Summer school at The New School - Parsons New York

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Host University: The New School, Parsons.
Study Programme at IT University: Digital Design and Communication
Activity Abroad: Summer School, Graphic Design I
Exchange Period: Summer 2015

Your stay abroad

In the summer 2015 I went to New York to study Graphic Design I at Parsons – New School. We were actually ten Danish students from ITU who went there this summer to study different courses. Seven of us lived together in an apartment at Upper West Side – a perfect distance from the school.

The summer course was a three-week programme that ran from July 6th to July 24th. I decided to be in New York from July 1st to August 1st, which left me with a couple of days in New York before school and a week afterwards. The planning worked perfectly – it was great to have some days before school to get settled and to have a week of vacation in the city before going back to Denmark.

Summer school was a perfect way for me to get to study abroad and approach education, teaching methods and school systems in a different country without having to leave Copenhagen and ITU for six months.

It was a big advantage and motivation that I within three weeks of intensive school could take 7,5 ECTS points and then in the following semester could dedicate my time to 22,5 ECTS point. Intensive programmes have several advantages, especially when a lot of the course - as mine - was about learning IT software programmes.

Over all I was very satisfied with Graphic Design I. It gave me the chance to explore Adobe Creative Cloud further and combine it with actual hands on graphic design such as drawing, painting and the use of typographies.
We were all a bit surprised about the workload. It was definitely a lot to do and there were at least a couple of hours (often more) of homework every day and we also had to include the weekends for this.
The Graphic Design course was a great input to my master in Digital Design and Communication. It taught me some basic Adobe skills and some work methods e.g. the importance of sketching. I am confident that all of my gained skills will be useful in both my future study and my future job search.

**Arranging your stay**

**Please give a short description of the process involved in arranging your stay:**

Arranging my trip to New York was quite a challenge. There were many things we had to sort out and especially the visa application was an obstacle. Luckily for us we had several months to plan the stay and get the paperwork done, which is a big advantage when you want to study in the States.

From ITU to Parsons in steps:

1) Find the course you wish to attend – you find their course catalog at their website
2) Get a pre-approval at SAP
3) Sign up and pay tuition fee at Parsons
4) Apply visa:
   a. Apply I-20 through Parson’s website. You need: Passport, financial documentation
   b. Apply DS-160 (Nonimmigrant visa). You need: Approved I-20, a new photo of yourself
   c. Pay I-901 SEVIS
   d. Book a meeting at the American Embassy in Copenhagen. You need: Approved I-20, I-901 SEVIS receipt, new photo of yourself, documentation from Parsons
5) Receive your passport and visa by mail and you are ready to go!

For accommodation we were lucky to get in touch with a landlord how often has Danish students as tenants. I would recommend new students to start looking for apartments/rooms in time. There are many online places you can find available rooms – e.g. Airbnb or Facebook groups for Danes in NYC.

**Expenses and Financing**

**Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad**

The trip was over all quite expensive. Fortunately we were able to get some of the tuition fee covered by SU Udlandsstipendium, which was very helpful. You must however expect to spend approximately DKK 10.000,- on school (tuition fee and art materials) and then comes flight tickets, visa applications, travel insurances, metro cards, housing and usual living expenses. New York is furthermore an expensive city to live in and due to a high exchange rate living expenses were also unexpectedly high.

**Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?**

I applied for several scholarships, but it was difficult to find foundations since most funds expect at least three months study abroad.
I would recommend future students to apply the most common funds such as Oticon Fonden, Augustinus Fonden and Nordea Fonden – but also to seek funds in their hometowns. Some students are lucky to find local bound foundations.

**Recommendations for other students:**
Go ahead and jump right into it – it’s all worth it! Don’t be discouraged by all of the paperwork and arrangements you must go through before leaving. Both SAP and the international study guide at your future summer programme knows the procedures and they are very often able to guide you to the next step.