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## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM/EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

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Dear Foreign Study Returnee:

The International Programs and Exchanges Office requires that students enrolled in University of Washington direct exchanges or foreign study programs submit a final report to our office concerning their experiences abroad. This report has a dual purpose: to help us evaluate our current exchange ties and programs and to help us inform and orient students who will be participating on foreign study (or are considering applying) in the future. We ask you to reflect on your experiences abroad by addressing each of the topics in this outline. Advice or comments on other topics are also welcome.

The reports are kept on file in the International Programs and Exchanges Office and are available to any prospective student or interested faculty or staff member. If you wish your report to be read by the International Programs and Exchanges Office only, and withheld from all others, please write **CONFIDENTIAL** at the top of your report.

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

PLEASE TYPE YOUR REPORT OR WRITE LEGIBLY. IF YOU ARE WILLING TO BE CONTACTED BY THE IP&E OR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM, PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR CURRENT AND PERMANENT PHONE NUMBERS AND/OR E-MAIL ADDRESSES. THANK YOU!

### IP&E PROGRAM EVALUATION OUTLINE:

**-Please list your name, program location, term/year of participation, and your current and permanent phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses at the top of your report.**

#### 1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.

Getting all my luggage to my student residence was stressful and difficult. I arrived at night, after office hours at the student housing office on campus, and so I spent the first night in a hotel. I had to then go from the hotel to the student office to get my keys, go back to the hotel, get all my luggage (five months worth) and then take two trains (for the first time, no instructions were given, I had to ask around and got conflicting advice) to my residence building. Having to get the keys on campus which is not close to any of the student residences is not easy or helpful when arriving or going home.

- b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?

Orientation was fairly corny and I did not learn much. It felt forced, as most college orientations do. It was mostly awkward group activities.

#### 2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:

- classroom structure: The classes at UiO were all smaller than most classes at UW. They were highly discussion based which was nice.
- instruction: Professors were less clear about what they wanted from us/Norwegian academic expectations than professors at UW

- teacher/student relations: Teachers were good about responding to emails and getting back to students, similar to UW.

- grading/exams: The exam system worked well for studying abroad but I would hate it if I were a full time student in Norway. The entire grade of all my classes was based on one final exam for each class. This was really nice for studying abroad because it meant less assignments throughout the semester and thus more time to explore the culture. But it was a lot of pressure to get the exam right. I was quite upset with my final criminology grade because I received a C in the class, something I am not accustomed to in the states. I emailed my professor to inquire about my grade because I thought my final essay exam was well written and researched. She told me that I did not include all the possible points and sources I could have – which is quite different than I have been taught to write here, which is to write a quality, focused essay rather than attempting to include little bits and pieces of all the material. I think expecting the latter would have been fine, but she never told us this before hand and so I felt the grade was unfair. I just wish they had talked more about how they grade and what they expected since my classes were all international students.

- administration: I didn't deal much with administration at UiO nor do I at UW so I don't have much to comment here.

- library, computer, and classroom facilities: I was never able to log into the school computers or get wifi access even after changing my password, which was frustrating. The library was gorgeous though and had easy book rental and friendly staff.

**b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.**

I think my classes at UW are slightly more rigorous and stimulating but I still learned quite a lot in Oslo. It was interesting to learn from another cultural perspective which was stressed.

**c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?**

I really enjoyed to my Feminist Fiction course, I recommend it to English and gender studies majors.

**d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?**

I am a CHID major so my focus is interdisciplinary. I tried to choose classes that would compliment my coursework at UW. I was able to write my applied ethics final on disability and animal ethics, which relates to my animal studies work here at UW. My feminist fiction course was tied to my gender studies work here and though I have never done any other specific work in criminology, I think understanding why certain bodies are policed and how is vitally important to my education which focuses on the intersection of oppressions.

### **3. HOUSING:**

**a. What housing options were available to you?**

Dorm-like accommodations – single rooms within a larger flat with shared kitchen, either single or shared bathroom. A shared couples room within one of these flats or a family-accommodating student residence space. Single room with own bathroom.

**b. Which did you choose, and why?**

I chose to live in a flat with my own room and bathroom but a shared kitchen space. I wanted to be able to meet new people but also have my own space. Having my own bathroom was really, really nice.

**c. What would you recommend?**

I would recommend the flat I chose for single students. It's a great way to meet other people and also have your own space. I lived in Bjølsen which was a quieter dorm and less partying which was kind of a bummer. However

the more social and party residences had shared bathrooms that were incredibly smelly, so I suppose it's up to what a student wants more: more party and smelly bathroom or own bathroom and less active building.

#### **4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:**

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

Campus was really lovely and nice to walk through. There was a nice student store with snacks and alcohol. The student cafes also had trivia nights and served coffee, waffles and alcohol all day which is really different than campus spaces in the US. That was fun. There is a hair salon, nail salon, and several restaurants as well as cafeterias on campus.

I loved the surrounding city of Oslo. It is now my favorite place and I honestly want to move back. It's so diverse and calm. It's hard to describe because each neighborhood is so different but that's what I loved. Public transportation is so easy and efficient and widely used.

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

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

I did not have any health or safety concerns while in Oslo. I felt safer than I ever have.

#### **6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:**

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

I walked around by myself a lot simply observing the culture and after a while I felt really used to the spaces. I also found a local activist community towards the end of my stay that allowed me to meet a lot of cool new people working on things I care about but from a different cultural perspective. My roommate and I became instant best friends and we would try to go around the city and explore together a lot too.  
(e.g., clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, pubs, etc.)

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

Norwegians are quite reserved, but incredibly nice. It just takes being the first one to start the conversation and then everything goes smoothly from there. So it makes you maybe move outside your comfort zone and strike up a conversation if you need directions or advice, etc.

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

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

Use a credit card with a chip for most purchases. Have a debit card for withdrawing cash when needed.

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

Honestly probably close to 800-1,000 dollars including rent, food and transportation as well as fun things like going to bars and movies. I'm bad at estimating money, but everything is really expensive, especially food and alcohol.

c. Please note any unexpected expenses you incurred.

Transportation is expensive, the best thing to do is get a student priced monthly card. It's also expensive to take the train to the airport (don't even think about taking a cab) – about ten dollars each way. I traveled a lot so that added up.

d. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications? If so, how did you address them?

I did not use financial aid.

**8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:**

a. If the IP&E administered your program/exchange, please comment on the effectiveness of the office's services. What service could be improved?

It was nice receiving periodic emails telling me which steps I needed to do to prepare for my semester abroad. Everyone in the office was super helpful in answering emails and questions.

b. If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

**9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:**

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

Someone who wants to immerse themselves in a culture. Someone who is willing to go out of their way to meet new people and strike up conversations. Someone who enjoys nature – you have to take advantage of Norway's gorgeous nature. Someone who doesn't mind the dark and a slightly slower paced culture.

**10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:**

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

Academically I felt that my expectations were met well, apart from my poor grade in criminology. Personally my expectations were so far exceed it's almost unreal. I fell so in love with the culture and grew so much as a person and a traveler. I want to move back to Oslo, which is something I never ever thought I would say. I cannot stress enough how magical Oslo and Norway is. It is such a peaceful, unique and culturally/environmentally rich country, I think everyone should go.