

# PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT:

## Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS) March 2011

### INTRODUCTION

The review team appointed by the Learning Abroad Center (LAC) is pleased to present the following report on the DIS program in Copenhagen, Denmark, as well as two study tours observed by the reviewers in Berlin and Istanbul.

We wish to make clear that we greatly appreciate the cooperation of the DIS staff and faculty, both in Denmark and in the US, for their support, transparency, and engagement throughout the entire process.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DIS is a leader in European-based learning abroad education with a strong institutional identity. The leadership, faculty, and staff are fully committed to their goals of “academic achievements and personal growth through challenging and broadening students’ perspectives.”

DIS offers 15 content-specific semester programs and various summer programs. These programs are designed to be academically rigorous and to enhance student learning and engagement in a European context. At the core of each semester program are the two study tours, with a short study tour in Denmark and a longer study tour to a European destination. Several summer programs also have study tours. These study tours are faculty-led, content-based, and experiential learning components. DIS also offers two additional study tour options; a one-credit academically focused option and an adventure-based option during the semester and the two-week semester break. All DIS courses are rooted in experiential learning and incorporate excursions or assignments making use of the city and region.

DIS has continued to see an increase in student demand for their unique program over the past several years. We believe their assessment and consideration of this increased student demand and their desire to expand the program has been both thoughtful and reflective. We also believe that any increase in demand or planned expansion will be capably managed by the DIS leadership. We agree with the stated strategy of the DIS leadership that creating additional programs is preferable to increasing the course offerings within existing programs to address increased demand and/or planned expansion. For example, to address the high student demand for the Sustainability in Europe program, a program in Environmental Science is being developed. This strategy allows for smaller student cohorts with more focused academic content.

The following report contains recommendations from the review team. We wholeheartedly endorse the DIS program and feel that it meets all necessary specifications to warrant University of Minnesota School of Record credit.

## METHODOLOGY

The evaluation site visit team was composed of Lee Anderson, Associate Dean, College of Design, University of Minnesota, Nanette Hanks, Assistant Dean for Curriculum, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota, and Martha Johnson, Director, Learning Abroad Center, University of Minnesota.

The three members of the site visit team each reviewed the history, annual reports, and student evaluations of the DIS program. They studied the course catalogue and reviewed numerous syllabi for program courses; they read annual program reports; they reviewed statistical information on the students (numbers, gender, major, sending institutions, etc.). They reviewed staff and instructor curriculum vitae; they reviewed the pre-departure orientation packet and the on-site orientation schedule. They received feedback from sending institutions through informal contact at the International Educators Workshop (IEW), which was held during the same week as the review team's visit. The IEW brings together approximately 50 faculty and staff from DIS sending institutions twice a year for a week-long introduction to DIS through course visitations, staff and student presentations, and cultural activities.

In preparation for the site visit, DIS informed its teaching faculty of the review team visit, organized faculty and staff meetings with the review team, organized a meeting with the review team and University of Minnesota students studying at DIS (19 students this semester), and arranged meetings with key administrative staff.

During the six-day visit, team members:

- Visited housing options
- Observed classes across the curriculum
- Observed practicum sessions and course excursions
- Met with the DIS faculty representatives
- Spoke with a wide variety of individual instructors
- Met with University of Minnesota students, as well as students from other institutions
- Met with the DIS program directors, academic staff, student affairs staff, and study tours staff
- Visited the University of Copenhagen where students can enroll in courses with Danish students
- And participated in a curriculum committee meeting.

In addition, the review team members spoke informally with a variety of faculty and staff from sending institutions at the IEW workshop to learn about their impression of DIS's program and to discuss their home institution's curricular needs. Team members also participated in a number of cultural activities that are also organized for students during the semester. The schedule for the three review team members is attached.

Previous to the week in Copenhagen, Nanette Hanks joined a study tour for the Migration and Identity program to Istanbul and Martha Johnson joined a tour for the European Culture and History program in Berlin. During these study tours, the team members participated in excursions, lectures, and observed the use of the sites as well as local contacts and resources.

The site review team jointly drafted and agreed on recommendations that are made part of this report.

## MISSION OF THE PROGRAM

The following is the recently-updated DIS mission statement:

To offer a European-based **study abroad program of the highest quality**, focusing on academic achievements and personal growth by challenging and broadening students' perspectives through a wide range of theory-based and **experiential academics** and **cultural immersion** opportunities.

The program objectives are achieved through:

Study Tours: Europe as your Classroom

- Two program study tours with core cohort
- Optional tours & adventure trips during 2-week travel break

Field Study: Copenhagen as your classroom

- Field study incorporated into every course
- Multiple courses with practicum

Danish Faculty: Learn from Experts

- Practitioners in their fields
- Minimum educational level: master's degree

Immersion & Engagement

- Housing including Host Family, Kollegium, Danish Roommate, Folkehøjskole, DIS Residential Community
- Multiple innovative immersion programs and opportunities

## EVALUATION

### ACADEMICS

The review team was very impressed with the overall academic program of DIS. The quality and quantity of the program core courses offered are impressive. The team felt the academic rigor of both the core courses and electives was on par with US institutions, and the long and short study tours are a unique and highly valuable experiential learning experience for students. The faculty are committed and engaged with teaching and learning, and are highly qualified in their areas of expertise. DIS continues to engage and improve their student evaluation and assessment efforts.

### Curriculum

DIS offers 15 programs focused on specific academic fields or topics. Each program consists of a program core course and two faculty-led course-integrated program study tours – a short study tour in Denmark and a longer study tour to a European destination. Participation in the two study tours is mandatory for all students. In addition to the core course and study tours, students also select up to 4 elective courses. Students have the option of selecting electives within the academic core or from the entire DIS curricular offering; however, students cannot take more than one core course. Student must take a minimum of 12 credits but no more than 18 credits. Students also have the opportunity to sign up for optional short-term study tour courses that carry one academic credit. All core courses and electives are upper-division courses with the exception of Danish Language and Culture, which is an introductory course.

Program core courses are designed around specific major areas of study that generally align with U.S. majors and/or minors. The academic rigor of the core and elective courses is appropriate to upper division coursework with adequate classroom contact hours. The academic content of the study tours are integrated into the pedagogy

of the course. The transfer of credit received for core and elective DIS courses for major and/or minor credit or to fulfill liberal education or general education requirements to the students' home institution is a top priority for DIS.

The team observed several guest lecturers in core and elective courses in Copenhagen. These visitors were well-prepared and encouraged student questions and engagement. The presentations were appropriate to the course material and supported the course learning objectives. The guests brought a specific European and/or Danish focus to the curriculum that students may not have access to in the U.S., and all that we observed had specific and relevant expertise to the course topics.

**\*Recommendation:** While many study tours do an excellent job of learning objective integration, the team recommends the development of specific learning objectives for all European study tours to make it transparent for students how specific sites and experiences are integrated into the core course learning objectives. The team further recommends that the Study Tour Director and Assistant Director works with the faculty to review and revise the individual syllabi to ensure the course learning objectives are integrated into the study tour experience.

### **Experiential Learning Components**

DIS has a unique strength and tradition of incorporating experiential learning in coursework. This is particularly evident in the study tours. DIS has developed an innovative training program for faculty leading study tours that takes them to a site for a long weekend and simulates a study tour so they can experience active learning pedagogy as a participant. The influence of this training was evident in the study tour syllabi, many of which use techniques to engage students, such as assignments requiring students to identify landmarks, buildings, or sites, or assigning students to "introduce" sites along the way. Tours often engage local professionals or cultural informants such as practitioners in relevant fields. Students on a tour to Sweden on the medical practice tour got to observe a knee surgery, architecture students in Finland met renowned architects, and students on the tour in Berlin met with a Turkish-German professor at a mosque. Students consistently commented that the study tours were a highlight because they learned so much more than they would have as a tourist.

DIS offers a variety of practicum opportunities for students that are directly related to the core course curriculum. Examples of practicum disciplines include medical practice, child development, and architecture.

The team observed the Child Development and Diversity Practicum site "Snorretoppen," an integrated daycare and kindergarten with approximately 200 children aged 0-6 years. Students are trained and receive ongoing support for their work at the practicum site through the core course curriculum. Only students enrolled in the Child Development and Diversity core course program are eligible for this practicum experience. The work at Snorretoppen is directly related to the course learning objectives. The students observed by the team appeared integrated into the work at the site and were fully engaged with the children in a variety of settings. While they are at Snorretoppen, the students receive direct supervision and support from site staff. Student assessment at the practicum site is incorporated into the core course.

The team also observed another form of practicum: the architecture design studio. Students in the observed studio were assigned a real-world design exercise, received a lecture about the topics of that design exercise from a prominent local professional, and went on a guided field trip to three local sites that were foremost examples of built solutions to the design exercise. All activities of the studio were of the highest caliber, and students were enthusiastic to begin work on the exercise. Student work from previous design exercises were observed to be equivalent to work from strong design-oriented professional architecture programs in the United States.

The team additionally observed a foundational design course that gave students a limited set of materials and a challenge. Students worked in teams for three hours to design and construct their solution. Their projects were creative and fun, and the instructors were very engaged throughout – going around and coaching each team through their project.

All DIS courses are required to incorporate two local field study activities into their semester course. The team observed several of these including a walking tour of Hans Christian Anderson's Copenhagen, a visit to Danish

parliament, a tour to local sites of architectural significance, and a visit to a local social services office. All were excellent and demonstrated DIS commitment to using Copenhagen as the classroom.

### **Faculty**

The hiring of faculty is handled by the academic Program Directors in each individual program and approved by the Faculty Executive Committee. There are 11 full-time faculty and a large number of part-time faculty. A high percentage of the faculty have terminal or professional degrees and all faculty are required to have at a minimum of an M.A. or equivalent. The team felt that all faculty we observed had degrees appropriate for the course content presented. Faculty are available to students outside of class through office hours, phone, and electronic mail.

**\*Recommendation:** All faculty list their contact information on the syllabus but the team notes that the listing of office hours is inconsistent. The team recommends more standardization and consistency in basic contact information for every syllabus and all courses.

### **Syllabi**

The team was provided with syllabi prior to the site visit and received additional copies for individual class observations. We note that there is a general inconsistency in the format of the syllabi; however most include the basic information including a general description, contact information, learning objectives, grading elements, required readings, and class schedule. The number of classroom contact hours and out-of-classroom readings and assignments met or exceeded average US standards in most disciplines. Assigned readings and supplemental materials appeared to be academically rigorous and appropriate.

**\*Recommendation:** The team recommends the adaptation of a syllabus template to be used by all courses that includes standardized contact information, office hours, course description, learning objectives, readings, class schedule, grading elements, and other academic policies. There should be room in the template for faculty to tailor the content to the individual needs of their discipline or course while maintaining a standard format for basic information.

**\*Recommendation:** It appeared to the team that the development and inclusion of student learning outcomes for courses is inconsistent. We recommend that student learning outcomes and assessment are developed for all courses and included in the syllabi. Clearly identifying the learning outcomes and how student learning related to the outcomes will be assessed will provide students with a better understanding of course expectations and the required academic effort.

**\*Recommendation:** The team heard a consistent message from students that they would like more transparency in assessment of their progress in a course. Students noted that sometimes they were surprised to learn they were not meeting the instructor's expectations nor performing as well as they thought given their effort in the course. The team realizes that this is a unique US student concern and anxiety over performance and grades. Nevertheless, we recommend a more transparent and timely assessment of student progress which could be accomplished using the Blackboard grade report feature.

After meeting with Keith Gumery, Director of Teaching and Learning, and Malene Torp, Associate Director, the team had a better understanding of the evaluation project currently underway in DIS. We believe DIS continues to have high expectations for student achievement and seriously considers student evaluations. The team supports DIS in their ongoing effort to conduct comprehensive quantitative and qualitative assessment of student learning and faculty teaching.

### **Academic Advising**

All students register for courses prior to leaving the US. This process allows students to confirm with their home institution the applicability of a particular course to their major/minor program or liberal or general education

requirements. Although students are not assigned a specific academic adviser in DIS, each student has advising contact with the Program Directors in their core course program. Many of the larger core course programs also have Assistant Program Directors to aid students with any academic advising concerns. The new Director of Teaching and Learning indicated that he will take on the responsibility of counseling students with academic difficulties such as time-management, study skills, or paper writing.

## STUDENT SERVICES

The team was highly impressed by the continued investment and resources given to student affairs. In April 2011, DIS will pilot a parallel workshop to the Danish Educators' Workshop (DEW) at the University of Minnesota for student affairs staff. This innovative workshop will include meetings and training with student affairs professionals from an array of offices including residential life, multicultural affairs, parent programs, and student conduct at Minnesota and at other local liberal arts schools for comparison. The team commends DIS on its continued commitment to supporting student development through the student affairs staff and resources.

### Pre-departure services and materials

Students and IEW workshop participants consistently commented on the high level and quality of advising and support that they received both from the DIS North American Office and from the DIS staff. The students felt that had been prepared for the experience, and it is also worth noting that students discussed having chosen the program for the elements that DIS has worked to promote as their core features, such as academic rigor and the incorporation of study tours.

As there still seem to be some challenges for on-site orientation, there may be an opportunity to enhance pre-departure support to assist with the student's transitions (see recommendation in on-site orientation).

### On-site Orientation

Given the growth and very large numbers of students involved, the team felt that the DIS student affairs have done an excellent job in developing a program that is active and informative, and materials that are useful and clear. Unfortunately, some students seem to not have fully participated in the orientation, as it is expected but not really mandatory.

**\*Recommendation:** It is our understanding that preliminary conversations in regard to an online orientation had been held a few years ago. An online orientation would allow for better tracking of participation and guarantee a baseline of information students can be held responsible for. The team recommends that DIS consider developing an online orientation that would be required for all students.

While not all students participated in all of the activities fully, none seemed to find them inappropriate or lacking. Some students did comment that they would have preferred to be in groups organized by housing type or program so they could have better built a cohort from the beginning. Others preferred being mixed, so perhaps a structure that allows for students to choose could be explored.

The team engaged in multiple conversations about the experience of American students from racially or ethnically diverse backgrounds. DIS has worked very hard to recruit a more diverse student population and while the percentage is still relatively small, it has much higher than it has been historically.

**\*Recommendation:** The team recommends that a specific session (open to all participants but designed for students who self-identify as 'diverse') be developed to put issues of Danish attitudes toward and terminology around race, ethnicity, religion, or gender and sexuality into context. This will better prepare students for situations they might encounter and better indicate the staff's willingness to support students who encounter situations that create anxiety related to their identity.

## Housing

Again in the context of the growth of the program, the housing staff members have done a remarkable job of continuing to identify appropriate housing for all DIS participants. DIS has also made excellent investments in property with added use dimensions including an intended “sustainability community” and a courtyard to host cross-cultural events.

The housing forms and materials are clear and the organization and lists of “XXXX is the right option if you...” are of particular note. Homestays continue to be a highlight and the team is impressed by the systems being developed to better identify and track current and potential homes.

**\*Recommendation:** As a more diverse array of kollegiums are offered, information modified for each type of kollegium might be considered, as right now the kollegium information treats them as the same. It is our understanding from students and staff that they do differ significantly, so more information to allow students to identify their best option would be useful.

**\*Recommendation:** The roles of the social and residential advisors may also need to be clarified. Students were not clear about how to use them as a resource for housing issues, and in some cases stated they had little to no interaction. In other cases the advisors were very engaged and acted as a cultural resource. The team was impressed with this model as a means to support students in the various housing options; particularly in the options that DIS has little administrative control over (such as the kollegium). But a clarification of the roles for the students seems necessary.

**\*Recommendation:** As DIS attracts a more diverse student population, additional conversations should be included in the identification and training of host family to ensure a comfortable living environment for all students in Danish homes. Conversely, students should be prepared to consider and accept a diverse variety of living situations as “homestays.” Housing materials and resources should be reviewed and modified to address these dimensions.

Students across all housing types expressed a high level of satisfaction in regard to meal plans and public transport passes and access. Students who had issues felt the staff had been responsive and had a very high regard for the student affairs staff.

## Health & Wellness

DIS continues to be a true leader in the field in terms of student support. Students expressed few concerns in terms of support, and several had experiences of needing medical care and remarked at how helpful DIS staff had been. DIS’s disseminated support through housing and classes results in a high level of engagement and systems to identify student issues early.

**\*Recommendation:** The only specific recommendation in this regard is to reference home university insurance coverage more specifically in student materials. It is our understanding that coordination of insurance coverage with Danish coverage is addressed in orientation but it is not in the student handbook. A few students who had been treated for minor illnesses “forgot” they had US coverage as well. Particularly when students are traveling outside of Denmark, this insurance is often more appropriate and comprehensive.

## Cultural Learning

The challenges to facilitate culture learning for American study abroad students are multiple and daunting. The team observed that DIS has worked exhaustively to employ innovative strategies to foster cross-cultural engagement including, but not limited to:

- Homestays
- Visiting Family program
- Sports clubs

- Volunteer opportunities
- DIS International Club
- Danish Student House connections
- DIS Buddy Network
- Immerse Yourself Fair
- Intercultural Leadership Award

Student participation is not optimal in many of the above activities, but it is worth noting that students who do participate are very satisfied and view the activities as a highlight. We were particularly impressed with the depth and quality of the relationships some students had developed with their “visiting family.” They often seem to go far beyond the required level of engagement.

While the phenomenon of students expressing regret over level of immersion is universal in study abroad, the team truly feels DIS goes above and beyond to identify and provide opportunities. Students we spoke with felt this was encouraged constantly. DIS has worked very hard to break up the group, to the extent that some students indicated they wished they had more opportunities to meet other DIS students, as it is tough to do so outside of class (particularly for those in homestays).

The team does have some concern over the use of the word “immersion.” It may be problematic for a variety of reasons. It is common in education abroad but less so in much of US higher education’s lexicon.

**\*Recommendation:** DIS may want to consider re-branding these activities in a framework more familiar to US students, such as “engagement.” The use of the term cultural “engagement” (which is actually used synonymously with immersion in many DIS materials) is actually more active, and puts the responsibility back on the student more explicitly. More engaging language (no pun intended) around these activities may reduce some of the confusion or intimidation around what they require.

The team was also very impressed by the variety of optional adventure trips offered by the program. Students love these and the array of travel opportunities both for credit and for adventure continues to be the signature feature of the program and an excellent means to engage with the cultures they encounter.

DIS’s current materials and engagement with re-entry is minimal. A newsletter upon return is the current primary vehicle. Given the strong cohort building that takes place on the program and the active participation of alumni on Facebook or through LinkedIn, this seems to be an area DIS could expand. .

**\*Recommendation:** The team suggests DIS expand its current resources for students after they have returned to the US. The opportunities for alumni to return as interns are very unique, and resources specific to DIS but linking to home institutions, etc. could easily be developed and enhanced with a program specific angle.

## **ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM**

### **Resident Director and Staff**

The consistency and experience of the leadership of DIS is certainly a strength of the program. Recently, DIS has done a particularly good job of cultivating leadership across the organization, and this is clear in staff and faculty satisfaction. The staff and faculty are all highly committed to the organization and the project in general in a unique way. The Danish staff and faculty are cross-culturally aware, friendly and approachable.

### **Administrative Structure**

#### **General Program Management**

The faculty of DIS consists of eleven full-time faculty and a larger number of adjunct faculty, largely from the professional community who are selected by a formal search selection committee. DIS also invites faculty from

DIS partner institutions to submit proposals to teach one-time courses. DIS also invites faculty with their students from partner institutions to create summer programs that are approved and supported by DIS.

Each program within the DIS offerings has a director, and, depending on the size of the program, an assistant director. The granular nature of the structure has allowed the DIS programs to grow in an orderly manner.

The team commends DIS for engaging in and investing in several activities that are designed to constantly improve pedagogy and DIS's function as a study abroad program. The signature Danish Educators' Workshop has informed the quality of the teaching in very apparent ways. The new training program for study tour leaders is excellent. The creation of the Director of Teaching and Learning position and the consequent hiring of Keith Gumery demonstrate DIS's dedication to supporting teaching and learning.

## **QUALITY OF FACILITIES**

### **Office and Class space**

The DIS offices and classrooms are distributed within several buildings located close to one another in the heart of the old section of Copenhagen. The distributed space works well to create an intimate feel to the 'campus', even though it presently serves about 700 students. The classrooms and offices are bright and fresh, with plentiful access to daylight. All classrooms are equipped with video projection and, when necessary, white boards. The team especially commends the excellent studio spaces provided for the architecture and design students that provide both generous space and "atmosphere" for this important aspect of the program.

DIS recently acquired and remodeled space to accommodate increased enrollment. The team commends the strategic acquisition of new classroom space in nearby buildings and notes that, even though enrollment has increased at a rate of about 10% per year, classroom and associated space has remained adequate and even generous.

### **Library**

The DIS library recently moved into a new, enlarged facility that includes computer facilities and study areas. The collection provides good support for the DIS programs, and appropriately emphasizes materials related to Europe and Denmark. The collection also includes an extensive video collection that may be checked out, viewed individually in a quiet room, or viewed by a group of up to twenty-five in a theatre-style room associated with the library. Faculty may request that materials be purchased for the collection, and funding for acquisition seems adequate. Students also have access to several significant libraries in the Copenhagen area and multiple online periodicals and databases. The team commends DIS for investing in this new library facility.

### **Computer lab**

The 2007 report recommended that DIS continue to work to address computer and IT support challenges. The team agrees that DIS is now providing strong computer and IT support. The number and distribution of computer labs and printers, available software and access to computer kiosks are all of a high standard. The quality of wireless networking and support for integration of student laptops at both DIS facilities and student housing is also commendable. The team especially commends the friendly and outgoing nature of the IT support staff and the timely support given for any IT related problems.

\* **Recommendation:** The team recommends that consideration be given to extending access to some computer labs for programs, such as architecture, that have reason to use labs on a 24-hour basis.

## **SAFETY & SECURITY ISSUES**

DIS has an excellent set of plans and protocol for evacuation and crisis management, and it to be commended for the thoroughness of the materials.

DIS maintains a good relationship with local authorities and the US embassy staff in Copenhagen. Local crime and safety issues are minimal and students feel very comfortable in Copenhagen.

**\*Recommendation:** The Danish perception or belief that there “is no crime in Denmark” was pointed out by several students as being overly exaggerated. Incidents are infrequent but do happen, and students suggested that a recognition of the realities inherent in being in any major capital should be shared rather than a constant attempt to minimize perceptions.

The protocols for handling individual student crises both during and after office hours are excellent.

**\*Recommendation:** The team suggests that a more detailed directive for specific types of incidents (student arrest and particularly sexual assault) be provided in more detail.

## **RELATION TO PREVIOUS REVIEWS:**

The review team feels that in all cases, DIS appropriately addressed the recommendations of the 2007 evaluation. Of particular note in relation to the previous review is the incorporation or development of the following:

- The creation of the curriculum committee including US institutional representation to better engage partners in a systemic program development process
- The enhancement of the role of program director and the addition of assistant directors to address program growth and to professionalize program management
- Constant engagement with faculty and leadership from partner institutions in the US
- A review of the evaluative processes and investment in learning technologies
- Continuing the focus on articulation of learning goals and outcomes
- Tools to help students better select housing
- A myriad of opportunities and structures to assist students with cultural engagement.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The committee expresses its sincere and genuine admiration for the outstanding dedication of the entire DIS staff. In particular, we would like to thank Swenyu Hu for her thorough and detailed organization of the review materials and schedule. The committee also deeply appreciates DIS’s transparency and openness, which enabled the review committee to commit an open and thorough evaluation. The review committee wishes the DIS administration, faculty and staff continued growth and much success as a unique organization among US study abroad offerings.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. While many study tours do an excellent job of learning objective integration, the team recommends the development of specific learning objectives for all European study tours to make it transparent for students how specific sites and experiences are integrated into the core course learning objectives. The team further recommends that the Study Tour Director and Assistant Director work with the faculty to review and revise the individual syllabi to ensure the course learning objectives are integrated into the study tour experience.
2. All faculty list their contact information on the syllabus but the team notes that the listing of office hours is inconsistent. The team recommends more standardization and consistency in basic contact information for every syllabus and all courses.
3. The team recommends the adaptation of a syllabus template to be used by all courses that includes standardized contact information, office hours, course description, learning objectives, readings, class schedule, grading elements, and other academic policies. There should be room in the template for faculty to tailor the content to the individual needs of their discipline or course while maintaining a standard format for basic information.
4. It appeared to the team that the development and inclusion of student learning outcomes for courses is inconsistent. We recommend that student learning outcomes and assessment are developed for all courses and included in the syllabi. Clearly identifying the learning outcomes and how student learning related to the outcomes will be assessed will provide students with a better understanding of course expectations and the required academic effort.
5. The team heard a consistent message from students that they would like more transparency in assessment of their progress in a course. Students noted that sometimes they were surprised to learn they were not meeting the instructor's expectations nor performing as well as they thought given their effort in the course. The team realizes that this is a unique US student concern and anxiety over performance and grades. Nevertheless, we recommend a more transparent and timely assessment of student progress which could be accomplished using the Blackboard grade report feature.
6. It is our understanding that preliminary conversations in regard to an online orientation had been held a few years ago. An online orientation would allow for better tracking of participation and guarantee a baseline of information students can be held responsible for. The team recommends that DIS consider developing an online orientation that would be required for all students.
7. The team recommends that a specific session (open to all participants but designed for students who self-identify as 'diverse') be developed to put issues of Danish attitudes toward and terminology around race, ethnicity, religion, or gender and sexuality into context. This will better prepare students for situations they might encounter and better indicate the staff's willingness to support students who encounter situations that create anxiety related to their identity.
8. As a more diverse array of kollegiums are offered, information modified for each type of program might be considered, as right now the kollegium information treats them as the same. It is our understanding from students and staff that they do differ significantly, so more information to allow students to identify their best option would be useful.
9. The roles of the social and residential advisors may also need to be clarified. Students were not clear about how to use them as a resource for housing issues, and in some cases stated they had little to no interaction. In other cases the advisors were very engaged and acted as a cultural resource. The team was impressed with this model as a means to support students in the various housing options; particularly in the options that DIS has little administrative control over (such as the kollegium). But a clarification of the roles for the students seems necessary.
10. As DIS attracts a more diverse student population, additional conversations should be included in the identification and training of host family to ensure a comfortable living environment for all students in Danish homes. Conversely, students should be prepared to consider and accept a diverse variety of living situations as "homestays." Housing materials and resources should be reviewed and modified to address these dimensions.
11. The only specific recommendation in this regard is to reference home university insurance coverage more specifically in student materials. It is our understanding that coordination of insurance coverage with Danish coverage is addressed in orientation but it is not in the student handbook. A few students who had

been treated for minor illnesses “forgot” they had US coverage as well. Particularly when students are traveling outside of Denmark, this insurance is often more appropriate and comprehensive.

12. DIS may want to consider re-branding these activities in a framework more familiar to us students, such as “engagement.” A word such as engagement (which is actually used synonymously with immersion in many DIS materials) is actually more active, and puts the responsibility back on the student more explicitly. More engaging language (no pun intended) around these activities may reduce some of the confusion or intimidation around what they require.
13. The team suggests DIS expand its current resources for students after they have returned to the US. The opportunities for alumni to return as interns are very unique, and resources specific to DIS but linking to home institutions, etc. could easily be developed and enhanced with a program specific angle.
14. The team recommends that consideration be given to extending access to some computer labs for programs, such as architecture, that have reason to use labs on a 24-hour basis.
15. The Danish perception or belief that there “is no crime in Denmark” was pointed out by several students as being overly exaggerated. Incidents are infrequent but do happen, and students suggested that a recognition of the realities inherent in being in any major capital should be shared rather than a constant attempt to minimize perceptions.
16. The team suggests that a more detailed directive for specific types of incidents (student arrest and particularly sexual assault) be provided in more detail.