

EXCHANGE STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT

Student Name: David Lopez

Institution where you studied: Not applicable

Semester of participation: Summer A/B

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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?
 - Having conducted case study research on Denmark for a thesis project, I decided my pre-dissertation research would benefit from field work and data collection in Denmark.
- b. Why did you select the program/University?
 - ScanDesign was flexible in allowing me to create my own schedule and itinerary for independent research via the summer scholarship. Field work is unpredictable and challenging, thus the flexibility helped me focus on my work rather than adjusting my activities to stringent grant requirements
- c. What were your expectations?
 - I expected to learn a lot about the social, political, and historical context of Denmark in my daily interactions as well as conduct enough interviews and gather enough quantitative data to have sufficient data for an academic article or dissertation chapter.
- d. What preparations did you make prior to departure?
 - I had meetings with faculty and visiting scholars in the Scandinavian Studies department, including conducting a mock interview. I also read more background publications on Denmark and my topic. F
 - I e-mailed dozens of contacts to solicit interviews before departure.
 - I booked flights and reserved a room in an AirBnB for my stay three months ahead of time.
 - I read the book "The Almost Nearly Perfect People" by Michael Booth. It's a witty and well-researched book by a British journalist from The Guardian on Nordic countries' historical, social, political, and economic differences.
- e. How could you improve your preparations?
 - I would have made phone calls in addition to e-mails, and scheduled my trip to from August-September rather than July-August to account for the summer holiday.

2. ARRIVAL/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
 - It is fairly easy to find a reasonably priced room to rent during the summer on AirBnB, but start looking several months before departure.
 - Students should make sure that they understand the transit routes so they book rooms a manageable distance from their host institution.
- 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?
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2. ACADEMICS:

3. HOUSING:

- a. How would you assess the housing arrangements?
 - Excellent
- b. How did you locate your housing?
 - AirBnB

4. EXCHANGE SITE:

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

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

- None whatsoever.

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.)
 - Fairly well after four weeks in, but as an independent researcher without an institutional affiliation I missed out on what could have been a more fruitful social experience.
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- b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)
 - I was well aware of these differences as a result of my own research into the Nordic countries for my thesis as well as reading "The Almost Nearly Perfect People" by Michael Booth.

7. FINANCIAL:

- a. Describe how the Scan|Design Foundation Fellowship assisted you / made a difference in your decision to study abroad.
 - The application process was fairly easy to navigate and the funds were disbursed before my arrival.
- b. What is the best way to access/transfer money?
 - Direct deposit
- c. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.
 - Public transit is quite pricey if one opts out of a month long flex-pass or travels outside of inner-Copenhagen or between cities. Otherwise, staying within central Copenhagen (zones 1 and 2) with a 30-day flex pass, grocery shopping and occasional meals out, and renting a room, I would estimate the following:
 - Rent: \$700-800
 - Food: \$200-300
 - Transit:\$100-200
- d. Comment on the relative "cost of living" between your home University and the host University.
 - The cost of living was perhaps \$100-200 more per month primarily as a result of the transit and costs of eating out/coffee from cafes. Groceries are a bit pricier since items are sold in smaller portions and quantities for similar prices.

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?

- Communication was a bit intermittent and e-mail responses to inquiries sometimes never arrived. There were several pre-departure questions regarding how to get an institutional affiliation that were never answered. As a result I never set-up an affiliation with a host institution which may have helped with my research activities.

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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.

- The dinner organized by Natalie Gulrud in August was a very nice event. Otherwise the summer activities were fairly non-existent.

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.

- The summer scholarship worked out for me as an independent researcher, but I can't speak to most other students who use ScanDesign for study abroad coursework and credits.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

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

- 9/10

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

- I expected a higher response rate to interview requests than I received. I didn't realize how unavailable respondents were during the summer holiday. I wish I had a more realistic understanding of this beforehand.

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