received an increasing amount of responsibility and I felt valued as an employee. Everyone in the office was extremely helpful and the work environment was healthy and productive. The Office is very comfortable to work in and has a great social environment with a weekly afterwork happy hour on Fridays. I also really enjoyed the lunch culture in the office. Most people would make and eat lunch together in the office kitchen, creating a new work culture experience for me that I had never seen in the states.

I have no real complaints about the internship. However, I did have to create new expectations for myself in terms of counting on punctuality of others. Being on time or ready for meetings was loosely realized in many situations in the office. This was not so much bothersome for me, it was more so of an adjustment for my expectations in a workplace environment that was different from what I was used to. In many instances I came to enjoy the laid-back and easy-going environment of the office, everything seemed to work out and deadlines were met (most of the time).

### **d. Would I recommend this internship?** definitely

## **3. HOUSING:**

### **a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?**

I arranged these myself and was quite pleased

### **b. How did you locate your housing?**

I used airbnb and word of mouth. I lived in Nørrebro the first three months and Vesterbro the second three months. The office was in Vesterbro and both neighborhoods I lived in were convenient to the office. I loved both locations but if I had to choose one neighborhood over the other I preferred Nørrebro for its youthful character, location in the city, diversity, and culture.

#### **4. EXCHANGE SITE:**

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

The Dorte Mandrup Office was located in Vesterbro, a hip and trendy neighborhood just south of the inner city. Lots of great restaurants and bars nearby, and close to the harbor for after work swims in the summer.

#### **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Health and Safety were never a concern for me. I felt safer and healthier than I did in the states do to a healthier diet and lifestyle that I was experiencing in Copenhagen and my work environment.

#### **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.)

I spend most of my time socializing with my fellow interns and their friends after work at bars and restaurants in Vesterbro and Nørrebro. The office's Friday happy hour was a great opportunity to get to know my peers in the office. I also spent a lot of time on my own exploring the city and the surrounding environment by going to a lot of different museums and visiting different cities by bike.

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

lots of differences but not too many challenges. I did my best to observe and understand the reasons for these differences and to learn from some that I admired.

#### **7. FINANCIAL:**

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

The internship program provided me with a paying job as well as a stipend for living and traveling expenses. The financial assistance was sufficient and made the opportunity accessible for me. I would not have been able to go without it and I am very grateful for it.

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

I used Nordea bank in Denmark and was able to do so through nemID.

- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

rent: 3,000 - 6,000 kr. food: 2,000-3,000 kr.

TRANSPORTATION: free after buying a 600 - 2500 kr. bike. I only took public transportation to get to and from the airport.

- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.

It was comparable to my cost of living in Seattle but I was there during a time when the dollar was strong and the kronor was declining. Some things are much more expensive than they are at home (e.g. restaurants and bars) and some things are cheaper (health care, insurance, some grocery store items). I lived more simply in Copenhagen than I do in Seattle.

## **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?

Before my departure it would have been very helpful if there was a document that had all of the necessary steps for the visa application process, credit enrollment, and office/employer communication topics listed in detail in addition to a list of people with information on who to contact for different things. There is a lot of research that needs to be done by each individual student that could be simplified with a document that laid out all of the general steps required. At one point in the process my eligibility for being able to go to Copenhagen was jeopardized because I was unaware of an important part of the credit enrollment process. The sporadic information I received was sent to me in various emails at different times coming from different individuals, making it confusing and difficult to keep track of.

Once I was there, everything was great!

### **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.

I enjoyed all of the activities in Copenhagen. The dinners, happy hours, excursions, and cultural activities were all interesting and a lot of fun! I was grateful for all of the events and the coordinators.

Suggestions for activities we should add to the program

**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.

any architecture student interested in Scandinavian architecture.

**10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

**a.** How would you rate the quality of the overall experience?

10 out of 10

**b.** How realistic were your academic and personal expectations and how did the Scan|Design Fellowship Program make a difference?

Without the Scan Design program this opportunity may have been out of my reach. Because this program exists, I was able to experience something I wouldn't have without it.

**c.** What did you consider to be the greatest benefit and challenge of studying abroad?

Working in a Danish architecture firm with people from all over the world was a valuable experience and the challenges that came with it only made the experience that much more of a learning opportunity.