Exchange Report

Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, Business, Fall 2018 Exchange, August 27 – December 17, 2018

I just returned from my 4 month exchange spent studying at Copenhagen Business School and I can honestly say that the experience will remain with me for the rest of my life. Learning to step outside of my comfort zone while travelling and getting to meet new people has allowed me a new found independence that I would recommend to anyone considering academic exchange.

While preparing for exchange my biggest worry was about housing. Speaking to previous exchange students I knew that Copenhagen is not cheap and the academic housing they provide to exchange students fills up incredibly quickly. My advice to anyone going to CBS is to wake up for the 3 am deadline to secure housing. This makes the entire process much easier and finding private housing does take some work. That being said, the friends I had that did decide to live in private housing through CBS’ housing portal did pay significantly less in rent on a monthly basis. I paid roughly 1300 CAD/month for a private room with a shared bathroom at the Porcelænshaven residence which was super convenient as it is the closest to the various campus’ but is not as social as some of the other dorms as there is no shared kitchen. That being said I had friends stay in the Holger residence and the kitchen was always dirty and sleep was not something easily had despite the great atmosphere there.

Something I wish I would have known ahead of time are that formal presentations are not really a thing at CBS as long as you don’t have an oral final. I had 24 hour exams, sit in exams, and take homes but all presentations in class were informal and did not require formal wear, don’t pack it if you don’t need it. Sim cards were provided in our welcome packages that our buddies provided. Course selection is done in rounds at CBS with the first round allowing for general selection and the second round being the final chance to change courses if I remember correctly. Classes were not able to be switched soon after arriving in Copenhagen if not before so figure those out before hand through the SFU exchange course archive. Overall both cash and credit work in Copenhagen although credit was definitely more common, but I don’t believe I ever was turned away with Cash. Eating out or drinking anything but store
bought alcohol is incredibly expensive in Copenhagen so plan ahead for a much higher cost of living there. That being said the one thing that saved all of us was that grocery stores have very cheap options. On average I would say the prices are comparable or even cheaper than Canada.

For what to pack I would suggest layers! In whatever season you decide to visit the weather will change dramatically in four months and although my semester it didn’t rain all that much I have been told it rains all the time in Copenhagen so bring a good raincoat. Another thing to keep in mind is that you are likely to get a bike, so whatever you bring make sure that it works with that. That being said, the metro is a great way of getting to the airport although that is likely all you will use it for because biking is the way to get around.

A big benefit was the buddy program that was set up through CBS. My buddy actually came to the airport and already had my key for my apartment ahead of time, it was so helpful. I would recommend signing up for that and the orientation week events they offer, they are both a great way to meet people. Academics at CBS are similar to SFU if not easier. On a weekly basis there wasn’t really any work to be completed as all classes (I believe) are 100% final exams. This allows for more free time throughout the semester but catching up at the end is definitely a challenge. Marking is different in the fact that there is a scale out of 12 as opposed to letter grades. This was an adjustment along with the fact that a 7 or what translates to a C in our scale is an average mark. Some teachers really impose this “average” grade but I would say overall it is not too difficult to do well there. Lecture format was essentially the same as seminars at SFU as most classes are capped at 50 students unless you are enrolled in a larger elective course. The Danish people are incredibly friendly and everyone speaks perfect English, I didn’t feel hampered by language once throughout my exchange. One thing to consider is that Denmark is a welfare state and this is heavily engrained into the culture, Danes really care about one another and there is a high degree of trust in the society. I was really fortunate to be able to study with them and get to learn about how every seems to embrace a real caring for one another.

One regret I have is not seeing more of Denmark, I was able to see Ribe (the oldest town in Denmark) on the west coast, which is great for a weekend road trip. That being said, I was told that the northern most point of the country, Skagen, was well worth the excursion and
visiting Aarhus was really interesting. I spent time in Iceland on the way over to Denmark and I would recommend that option to anyone flying over a couple of days early, flights may even be cheaper if you plan it right. Norway is almost like the B.C. of Europe, it’s so beautiful and I would recommend it to anyone despite the enormous hit to your bank account. Overall, all of the Nordic countries I visited were some of the most picturesque places I have ever seen and I would recommend them all.

Living in Denmark was an experience that really allowed me to witness first-hand what it’s like living in a completely different culture. Being out of your comfort zone you learn so much more about yourself than you would surrounded by a familiar environment. When you factor in this with new friends that you meet on exchange you really do develop as a person as clique as that sounds. For anyone considering CBS as an exchange destination I would whole heartedly recommend it, I gained a completely different perspectives while meeting friends I will have for life.

View of the Royal Residences, Copenhagen
Hike up to Trolltunga, Norway