

EXCHANGE REPORT

Los Angeles 2023

13rd of January - 17th of June 2023

Marie Christensen

Exchange program from Design and Business – Fashion Management at KEA, København, Denmark to Los Angeles, United States at FIDM – Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising with a major in Apparel Industry Management.

Classes at FIDM

Apparel Process 1	I learned the basics about sewing and producing patterns for clothing. By the end of the class, we had the skillset, to design and sew our own dress.
CLO 3D	Here I learned all about using the program CLO-3D for designing and producing clothing in 3D. We ended up making our own mini collection of clothes in the program.
Cost Control	In Cost Control i learned exactly what it takes to start a business, and making it succeed. This included learning about different steps in the different departments of a business, that should be made in order to make a successful business.
Quality Control	In Quality Control i learned about the important steps of ensuring quality throughout the supply chain. This included learning about the principles of Six Sigma.
Ownership and Finance	Here i learned about making a business proposal, and the processes of starting your own business from an investors point of view.
Production Control	In production Control i learned in depth about the different

	departments of a business and which delivery dates needed to be taking in to consideration. The course ended up with us developing a full portfolio for future employers.
Apparel Management Technology	In this i class i learned about different computer programs that generate tech packs, and follows the product lifecycle from start to end.
Production and Sourcing	In production and sourcing we worked on developing a style, and sourcing the necessary items for that style. This included sourcing for BOM and finding a contractor in a country that was fit for that garment.

Academic Experience

- *How helpful was the receiving school in the process of choosing classes and settling you in?*

My exchange coordinator at FIDM was Sarah – she was super helpful and nice in getting me settled in, and getting me registered for the classes i wanted to attend. Throughout my stay, she took all the exchange students out for coffee multiple times as well, and she was always nice and helpful if you needed any help or had any questions.

- *What classes/study experiences did you find the most rewarding? Why?*

I think overall, it was the experience of learning how the fashion industry and business works in the US, and how to manage the industry on a global scale that was the most rewarding. Doing business in the US is in a whole other scale than what i've learned in Denmark, so that what really interesting.

- *What classes/study experiences did you find least relevant or least valuable to you? Why?*

It would probably be the Production Control class, but mainly because I already had learned most of what we were taught from back home.

- *What classes would you advice other KEA students going to the receiving school to choose or not to choose?*

The CLO3D class – as frustrating as it sometimes was – was super rewarding in the sense that i believe it is a tool that will be useful to have in the future. Cost Control was really interesting as well, especically because our teacher had a lot of anecdotes and stories from real life, that was really interesting to hear about.

Practical Experience

- *How was the application process?*

- *What did KEA help you with?*
- *What help did you receive from your school abroad*

When it comes to the application process you have to be patient, and do things as soon as they are possible. Because you are dealing with the US, there are a lot of documents to fill out and to secure as well, and not the time in the world to do it, so i would make sure to be ahead of time. If you follow all of the application steps as you are being told by FIDM and KEA it is pretty straightforward, it can just be a bit time consuming so keep that in mind.

- *Did you have any practical difficulties settling down in at your destination?*
 - *How helpful was the receiving school in this process?*

As i had all of my documents ready, and my apartment was already furnished with all amenities as well, it was pretty straightforward, and I didn't have any difficulties. As an exchange student you start a couple days earlier than normal students, just to get a tour of the school and all the important information. This really helped me in getting settled in, and understanding how to school works.

- *Where did you live?*
 - *Was it difficult to find accommodation?*
 - *Was it expensive?*

Rent in LA is insanely expensive, so keep that in mind. It was a bit of a challenge to find accommodation, but as i traveled with a friend from school, we managed to find a really nice apartment via Blueground.com that was furnished with two bedrooms, and was only a bit more expensive than the school housing. But you should be prepared to put down a lot of money for rent each month.

- *What kind of expenses did you have in general?*
 - *Did you spend more or less money than you budgeted with?*

As the dollar is at an all-time high, and inflation is high as well in the US, it has definitely been more expensive than i anticipated. Not only the rent is high, but California in general, is one of the most expensive states to live in in the US, and living expenses were a lot higher than I anticipated. The amount of money I was told to have available was not near enough, which is something you should be prepared for.

- *What kind of income did you have during your exchange?*
 - *Did you receive SU and/or Erasmus*
 - *Did you apply for any grants and did you receive any?*

I received SU as well as the Erasmus Plus grant while i was in the US, and in addition to that i received one or two independent grants as well. I can only recommend to apply for as many grants as possible, as it is a bit of an economical challenge to make ends meet.

Cultural/Personal Experience

- *What challenges did you experience culturally while being abroad?*
 - *How helpful was the receiving school in this process?*

To be completely honest I don't think I have had any cultural challenges whilst I have been here. I have travelled a lot around the US before my stay here, so I was pretty prepared for whatever that may occur, or how the cultural differences between my home country and the US might be. Otherwise I am sure that Sarah and FIDM would have been helpful, as they were always open and friendly.

- *What was the best cultural/personal experience during your studies abroad?*

Throughout my stay in the US, I took many trips with both friends and family around the state, and I never would have imagined that there was so much beautiful nature in California. Yosemite national Park was definitely a highlight, and i can only recommend renting a car, and drive around California in order to get the full Californian experience. Americans are in general very friendly and open to giving advice on where to go, so if you ever need any tips on what to see, it is easy to just ask around and get a lot of great tips.

- *What advice would you give other KEA students going to study abroad at the receiving school?*

It's really easy to talk to people, and most people are really friendly and outgoing, so if you are open and curious then it will be a great experience.