

Office of Global Business: Sustainable Business Global Lab



Logan Cahall, 3rd Year Accounting Major, STEP Faculty Member Lauren Haas-gehres

Background/Description

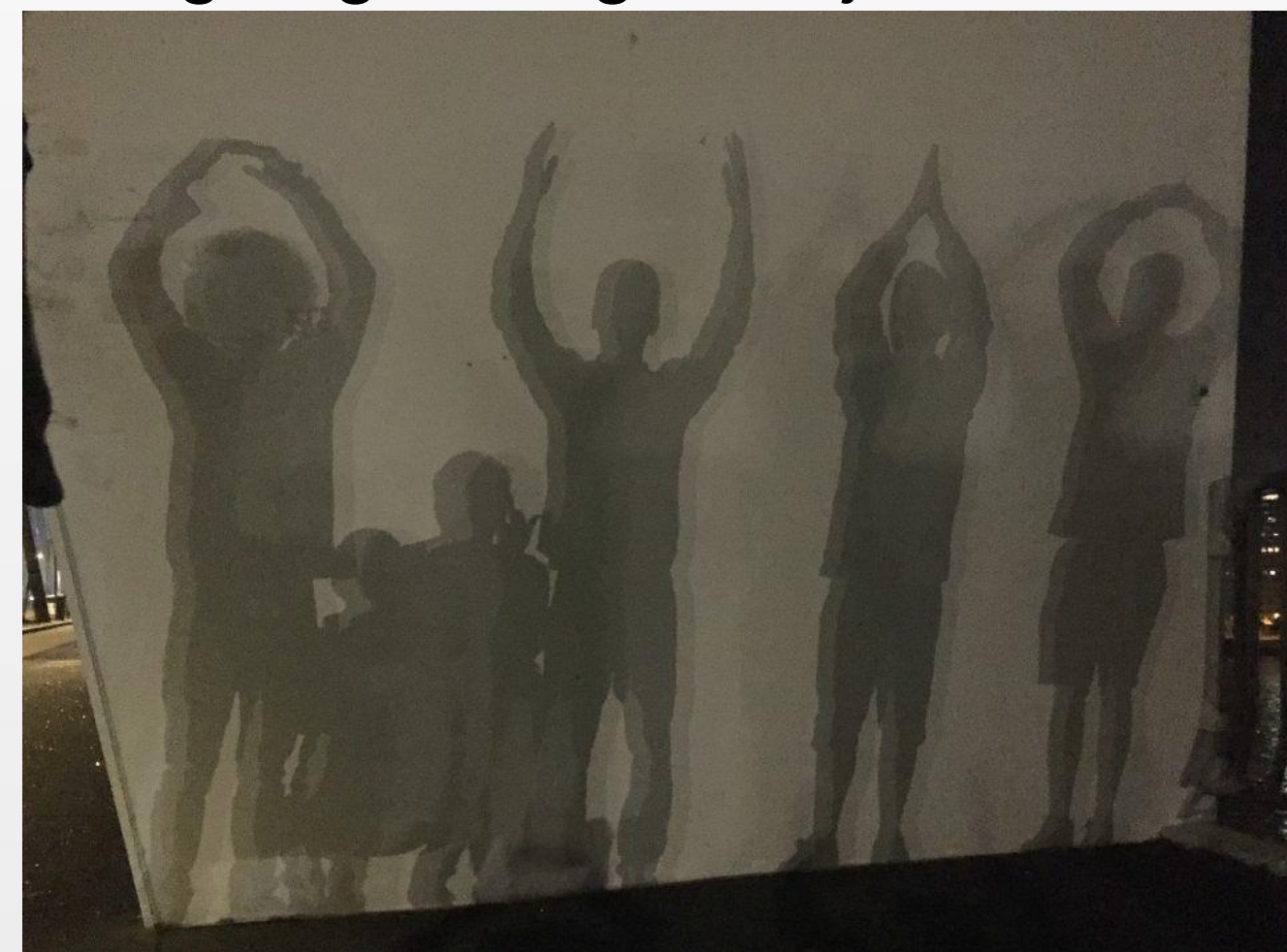
The sustainable Business Global Lab is a two-week trip during May that takes select business students to Rotterdam, The Netherlands and Copenhagen, Denmark. The lab incorporates a second session course which focuses on sustainable business practices in the Scandinavian countries in which you visit, a region widely recognized as having the most innovative and culturally ingrained sustainable practices.

The course prepares students for when they meet with executives in-country, as the students hear how various companies in different fields deal with implementing sustainable business practices, with time built-in for asking questions. In addition to meeting with companies, there are also cultural excursions that allow the students to visit tourist highlights and to learn about the country's history and culture, among other things.



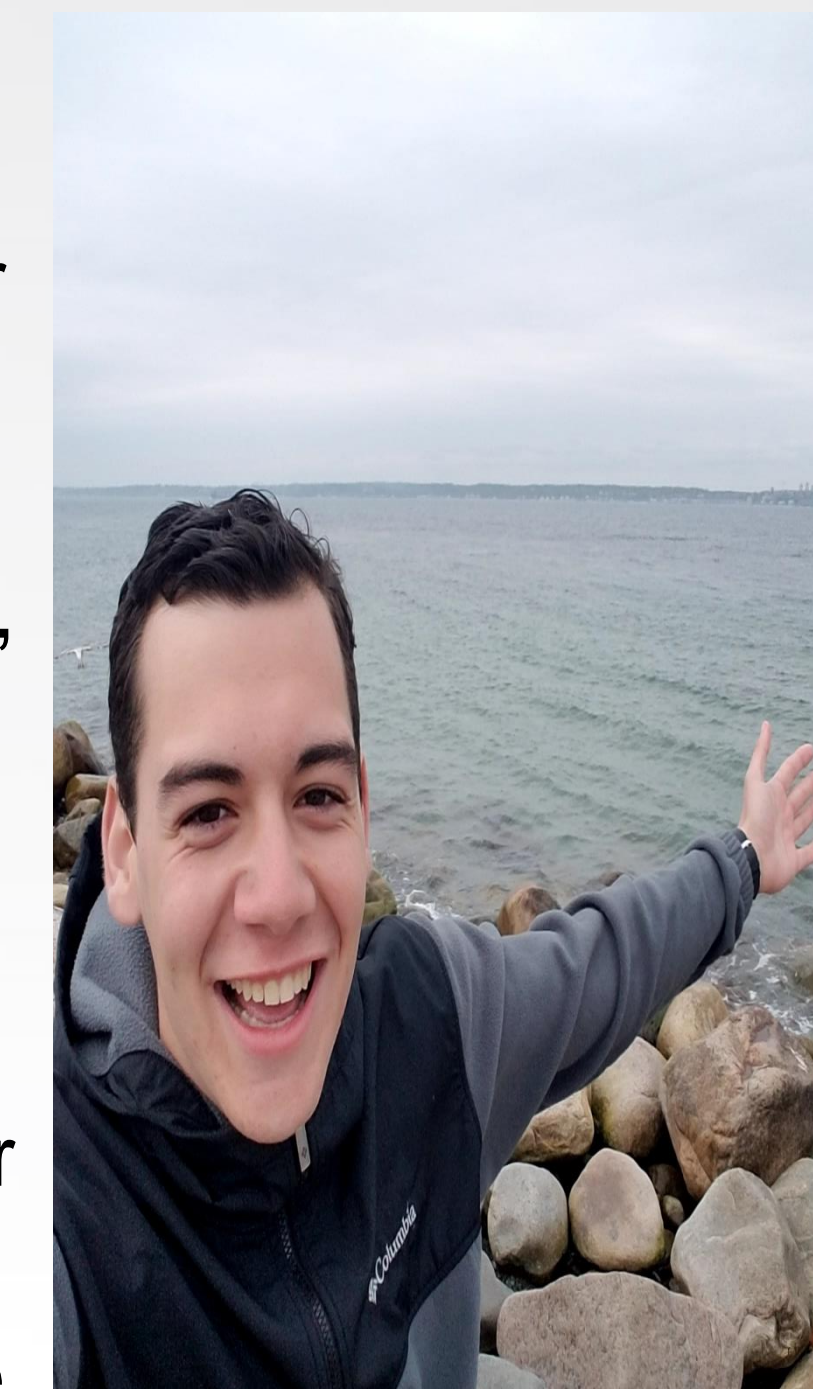
What did I learn?

Considering this trip abroad was my first time ever going outside of North America, it would be fair to say that this trip taught me a lot. While I was deeply impacted on a personal level and from a cultural perspective, what really impacted me was my shift in perspective regarding how I might want to operate in the business world during my career. I used to understand business from an inside-out perspective, as is typical in the U.S., most companies focus on its own interests and then consider its interactions and how it might be exploiting the world. Through my trip, I have aligned my thinking with that of a different perspective, an outside-in perspective, one where a company considers the world's needs and then asks how it can do business to see those needs met. This trip helped shape my perspective and taught me to consider the values of companies when going through the job searching process.



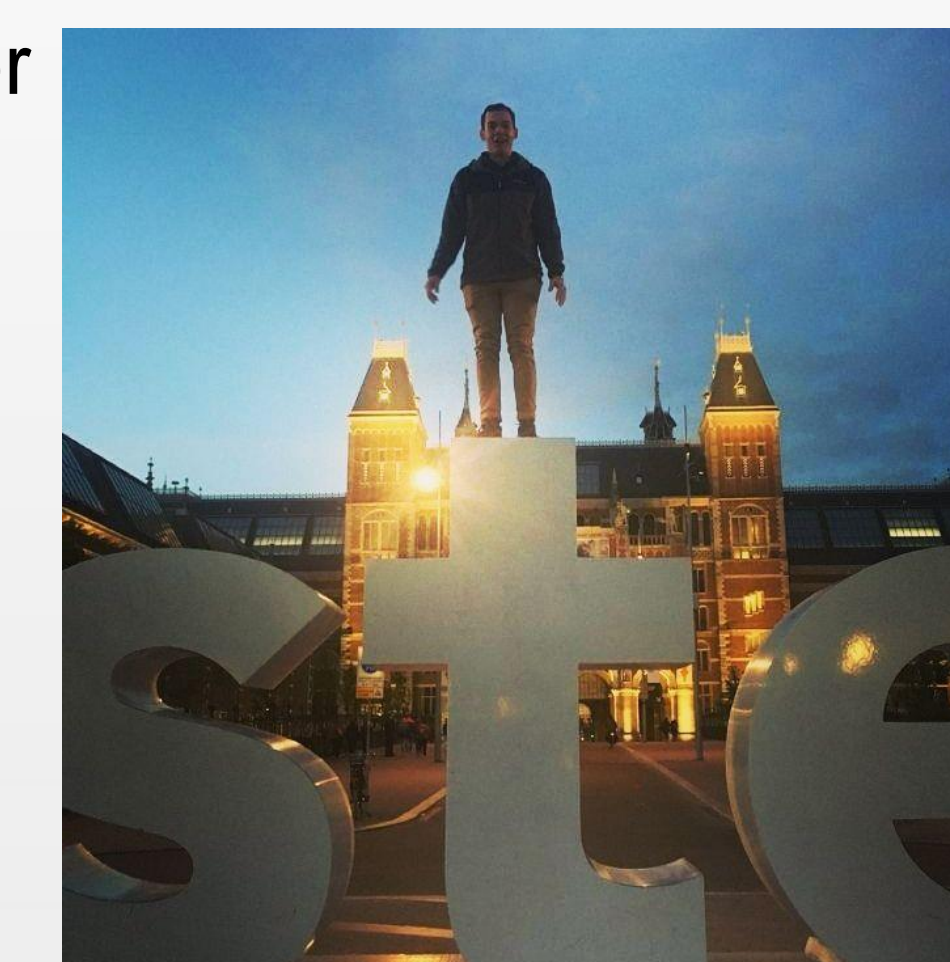
Personal Impact

One thing that I discovered through my trip abroad was my sense of independence. While I enjoy hiking and exploring at home, I had never been put in a situation where I had as much freedom and opportunity to truly explore. Every night, once our required activities were finished, I picked a different part of the city that I was staying in and just started to walk. Without too much of an agenda, I stumbled upon cool shops, beautiful parks, inviting residential neighborhoods, and even national attractions or landmarks. Through this traveling, I was able to get different perspectives of cities and was able to fully explore the beauty that they had to offer. This attitude abroad made me wonder why I had never tried something like that in my own home city of Columbus, a large city with a great deal to offer, and since returning home, I have made it a point to get out and more deeply explore the city that I reside in. This opportunity abroad gave me a lot of time to myself to think and to grow as an individual, and it was truly rewarding.



Cultural Impact

Due to this being my first cultural experience outside of the United States, my trip abroad taught me a great deal about how to be more of a global thinker and learner. In addition to getting to meet new people and try different foods, I was also challenged with how I should think and approach situations, particularly in a business setting. Growing up, I was instilled with the idea that the United States was #1 in everything, an idea that has been wearing away over the years. As I was presented with different ways of thinking, I was able to see U.S. culture from a truly outside perspective for the first time in my life, and it showed me that we have a long way to go. My experience abroad taught me how to be more of a global thinker, and it showed me that there are a myriad of ways of approaching difficult situations, a mindset that I hope to carry with me and cultivate throughout my personal and professional life.



Moving Forward

Overall, it is fair to say that this trip made a tremendous impact on me. It has changed the way I think, it has influenced how I carry myself, impacted the courses I am taking at Ohio State, and has guided me towards new potential career paths. One thing from the trip that surprised and impressed me was the diversity of the companies we met with, from logistics companies, to retailers, to local government departments, to even an accounting firm, which happens to be my major. From getting to hear from such a range of companies, I was able to hear new possibilities of what jobs I might enjoy and want to pursue, both in the field of accounting or outside of it. One thing I took away from the trip was that the job of sustainability doesn't just fall on those who oversee it, but that it's an area that all employees must be invested in. In determining career paths, I would love to be a part of an organization that would allow me to make an investment in the field of sustainability in the United States, and this trip abroad is solely responsible for that change in passion and direction.



Favorite Part

For the most part, my trip abroad was pretty structured. Most days had a nearly full itinerary, but there was one day that we were given in Copenhagen, Denmark where we had completely free to ourselves. We had a pass that gave us free access to almost every museum, some major attractions, and all public transportation throughout the country. I took full advantage of this day and explored from dusk until dawn. My highlight of this day was taking a train with some friends up the countryside towards the North Sea, where we visited Kronborg castle, the castle that the plot of Hamlet is said to have taken place in. The castle is essentially a fortress nestled on the North Sea, and it was a breathtaking experience to take it all in. On the way back to Copenhagen, we visited a modern art museum that blended nature, art, and culture, by far the coolest art museum I have ever been to, and that's including the Van Gogh Museum, which we were able to visit in Amsterdam.

