IT University Travel Report

Student: Ebbe Nygaard (021085)

Host University: San Diego State University.

Study Program at IT University: eBusiness.

Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Study Abroad.

Courses studied abroad:

- Advanced Marketing Strategy,
- Entrepreneurship,
- New Product Innovation Management.

Exchange Period: Fall, 2013

My stay abroad

Studying in the US is a somewhat different experience than studying in Denmark. There are no oral exams as you are measured on your performance throughout the semester. This means that your final grade depends on your participation/attendance, the quality of your written work, your presentations and finally on your written exams.

Like in Denmark, the academic level depends entirely on the professor, who is teaching the course. I followed 3 courses and found that the level varied a lot from course to course. All courses, however, contained written assignments, presentations and participation points.

SDSU is a very social campus. When attending the university as a freemover you are enrolled through an organization called the ALI. The ALI is nothing short of fantastic! They arrange events both on and off campus, make sure that you are enrolled for free in the ARC (university gym) – and more importantly, they are ALWAYS available if you have questions. I never had to wait more than a few hours to hear back from them – even on Sundays! Despite the many events and facilities at the SDSU campus, most of the social life is found in Mission- and Pacific Beach, where almost all exchange students live.
Initial motivation for going abroad

I wanted to experience the American culture, as it is essential to understand this market. Almost all businesses are interested in understanding and targeting this market. For me personally, it was also a great way of challenging myself and my ability to organize my own stay abroad. A lot of work went into applying for the university, finding scholarships, finding a place to live, etc.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in San Diego and it did indeed live up to my expectations. I could have learned more in one of the courses (New Product Innovation), but one has to remember that the courses you take are only part of the learnings you bring home after your stay abroad. You learn a lot about yourself and other cultures when you live abroad.

What I got out of my stay, both personally and academically

My courses were all focused on marketing and entrepreneurship, which added more business knowledge to my educational profile. At ITU many of the courses are focused on IT, programming and the many benefits found online. It was great to get a more basic introduction to offline business areas as this helps me form a more holistic understanding of the market.

Personally I had a fantastic trip, where I learned a lot, improved my English and experienced more than you would think was possible in 6 months. From New York, San Francisco, Grand Canyon and Las Vegas to staying in the middle of the desert in Tuba City and learning to surf the waves of the Great Pacific Ocean in San Diego.

Arranging my stay

Going abroad as a freemover requires some planning. EDU Danmark is a great partner that will help you with many aspects of the application process. There are, however, still lots to do: Finding grades, proving that your language skills are sufficient, getting ECTS-points pre-approved by the Study Administration at ITU and finally applying for scholarships.

I applied for more than 100 scholarships, and in the end, the thought of writing another application made me sick to my stomach. But it was all worth it. Spend the time applying – it will be worth it in the long run!

Helpful resources in planning my stay

Rikke Ilona Ulstrup, who is the International Coordinator at ITU has been most helpful. EDU Danmark have also been an essential resource throughout the entire stay.
How did I arrange practicalities such as accommodation?

When applying through EDU Danmark you are invited to join a Facebook Group with other students, who are either abroad now or who are going abroad at the same time as you. This is a great way of communicating with other students and a great way to find accommodation.

Other than that, Craigslist.com is your friend. Here you find many apartments and houses for rent! Don’t sign anything or pay anything from home, though! I recommend that you arrive a month before schools starts and that you walk around and visit the apartments before you pay or commit to anything.

Expenses and Financing

Going abroad is expensive, so you have to save up money before you go. Living in San Diego is expensive too. I lived in an apartment with two rooms with my girlfriend and the rent was $1500/month. On top of that, living in Pacific Beach (Holiday area) means that all grocery stores are quite pricey. Food is more or less the same price as in Denmark, but you will be amazed how expensive other goods can be. Toilet paper and kitchen paper will ruin you! 😊

Scholarships

I applied to many, many scholarships. I’d be happy to share the list if you like. There are no scholarships I would recommend more than others, as it seems quite random, who gets the scholarship. I send an application to Oticon, who rejected my initial request. However, I decided to apply again and was then granted 8500 DKK – with the exact same application.

Recommendations for other students:

- Go early, find your place before all the other students arrive.
- Negotiate with your landlord. It is JUST like in Denmark – you don’t have to pay everything up front, even if they say so.
- Use your common sense. Do NOT pay more than 750$ for a small, shared bedroom. They are taking advantage of students, who do not know the prices.
- Live in Pacific Beach or in Mission Beach.
- Rent your car from dirtcheapcarrental.com
  - They have good student discounts and an insurance that covers everything!
  - You don’t have to worry about anything, which makes it easier than buying a car.