



Class of 2015/2016 Newsletter

Welcome to the November issue of the GRSP newsletter. If you have anything you would like to contribute in the future please let me know.

I'm sure all the GRSP's enjoyed the break and had the chance to celebrate Thanksgiving, probably for the first time. I managed to fit in three turkey feasts and plenty of pie, and enjoyed the time I spent with my host families. I know many others got up to the same things as me, and also managed to fit in a bit of travelling.

- Lauren Darge, dargie94@hotmail.com, (678) 599-4716

A Spring Full of GRSP!

It was almost impossible to wait till the "next" GRSP weekend. It felt like time passed in slow motion. In all honesty, we were all more than happy when Friday the 13th of November arrived and made plans for the GRSP weekend hosted by Sandy Springs, Alpharetta, and Milton-Windward Rotary Clubs. The ride to Atlanta from Savannah was quite interesting, as we shared our opinions, cultures and differences during the full 4-hour ride.

We reached the Sandy Springs Christ Church for dinner on Friday night. The Rotarians were all ready with the warm and delicious food as usual, making it feel like home. The discussion which took place shortly after dinner gave us some time to introduce ourselves to the



Rotarians who brought us together for weekend. After introducing ourselves and sharing thoughts, we split up and were on the way with our hosts for the weekend.

Some of the students had the opportunity to gather up around a lovely bon-fire and toast marshmallows and then watch a movie before heading to the homes of host families for the night.

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We reached the YMCA on Saturday at 8.00am as planned. We were taken to the World of Coke or the CNN World Headquarters. Having been to the CNN before, I chose the World of Coke and had one of the most amusing times of my life throughout the tour. The World of Coke exposed its history, product cycle and their culture through a professional tour to the GRSP students and of course – provided us with a free Coke bottle. We had the chance to taste Coke syrups from all over the world and in all honesty, their taste ranged from the loveliest to the most sickening.



After lunch, we all had a walk to the Georgia Aquarium. The aquarium was quite big and brought together different varieties of fish to one stadium for our exhibition. The Georgia Aquarium is one of the biggest contributors to research done all around the world on how to preserve the ocean and the wildlife. According to information provided their primary goals are to educate people about the importance of saving and conserving the natural waters.



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After a breathtaking dolphin show, we all reached the YMCA to call it a day. After dinner, the YMCA provided us with some activities such as rock climbing, basketball, and swimming. We made use of the hall we were in, using the equipment to play tennis, basketball and do crazy things.

It was quite a different experience going to bed this time as we all had one hall to share and we went to bed in sleeping bags. While some complained about how uncomfortable it is and some actually didn't care, all in all everyone went to bed earlier or later with new memories to hold on to, dearly – as a GRSP scholar.

-Nipuna Ambanpola, Sri Lanka



Kennesaw State University



Kennesaw State University is a public university just outside the city of Kennesaw, around an hour (depending on the traffic) away from Atlanta. It has just merged with what was Southern Poly (SPSU) and so now the university has two campuses; one in Kennesaw and one in Marietta. This means that this year KSU has a total of 33,000 students enrolled- a far

cry from the original 1,014 students it had when it opened as Kennesaw Junior College in 1966. Everybody that I have spoken to so far seems to think that KSU is an enormous school which is bizarre to me because it has less students than my university back home and most universities in the UK have at least 20,000 students. The sheer number does make for an interesting mix of people though, you can be sure to find people you get along with and if you don't get along with someone, chances are you'll see them once in a blue moon anyway!



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Oh, and if the sun is shining, there is usually a guy practicing his tight-rope walking between the trees on the green.

The student housing at Kennesaw is also something I have been told is unusual for a university in the US. KSU

started off as a commuter school so there are not actually many rooms available and those that are, are really new. There are three residence complexes and the one that myself and the other three GRSP students at

Kennesaw live on is made up of apartment style living. There are 4 students in one apartment with

a fully furnished living room, a kitchen, a washing machine, a tumble dryer and each person lives in their own en-suite room. I'll be sad to leave it when I move into my halls next year where there will be seven people sharing one bathroom and shower!



Part of what is so great about Kennesaw is the focus they have on international students and internationalisation. There are great international student groups, there is a great global admissions team that are so helpful when one of the regular admissions counsellors don't understand a question, and the fact that thousands of students here are international means you are bound to meet somebody from your own country and have something to bond over. Whether you join one of the Model UN clubs- there are at least 4, or some kind of religious group, or political group, or dance club, or sports club, or even if you just like to chill in the Commons by yourself or with your roommates, there is always something to do on campus at Kennesaw and always someone to make you feel at home while you do it.

-Cali Jeferies, England

University of West Georgia

Located in the Carrollton, Georgia, the University of West Georgia sits on a beautiful 645-acre campus, with approximately 13,000 students. Just 30 minutes west of the Atlanta metropolitan area, and an hour from the heart of downtown has been the home to me for the past 88 days with a semester coming almost to an end in less than 30 days.



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UWG enrolls more than 13,000 students and offers more than 85 programs of study through the College of Arts and Humanities, the College of Social Sciences, the College of Science and Mathematics, the Richards College of Business, the College of Education and the School of Nursing. The Honors College continues to provide intensive study options for high-achieving students.

Outside of the classroom, the University of West Georgia offers to us over [150 student organizations and activities](#), both [intramural sport teams](#) and [intercollegiate sport teams](#), and 26 different [fraternities and sororities](#), students have many opportunities to get involved! While you are a student at the University of West Georgia, you can be certain to be well taken care of. Resident Halls provide us with many options, from private apartments, to a shared dorm room; all of which are fully furnished. These halls are also staffed 24-hours a day to ensure campus safety. These residence halls are also a short walk from on-campus [Dining Services](#), where we can enjoy a wide range of dining options while a wide range of [entertainment options](#) vary on campus.

Katy Lowe from England and Myself have had nothing less than an enjoyable stay at West Georgia and we are rather excited to see what West Georgia has in line up for the rest of the period. Coming from a little island in South Asia having studied in college before, campus life here in Carrollton is quite a contrast. Back home there is no option of staying on campus and experiencing the whole residential life of living on your own and dealing with everything on your own or with friends, most often most Sri Lankan's travel to college from home on a daily basis and I believe we totally miss out on one aspect of college life which is living on campus and this has been a new yet challenging experience on my part which I have enjoyed the most. Education has not been challenging especially with juggling exams and assignment as we Sri Lankan's are used to 25- 30 page writings for exams and to me this feels a piece of cake given the stress some colleagues go through here.





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Being an international college student is always challenging but I think here at West Georgia it makes it way too easy thanks to a great international student service and an international student club which doesn't make you feel homesick or left out. There is not a day that passes by without the southern hospitality ranging from a "Hello", "how are u?", "Wanna grab a bite?" or even big wide smile when you pass by here at West Georgia. College Football is a fairly new thing in the life of me, still struggling to grasp the game. I have very much enjoyed the games I have been to which adds a different color to college life here in Carrollton.

Going WEST has definitely been a life changing experience even in such a short period of time and GRSP really chose the best choice for me.

If it's **UWG** its **GO WEST, Go WOLVES.**



-Trinushka Perera, Sri Lanka

Augusta University

Augusta is one of the biggest cities of Georgia so I was really excited when I figured out that I will attend ~~Augusta State University~~, ~~Georgia Regents University~~, Augusta University. Yes, the school has changed its name 3 times in the past years. Although sometimes I am a little confused what the name of my school is, I really like to attend it. It was founded in 1828, and at the moment it includes nine colleges and schools with nearly 9,000 students, over 1,000 full-time faculty and nearly 7,000 staff.

My major is business so it is an incredible experience for me to be thought by American professors. We can experience the famous American education and the professors help us to get an understanding of the way how the world's business leaders think. Hopefully some of us will be members of that club in the future. Besides its exceptional education the university places great emphasis on sports too. The university fields teams in NCAA Division I men's and women's golf, and the men's team claimed back-to-back national championships in 2010 and 2011.

-Zsolt Pap, Hungary



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Guatemala- “The Land of the Eternal Spring”

Wouldn't it be awesome, waking up every day of the year with a big and shiny sun as the one you all have in summer? Looking out of your window and seeing beautiful colors everywhere in the garden just as you do during spring? Going out in the middle of June or at the end of December and having a temperature of 72 °F?

Wouldn't it be awesome not getting sick around two times a year because of the changes of the seasons? Well, if you liked this idea of having a perfect weather, maybe you should also learn a little bit more about my awesome country Guatemala.



Guatemala is a small, but a beautiful country located under Mexico, at the top of Central America. Pretty similar to the State of Georgia in size with 348.6 square miles, and with about 15.8 million people, it is the most crowded country in C.A. Despite its relatively small territorial expansion, Guatemala has large climatic variety as a product of being a really mountainous country. Also known as “Land of Eternal Spring” because of its shortage of seasons and its abundance of nature during the whole year.



It has 22 different departments, which is the way in which the country is divided, just as the U.S. has 50 States; there are also 23 languages that are spoken all over the country, with Spanish being the official one even though a large part of the population does not speak it. We grow coffee, bananas, plantains, and one of the most important-sugar cane; we have one of the largest productions and exportations of sugar cane in the world.



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One of the greatest factors of our economy are tourist locations that are often visited by people from all around the world, such as the Mayan ruins of “Tikal” in Petén, “Semuc Champey” in Coban, or one of the most visited places is “La Antigua Guatemala” in Sacatepequez, which used to be the capital hundreds of years ago. These, and other places are really special not only because of the beautiful landscapes they count with but because of the abundance of cultural heritage and history they have.



Something that best describes us is the amount of colors in almost everything we have, our national dress, and food or candies, in our traditions and even in the houses or in the nature. Guatemalan people are usually extremely hospitable, especially in the departments and despite their humble homes, they will always love to welcome foreigners and share a little bit of our culture.

If you would like to be surprised by nature, having nice weather, appreciating thousands of landscapes with colors everywhere, and being loved and welcome, all at the same time, then I will strongly recommend you having Guatemala on the top of your travel list.



Watch this video to know a little bit more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koIjcep1I4A>

-Nicolle Galeotti, Gutemala



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Denmark

Welfare in Denmark

Welfare can be a difficult topic to discuss in the US, since Danes and Americans have grown up with very, very different views on this particular part of the structure of the government.

The reality in Denmark is that we pay at least 50% and up to 60% of our salary in taxes, as well as massive taxes on products like candy, nuts, and cars. Cars are especially taxed by around 200% to encourage the use of our great public transportation and bikes, which means that most families only have one car.



Blue: Actual price of car, red: special taxes imposed on cars, green: regular sales tax (25 %)

While this high amount of taxes can seem excessive and problematic to an American, there are a few things to keep in mind. First of all, the minimum wage in Denmark is around 17 dollars, which means that even though 50% are paid in taxes, the wage still lands around 8.5 – so about the same as in the US.

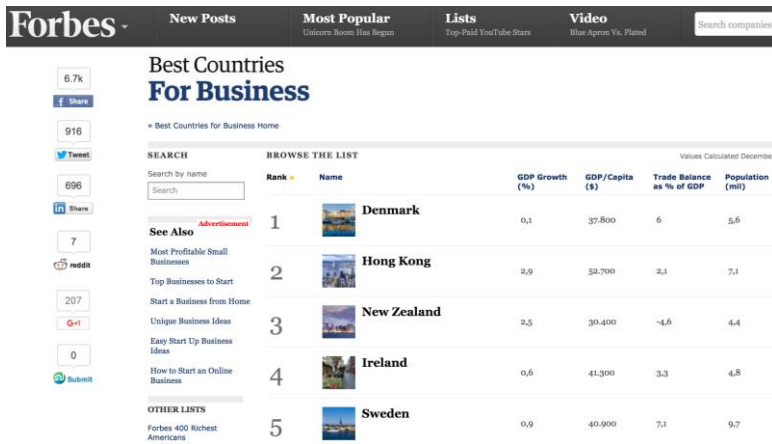
Then come all the benefits of paying 50% taxes. Most important is the free universal healthcare, and it cannot be emphasized enough, just how much free healthcare means to a society. Secondly is the free education, which means that everyone can go through the educational system from primary school to graduate school without ever directly paying a penny, thus giving the social mobility a massive boost. The list continues with substantial benefits and help to the unemployed, the ones incapable of working, and the old. An example is, that all homeless people in Denmark are homeless by choice, since the government provides living facilities to the ones in need.

These are the most important parts of the Danish welfare system funded by taxation, but despite the benefits, it is understandable if the taxation still seems excessive to an American. I often hear the connection between socialism and welfare being made, which requires me to point out that Denmark is *not* a socialist country. A more correct term is social democracy. Yes, the idea of welfare is largely inspired by socialism, but at the same time Denmark has a



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free economy – in fact it is freer than that of the US. Adding to that, Forbes declares Denmark the “#1 Country for Business”, so the socialist welfare rests on a foundation of capitalist economy.



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SEARCH

BROWSE THE LIST

Rank	Name	GDP Growth (%)	GDP/Capita (\$)	Trade Balance as % of GDP	Population (mil)
1	Denmark	0.1	37,800	6	5.6
2	Hong Kong	2.9	52,700	2.1	7.1
3	New Zealand	2.5	30,400	-4.6	4.4
4	Ireland	0.6	41,300	3.3	4.8
5	Sweden	0.9	40,900	7.1	9.7

OTHER LISTS

- Forbes 400 Richest Americans

We are not to say which form of government is better, and it is actually our personal opinion that both Denmark and the US can learn from each other in this. However, the Danish – and Scandinavian – welfare is definitely a central part of our national identity and the way we view the structure of the society.

Summerhouses in Denmark

Denmark is a very small country, so it is not uncommon for Danes to leave the borders when going on vacation. However, especially during summer time, it is also very common to spend time in summerhouse. There are many summerhouse areas in Denmark, almost all of them by the coast. Each area has its own unique atmosphere, and that atmosphere certainly peaks during summer. The summerhouse vacation is the perfect time for the family to come together, and the community in summerhouse areas is very social too. Beach, bicycles, elderflower juice and ice cream are definitely essentials during summer break. Due to Denmark’s latitude, summer nights never really get dark and only last for a couple of hours, so – when it is not raining – there is plenty of sun to enjoy with friends and family at the beach!





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Danish hygge



hygge

(n.) a Danish concept of a complete absence of anything annoying or emotionally overwhelming; taking pleasure from the presence of gentle, soothing things such as good food and wine with your favourite people.

MASH

Living in a country where the winter lasts for months and months bringing temperatures below freezing point and plenty of wind, rain and snow, Danes have found a way to get through those cold, dark days: With hygge! Hygge is just as essential to a Dane as it is hard to translate but it is a certain feeling of warmth and cosiness often experienced when spending time with friends and family inside and it often involves candles (did you know that Danes are the world's largest consumers of candles per habitant?), blankets, tea, food and wine. Christmas is definitely the season of hygge!

Christiania

Back in 1971 a group of hippies occupied some abandoned military barracks in Copenhagen and developed their own society independent of the Danish government. They named the freetown Christiania and is still exist today as a green and creative neighbourhood with a great number of music venues, art galleries,



houses and eateries and a well-known Christmas market where you can buy handcrafted goods while enjoying a cup of gløgg (a traditional Danish Christmas drink consisting of hot



red wine, spices, raisins and almonds). The freetown mainly practices sharing-economy principles and the town itself is owned by a foundation - and everyone can buy a share. Although there have been major clashes between the people of Christiania and the police especially due to the freetown's liberal marihuana policy, it remains today a picturesque and irreplaceable area of the city where no one is too odd to not fit in.

-Johan Villemoes Grønvold, Gabriel Damsholt & Emma Leschly, Denmark

Student Blogs

dizzylizzietheparttimehippie.wordpress.com/

laurendarge.blogspot.com

nillinilli.wordpress.com/

nouw.com/mydreamcometrue

nouw.com/myyearinthestates