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Linnaeus University Summer Academy

Since I was about 15 years old, I had a goal of traveling to the country of Sweden. The vast forests, the bustling city of Stockholm, and the strong education system were all of interest to me at a young age. When I made the decision to study abroad this summer, I already knew where I wanted to go. Yes, I expanded my knowledge on an academic level, but I was also exposed to various people and cultures that created a unique experience for me, thus making me a more well-rounded individual.

One way in which participating in the Linnaeus University Summer Academy contributed to my education was through my course titled “Creativity, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation in a Swedish Context.” The class was taught by a different professor each week, and each of them had their own unique background in the realm of business. One professor, Nils Nilsson, specializes in the “Entrepreneurial Gaze” which essentially focuses on how entrepreneurs can learn to see and act on opportunities. This was very informative, because we discussed the debate of whether opportunities are created or found in our environments, and how we can act on those opportunities. Long story short, they can be both. I will apply this to my further studies and life experience by learning to exploit the resources that are around me. Another professor, David Calas, was very successful in teaching the class about the business model. We were taught how to calculate revenue streams and determine core values that will attract certain customers. I feel that I am very well-equipped with tools that can help me to start a business.

Outside of academia, my study abroad experience in Kalmar, Sweden taught me lessons about cultures that could never be learned in the classroom. The Summer Academy hosted over 100 students from countries such as Russia, South Africa, Canada, China, and Germany, just to name a few. I learned very quickly that what is normal in the United States is not necessarily normal in another country. Most people spoke a minimum of *three* languages, and so language barriers were sometimes a challenge, especially because the only language I know is English. Sometimes questions or comments would come across as rude and blunt from non-native English speakers, but I had to understand that they do not mean it this way, it is just difficult to be passive in a language that you do not speak on a daily basis. I found myself finding creative ways to describe things that my friends did not know the word for in their native language. One time, I used a *meme* to tell my friend what the word for “moth” was in English. One of the first weeks at Linnaeus, we had the opportunity to participate in an Intercultural Communications workshop, in which we learned about social norms amongst various cultures. We discussed things such as personal space, how people outwardly deal with emotions, and greetings.

Additionally, being in a city outside of Fort Collins showed me that the way people interact in public is quite different. The Swedish way is to tend to keep to yourself, and people do not usually greet you unless you greet them first. Most people do not say “excuse me” or “sorry” when they are trying to get around you in the grocery store or shopping mall. In a way, this was kind of relieving, because it can be redundant saying “Excuse me!” to every person you walk by in a Walmart.

In conclusion, I would recommend living abroad to any student at Colorado State because it allowed me to expand my brain and find creative solutions to problems that I did not face in my home country.