

To the board members of SWEA North Carolina:

I would like to thank you for contributing to my studies here in Gothenburg, Sweden. I am grateful for the scholarship, as it has made my studies here fruitful. With great thanks, I would like to summarize my exciting journey this spring in Gothenburg.

I entered Sweden in late December, 2017 to finish my Bachelor's degree in Economics as an exchange student at the University of Gothenburg, Handelshögskolan. At Handels, I have been studying while working on my senior econometrics thesis, called an Upsatts in Swedish. My field of focus is Economic Development, and my topic is migration and remittances from and to Bangladesh.



Over the semester I have drawn inspiration from courses and literature, as well as encouragement from peers to study migration. While studying, my course in economic geography led me to understand the unique challenge that geography plays in developing low income countries. It was here I understood the role which migration plays in development.

Via a beneficial dataset made available by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit in Bangladesh, I have applied the importance of migration to wellbeing within Bangladeshi households. The thesis, written with my study partner Amanda Stenström, attempts to understand the impact of a well working financial system on the ability for Bangladeshis to migrate abroad and send remittances home. I am discovering that a well working financial system is beneficial to migration, as loans insure migrants with funding and wealth creating tools like savings. I am also discovering that finance is only part of the issue, as other factors such as labor skills play a certain role in migration.

I am grateful for SWEA's funding of this experience, as these studies have tested and matured my economic and personal understanding. Thanks to SWEA, I have studied in the advanced learning environment of the University of Gothenburg. The high work ethic of my peers, course depth, and passionate advisors at Handels has challenged me unlike any studies before. I feel I have been led to apply my knowledge in a way that most American Bachelor students do not experience.

Aside from my education, I had the joy to continue amazing friendships, ski in Idra Fjäll (in the north as Swedes say, yet is not even halfway up the country), and excitingly begin the process of establishing my long-term residency here.

Looking forward, I plan to complete my Upsatts in August and thereby complete my Bachelor's degree in Economics. During the same time, I will marry my Swedish fiancée, Natalie Johansson, and continue to reside in Gothenburg. Our desire is to stay in Sweden for the foreseeable future while enjoying the occasional warm weather, plenty of fika in the winter, and fantastic friends and family.



Thank you again SWEA for making this experience possible. I am grateful and send my best regards.

Sincerely,

Michael Steele