IT University Travel Report

Student: Peter Mørck
Host: The Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites, Los Angeles
Study Programme at IT University: Global Business Informatics
Activity Abroad: HCII 2015 Conference, Los Angeles, USA
Period: 31/07/2015-10/08/2015

Your stay abroad
Please describe your stay abroad:
My two colleagues and I stayed for ten days in Los Angeles, CA, USA. We had the pleasure of being invited to present our research paper on how wearable health-tracking technologies are being used to differentiate health insurance in organizations. Thus, we attended the HCII 2015 conference to present our published work, and attended numerous other presentations. We purposefully stayed for 10 days so we had time to play tourists and made sure to see as much of LA as possible.

What was your initial motivation for going abroad and did your stay meet your expectations?
The initial motivation actually came from the supervisor of our project and she pushed us towards trying to get accepted at the conference. In the beginning we were quite skeptical and only joked about going. However, when we got accepted we were really happy and the whole stay was absolutely incredible and went beyond expectations.

Please describe what you got out of your stay, both personally and academically, and how do you expect it to contribute to your further studies?
We, all three of us, have proven that our research capabilities and academic interests can reach are larger audience, than that of an exam. We are very motivated to conduct more research and projects, reaching outside a specific course/classroom. We want to put method, theory and projects onto a larger academic scene to participate in analyzing, researching and debating the sphere in between human and technology in organisations and societies. It was also amazing as we got the opportunity to travel and see other parts of the world which was amazing.
Arranging your stay

Please give a short description of the process involved in arranging your stay:
The actual conference took place almost half a year after we had our paper proposal accepted so we had plenty of time to plan. Conveniently the conference were taking place at a huge hotel and we were able to get a room for a discounted price. Hence, we decided to stay at the conference hotel for a total of 10 days even though the conference only lasted 5. We then booked the flights right away and the last task that remained was to plan each day which we did in the week before leaving.

What resources did you find helpful in planning your stay and which people did you use (if any)?
Tripadvisor, Google sheets, Google, Momondo.

How did you arrange practicalities such as accommodation?
The conference was held at a hotel which offered a discount for participants and we therefore choose to stay at that hotel. The booking was made online through a link provided by the conference.

Expenses and Financing
Please comment on expenses connected to your stay abroad.
Of course traveling such a long distance creates expenses. My main expenses have been on the flight to and from LA (ca. 6200 DKK), the hotel (ca. 5500 DKK) and the conference (ca. 3100 DKK). Besides that I think I have used on average 35 USD a day on food and beverages. Even though it was a lot of money it was worth it, it was my first time in the US and we made a real trip out of it by staying 10 days and on top of it we got published.
Did you apply for scholarships and would you recommend any ones in particular?

We all applied for several scholarships but have not received any and can thus not recommend any in particular. This is really unfortunate as we had large expenses and it kind of discourages us to try to achieve something similar as this.

Recommendations for other students:

Think beyond the classroom, and your courses - and delve into your academic interests, and projects and take them into other academic contexts than just concluding the next exam. It is important to find professors and teachers that you can spar with and help you pursue these opportunities. Try, try and try but be prepared for the extra workload.