Nomadic Noles

Valencia’s café culture spices up city’s vibrancy

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First Year Abroad shapes students’ experiences

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International Programs plans anniversary parties

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From the U.S. to Spain: profs make life changes

PAGE 12
Letter from the program director

At Florida State University’s Valencia Study Center, we are proud to offer an academic and cultural program adapted to the needs of students who, in many cases, have never traveled outside the USA. We have grown in our program in Valencia from having 265 students during the 2001-2002 academic year, to 365 students during the 2012-2013 year, to 679 students during this academic year. It is our hope that the knowledge and life-skills that they acquire in Valencia will stay with them in the future, both in their professional and personal paths. It is especially fulfilling for us to see how they learn about and adapt to their new environment and gain a different perspective on the European lifestyle and culture. We firmly believe that having the chance to carry out their everyday lives in Valencia also gives students a strong sense of independence and self-confidence.

A study abroad experience is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to become immersed in a new culture and to also learn about one’s self in the world. In most, if not all, classes in the FSU Valencia study center, the use of the city as a classroom is maximized, as students make culturally-related trips, observations, and personal reflections about Valencia, its places, and people.

As dean of studies and program director of FSU Valencia, it is an absolute pleasure and honor to have Susan Hellstrom and Jack Clifford in Valencia, again teaching the Editing, Writing and Media program, following the success of the first issue of Nomadic Noles Summer 2014. Their students have once again had a unique opportunity to learn from experts in the field and to describe their unforgettable experiences in writing, while living in the heart of Valencia, Spain, and Europe.

We would like to thank the EWM students and instructors for their hard work and enthusiasm over the summer while working to produce the edition of Nomadic Noles that you are reading.

—Ignacio Messana

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Font cover photo by Rachel Townsend. Photo above by Claudia Gonzalez.
Home away from home

Freshman students brave first year of college in cities around the world

By Kathleen Keenan

What makes a home? Home is where you learn how to ride a bike. It’s the place where your family celebrates birthdays and other special occasions. It is a space where you feel safe and secure.

When most students leave home for the first time, it’s to attend a university in their home state. But imagine leaving home—full of these memories of birthdays and special moments—to study abroad in another country for the next 12 months. Your new living conditions might be an apartment overlooking a set of medieval towers in Spain or a house set in the suburbs of Central America.

Each year, more and more students are deciding to study abroad during their college careers, including some who decide to study abroad their freshman year. In the 2014-2015 academic year, 104 students participated in Florida State’s First Year Abroad (FYA) program. “I feel that the First Year Abroad Program is an excellent way for a young person to start their FSU career,” says Jim Pitts, FSU’s International Programs Director. “They have the opportunity to study a broad range of courses in small classes. They also gain a global perspective by living in another culture for an extended period of time and in many cases learning another language.”

Florida State has become one of the leading international study programs in the U.S., and one thing that makes FSU stand out is its FYA program. Through this program, students just graduating from high school can spend 12 months at one or more of FSU’s four main study centers, located in Florence, Italy; London, England; Valencia, Spain; or Panama City, Republic of Panama. Each location places students in the heart of the city, allowing them to live and embrace the local culture.

“Coming into this experience, students may or may not know their host country’s language. For example, what makes the Valenciana and Panama City programs so attractive is that students can practice their Spanish. Many students take Spanish in high school or are required to take a language as a part of their college course curriculum. For others, the appeal lies in the prospect of learning a new language like Spanish or Italian. These new or existing skills help students become horizontally integrated and immersed in a new culture.

The program does more than just broaden the perspectives of its participants. Those students, in turn, bring their experiences and new ideas back to the Tallahassee campus when they return.

“The FYA program helps internationalize FSU’s main campus by providing students with the opportunity for a yearlong immersive experience at the beginning of their college career,” says Lauren Schoenberger, the Florida State International Programs FYA program coordinator. “We are proud of the growth and change the students experience during their First Year Abroad experience.”

A financial incentive

With its main attraction featuring the experience of living and studying in a new country, FSU offers an added incentive for the out-of-state students. Once out-of-state students complete the 12-month program, they are eligible to receive in-state tuition rates for their remaining three years at the Tallahassee campus. This program is a smart option for students who may not have otherwise chosen an out-of-state school because of financial reasons.

Matthew Mackie, an FYA from Bethesda, Maryland, is one such student. “I was accepted, and the tuition was looking kind of steep, and it looked like my parents weren’t going to be able to afford it,” he says. “An admissions counselor pulled me aside at an on-campus meeting, and explained to me my options with the FYA program. It was then when I knew FSU could be a possibility.”

Once FYAs realize FSU is a possibility, the next step is to register for classes. Many international program courses can be described as unconventional—but in a good way. The classes are usually small, holding about 10-25 students. Because of this, the environment of the classroom can be more personal compared to those at the main campus. Additionally, having small class sizes gives professors flexibility both inside and outside the classroom.

During the days students have class inside, there is more time for in-depth discussions about the course material. Occasionally, you will see classes out exploring the city, going to museums, and eating local cuisine, all relating back in some way to the course of study.

“In my archaeology class, my professor took us to his high school to see a bomb shelter from the Spanish Civil War,” Mackie says. “We sketched the layout of it and everything.”

These excursions not only make classes more enjoyable, but they help students connect what they learn in class with a more authentic experience of the host country.

Science and math classes too

FYA students are offered a variety of classes, many of which satisfy first-year requirements for most majors. Other courses are meant to encourage students to explore their different interests and to take advantage of the host country. For example, students in Valenciana can take classes such as Sketching the City or Food and Society, ones that wouldn’t normally be taught in Tallahassee.

However, with interest in studying abroad growing, the study centers are increasing the number of courses related to business. These expanded course offerings help to attract students who want to major in technical fields but who fear that studying abroad will make them fall behind in their coursework.

Many students who have come through the program have good things to say about the FYA lifestyle at the four study centers. Since the students are required to stay in the same program for the fall and spring semesters, they become close.

“I lived in a house of nine girls in a suburb of Panama,” says Tina Spohnholtz, an FYA from the Chicago area. “I was an FYA at the Panama campus. “I lived living in a house better than an apartment because it felt like its own little community, where we became really close friends with all our surrounding neighbors. It just felt like a home.”

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Transitioning back to campus

An FYA student offers his tips on easing back into Tallahassee

By Kathleen Keenan

After living and studying abroad for 12 months, the transition to life in Tallahassee can be difficult. The lifestyle you led in your host country for the past year will probably be different when you return to the U.S. However, this transition does not have to be a tough one.

Check out these helpful tips from Connor Barniskis, a former First Year Abroad (FYA) student who studied in Florence and London his freshman year and now works as a program assistant in Florence, Italy:

1) Once you get back to Tallahassee, it is important to get involved. I understand that going from being abroad to a campus with thousands of students is overwhelming. Additionally, trying to branch out and meet new people might seem impossible. One of the best things about such an immense school is the myriad involvement opportunities. Greek life is massive at FSU, but if that isn’t your scene, there are intramural sports, various clubs, research groups, and organizations where you can make the campus feel smaller.

2) Your interaction with international groups does not have to end just because you are in Tallahassee. Students from around the world attend FSU. Because of this, FSU provides outreach at the Center for Global Engagement for international students who are learning to adapt to American culture. This can be a great opportunity to make friends from other countries, and it will allow you to use your experience as an FYA to help these “International Noles.” After all, you too have gone through culture shock while being abroad, and now you can impart your wisdom in dealing with such stressful situations.

My last piece of advice is to not feel jaded with your impending years at FSU. You will be tempted to compare your study abroad experience to memories you will create in Tallahassee. You saw so many amazing sights and have done so much that many people in Tallahassee will never understand. Never fall into dismissing everything Tallahassee has to offer, because if you keep an open mind you will see that Tallahassee has A LOT to offer. Find places that remind you of studying abroad, and stay in touch with friends you made abroad (even if it gets hard). Most importantly, meet new people, try new things, mess up, make mistakes, but always move forward. You have the travel bug now, so there should be no doubt in your mind that you will go abroad again. Until that time comes, enjoy FSU.
“I respect and admire him both as a friend and colleague,” Nordlund says. Gerber, who grew up in Fowler, Kansas, a small town in the southwestern part of the state, was born into a family of teachers. Gerber’s time with the Santa Fe Opera started when Gerber discovered opportunities in FSU’s International Programs (IP) through Director James Pitts when Pitts’s daughter was interested in opera and wanted to give it a try.

Gerber pursued his music passion wholeheartedly, not wasting a moment. He learned about a particular professor of music through one of his undergraduate professors and decided to study with him, packing up his life and moving to Colorado State University to pursue a master of music in vocal performance. His music career was off to a fast start.

Gerber’s time with the Santa Fe Opera company prepared him to audition for the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco, another of the nation’s best. He was selected for the program and remembers fondly his experience. "It was an inspiration in every way for me,” says Gerber. "And that’s where I decided: This is a great field."

Gerber accepted a teaching job at the University of Pennsylvania in 1979 as an assistant professor. In due time, he earned tenure, just one year later, at Florida State University. Gerber persuaded his friend James Pitts when Pitts’s daughter was interested in opera and wanted to give it a try. When it came to choose a mentor, Gerber chose Fort Lauderdale Florida State University. He couldn’t resist. He landed a job in 1979 as an assistant professor. "I immediately fell in love with the College of Music,” Gerber says.

An entry-level professor in the College of Music must participate in performances in order to move up in position, Gerber says, so he wasted no time. "You’re only as good as your last performance,” he says.

In due time, he earned tenure at FSU and was promoted to full professor, eventually serving as coordinator of voice and opera in the College of Music.

Gerber has performed in shows across the world, from the United States to the Caribbean, Central America, Europe, and Pakistan. In the U.S. alone, he has sung with the Orlando Opera, Charlotte Opera, Birmingham Civic Opera, Atlanta Symphony, Charleston Opera, Dallas Bach Society, Jacksonville Symphony, and many more.

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Spending a summer teaching abroad was all it took for Gerber—since then he has returned several times to teach at FSU Valencia. He has also taught for IP in London, England, and Munich, Germany.

Gerber’s top 5 Valencia music venues

Palau de la Musica (above)
This is an excellent concert hall. The acoustics are wonderful, so there is no bad seat in the house. It is a medium sized venue, so it feels intimate.

Palau Reina Sofia
This is one of Europe’s finest opera houses. It is a treat for eyes and ears. At this venue, one can hear the world’s best in classical music.

El Patriarca
I go to this venue because it is one of the few places in the world that still performs the Catholic Mass in the Latin Rite. Beautiful singing of Gregorian Chant can be heard for 30 minutes prior to the Mass and during the Mass. The acoustics and the church are stunningly beautiful.

Cafe del Duende
The place for flamenco in Valencia. It is intimate and features the best flamenco artists in Valencia. I have never walked away from Cafe del Duende unsatisfied.

Jardines del Palau
This is a fantastic outdoor concert venue that is in the riverside just behind the Palau de la Musica. I have heard wonderful concerts at this location that have included music styles that range from jazz to concert bands from Valencia to a Beatles tribute band. In general, all the concerts in this location are free.

A seasoned voice for FSU’s program

By Katherine Sinner

‘We must be global citizens. If I can display that through music—wonderful.” — Larry Gerber

Gerber, right, performs during a special Florida State Opera program that featured arias and ensembles from opera and music theater. The trio is performing their rendition of ‘Japanese Sandman.' collegiate level, but it also opened his eyes to other art forms. "I would go to art shows, poetry readings, theater,” says Gerber. "After his time at the fine arts high school, Gerber accepted a teaching job at the University of Alabama. However, this was short-lived because Gerber received an interview opportunity, just one year after he joined Florida State University. He couldn’t resist. He landed a job in 1979 as an assistant professor. "I immediately fell in love with the College of Music,” Gerber says.

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By Milagros Aburto

B ack in 1957, the first students to study abroad through Florida State University wore helmets and combat boots.

That’s because the Panama Canal campus, which was FSU’s first international program, was started to help American soldiers stationed there further their educations. Now, nearly 60 years later, FSU is celebrating the same program, as well as the three other international campuses that followed: Florence, Italy; London, England, and Valencia, Spain.

In 1966, the first FSU students to study abroad in Florence probably wore boots too — so that they could help the city of Florence save rare books from the most disastrous flood the city had seen in 400 years. Thus, FSU Florence’s 50th anniversary is a particularly monumental one because it also marks the 50th anniversary of the flood.

“Our students were active in helping clean up the city and removing books from the cathedral and various public buildings,” says Sue Capitani, director of the Florence program. “We received special recognition from the mayor of Florence for their service,” says Sue Capitani, director of the Florence program. “We were organizing a meeting with the local government for those interested in learning more about the flood and how to help prevent it in the future.”

Florence’s 50th and London’s 45th anniversaries will be commemorated in 2016, and Valencia’s 20th and Panama’s 60th anniversaries will be commemorated in 2017.

All past alumni of these programs are invited to join in on the ceremonies, which will be hosted in their respective study abroad cities. Those attending will be treated to guided tours of the study centers as well as the cities. Guests will also be invited to cultural events and gala dinners in historical parts of the city. To give you a taste of what you can expect, here are some highlights from each anniversary:

**FSU International Programs commemorates benchmark anniversaries**

**FSU Florence**

- **Top: London students pose in front of the London Eye. Middle: Valencia students gather in Plaza de la Virgen.**
- **Bottom: Florence students meet in St. Mark’s Square while on a trip to Venice.**
- **Photo courtesy of Adriana Gonzalez Bortot**
- **Photo by Monique Boileau**

**Q&A with Sue Capitani by Milagros Aburto**

**D** icate yourself abroad. You’ve fallen in love with the city, the culture, and the food. But what happens when you fall in love with a person?

Many students face this dilemma while they’re studying abroad. They make strong connections but feel lost once it’s time to return home. Sue Capitani, Director of the Florence program, shares the story of how she fell in love with her future husband when she was a 24-year-old graduate student and program assistant at FSU’s Florence program.

**Nomadic Noles (NN): What made you choose Italy?**

**Sue Capitani (SC): While in graduate school, I studied early Christianity, the medieval church, and modern-day Catholicism. Italy seemed like a logical choice, because I wanted to be in a culture quite different from the Anglo-American culture. I liked the idea of being centrally located in Europe, facilitating travel to other European countries.**

**NN: How did you meet your husband?**

**SC: One of my best friends and former roommates from the University of Florida (where I earned my bachelor’s degree) had studied on the FSU program as an undergraduate and had met her future (Italian) husband while there. She decided to return to Florence after graduation, and when I arrived in Florence a couple of years later, I called her immediately. She came by with her fiancé and one of his best friends—who ended up becoming my future husband! We met my very first day in Florence.**

**NN: Were you and your husband ever long distance? If so, how did you two stay in contact and how did that affect your relationship?**

**SC: Yes, we were long distance when I returned to the U.S. to finish my master’s. This was before internet, cell phones, and any kind of social media. WE WROTE LETTERS! We also spoke by phone every once in a while. It was a big deal to talk on the phone with someone overseas. However, it really didn’t affect our relationship. I knew that I needed to finish my degree and was willing to do what was necessary. Fabio was very patient, but it was an 11-month wait!**

**NN: When did you two get engaged?**

**SC: We decided to get married not long after I returned to Italy after having finished my M.A.**

**NN: Do you have any kids?**

**SC: Yes, we have a 32-year-old son who lives in Florence.**

**NN: Moving to Italy permanently must have been a huge decision. Can you tell us how you made that decision and how you felt?**

**SC: It was a very difficult decision. After we were married, we lived in the U.S. for almost two years, and although we had jobs (we both worked for the Italian Trade Commission—an Italian government office promoting trade between the US and Italy), something was missing. We had made friends in Atlanta, but everyone’s life is pretty fluid in the US, and two of our closest couple friends were moving to another city/country. My husband’s family was very close and we had lots of friends back in Italy—all in Florence, so it was a joint decision to return to Italy. I also missed the culture of living in Italy—the beauty of the city, the countryside, being able to go from the mountains to the sea in a couple of hours—and the food! I enjoyed speaking the language and the witty sense of humor of the Florentines. I personally knew the person who sold me meat, the couple where I purchased meat, and the woman who sold me cheese—you had lots of personal contact with people in your neighborhood, besides your family and friends. The most difficult part was telling my family that we were moving back to Italy because we were also very close. However, when my mother came to visit the following year, she told me that she understood why we moved back here. We would return to visit my family once a year for an extended visit.**

**NN: How and when did you start working at the FSU Florence study center?**

**SC: Late fall of 1989. I had worked in other jobs, but I wanted to be back in an academic environment, and also I missed being with other Americans. My life outside of my job was entirely Italian and I felt completely at home in that environment, but I also wanted some contact with my “roots.”**

**NN: Lastly, is there any advice you would like to give to future students who fall in love abroad?**

**SC: That is a tough question because every one is different. First of all, finish your degree—no one can take that away from you, and if the relationship is valid, then you can wait a few months. Try to return with a plan for what you are going to do. It is great to have lots of free time, but you will need your independence and that comes with a job. Learn the language properly by going to an Italian language school for foreigners, if you aren’t at least conversational. If you are enrolled in a school for more than three months, you will be able to obtain a student visa which means you will be in the country legally—and can work part-time legally. Be patient and try to keep your sense of humor. Being a student there is much different from living there, and you are going to have to make many adjustments—not only to your lifestyle but also to your way of viewing things.”**
**A gastronomical adventure**

What’s on the menu for FSU Valencia’s Food and Society class?

*Article and photos by Sasha Polissky*

On a hot, humid July day, 26 students from Florida State’s study abroad program gather at The Workshop, a place in Valencia that offers classes to help visitors transform the cooking experience. Each student participates in the time-consuming process of making Valencian paella by taking on a role at a station, where they add meat, vegetables, rice, and various sauces and spices.

After three hours of chopping, frying, and mixing they finally have their hands on paper that wouldn’t break,” Bajo says.

“Students are reluctant at first to try food so different from what they are used to eating. Human nature eventually gives way, though, and many are sometimes surprised by what they find.

“I mixed tomato marmalade with goat cheese on bread, and it was heavenly,” Bajo says.

Throughout the years this course has developed and added crucial components to the lesson plan, such as impact of world hunger. Angeles was reluctant about adding this topic at first, but now considers it an essential part of the course.

“It deals with how human beings intertwine through food as part of culture and civilization in an increasingly globalized world,” he says.

Coming from an area greatly affected by war, the topic of world hunger is familiar to Spaniards. Famine swept the nation when the Spanish Civil War began in 1936, and Angeles attributes this factor to the value older generations of Spaniards now place on food.

“From learning all about the regions of Spain and what foods come from those regions to the influences other cultures have on Spain, I find myself still applying those lessons during my study abroad experience,” Wells says.

Although he was born and now lives in Valencia, Angeles is a true Seminole at heart. He grew up in Florida, and after high school he attended FSU, where his father was chairman of the Modern Languages department. When he moved back to Valencia, Angeles did not lose the garnet and gold spirit.

*“From learning all about the regions of Spain and what foods come from those regions to the influences other cultures have on Spain, I find myself still applying those lessons during my study abroad experience.”*  
— *Samantha Wells*
American expatriates and FSU faculty members B.J. Biringer and David Nordlund have made Valencia their home, and they are opening new doors to their students so they can learn about the city.

V

By Joseph Quintana

Valencia is home to a bounty of ancient monuments: the San Juan Hospital, the Torres de Serrano, the Mercado Colón, and many other timeless treasures. Despite the centuries that separate students from when these sites were built, William “B.J.” Biringer and David “Dr. No” Nordlund are like time travelers with the way they bring these ruins back to life. Professors in residence at Florida State University’s Study Abroad Program in Valencia, Spain, and veterans of the program, Biringer and Nordlund teach every class with the passion of a first-year instructor.

“B.J. wants you to find your voice in his class, while also being respectful of other students and letting your voice be heard,” says Sarah Tatum, a student of Biringer’s in summer 2015. “He wants you to be passionate about the subjects you talk about while educating yourself about the culture surrounding your everyday life.”

Both scholars are homegrown Americans. Nordlund grew up among palm trees and Lakers fans in his native Southern California, earning his B.A. from St. Mary’s College of California, his M.A. from Middlebury College in Vermont, and his Ph.D. in Hispanic Studies from UCLA.

Biringer, who grew up in the Pittsburgh area, attained his bachelor’s degree in Spanish and international affairs at Penn State, his master’s degree in Spanish and in history at West Virginia University, and his doctoral degree at Florida State.

Both men serve as a helpful bridge between Spanish and American culture for students, says FSU Program Director Ignacio Messana.

“B.J. is not only a great professor, but also a wonderful person,” Messana says. “He communicates very well with the students and ends up being a great channel of culture between the U.S. and Spain or between our U.S. students and his passion for the Spanish and Valencian culture.”

Messana also has praise for what Nordlund brings to the program.

“David gets the best from his students every semester,” Messana says. “He is a good scholar and a very good researcher, and the students know that they must work hard in his classes. But the reward is leaving Spain having learned, experienced, and walked through the knowledge, history, and streets of Valencia.”

Biringer and Nordlund are perfect for the Valencia program, not only academically but personally. In addition to speaking fluent Spanish and being married to Valencia women, they have no strangers to the city.

In 1982, Nordlund was backpacking across Europe as a teenager when he visited Valencia as a tourist, but he couldn’t resist the city’s charm. As an undergraduate, he returned to Valencia to study abroad for a year. After his B.A., he took a teaching job in Valen-

cia, when he met Maria Sierra, whom he later married. Later, while working on his master’s degree at Middlebury, he actually did most of his work at Middlebury’s Madrid campus.

Since 1999, Nordlund has called Valencia home and now vacations annually in California. However, when not in Valencia or California, he enjoys spending time with his family in their country house in Valencia’s wine country, where he enjoys hiking in the foothills with his dog Lars.

“Dr. No is knowledgeable and we always learn something new,” says Jacqueline DePorr, one of Nordlund’s students. “He also believes learning should take place outside of the classroom and takes us on outings.”

Biringer first arrived in Valencia in 2000 to work on his dissertation and to teach at the FSU study center. He did all of his writing and editing in Valencia, receiving his Ph.D. in 2005.

“I was the first student to ever write a doctoral thesis in an FSU international program,” he says.

Currently, Biringer is active in an array of groups in Valencia: the Falla de Barrio San José (part of Valencia’s most famous annual celebration, Fallas), the Valencian Humane Society, and the American Space (a U.S. State Department initiative that tries to bring together Spanish and American cultures).

Even though he has lived in Valencia since 2000, he still manages to stream Nittany Lions games on his laptop during football season (see forgive him).

You would normally expect some level of culture shock when your plane lands in a foreign place that you’ve rarely only seen in history books, but these experienced travelers settled down in a place that has the perfect remedy for those worried about not fitting in.

“The idea of community and friendship is one of the best things about Valencia,” Biringer says, his face glowing as he raves about his city.

“The people are very open. I have, since day one, felt welcomed. Never have I felt outcast or marginalized; people here want to know you, they want to know your life.”

Nordlund and Biringer have completely immersed themselves into Valencian culture, which is exactly the experience they want to share with their students (with the exception of searching for a spouse). Studying abroad is not about sitting in a classroom in an unfamiliar place; it’s about diving head first into that culture to make that place familiar.

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“In the United States, students do not have the opportunity to literally interact with the course text. In Valencia, Biringer thrives on giving students that chance.”

“In the States, in the classroom, in a textbook, you can’t look at all these paintings in the same light. I get to show people Dali in person,” says Biringer, barely able to contain his excitement. “That’s what makes it great. Or we go to the archaeological ruin, and you can actually touch the castle and be with it.”

Firing off what seems like 1,000 words a minute coupled with lightning-fast gestures, Nordlund might seem a little overwhelming at first, but he has this frenetic pace because he has just so much information to dish out. In class, he draws maps of historical sites prior to his scheduled class expedition. He details the interior of the San Juan Hospital down to the exact number of windows.

“In addition to teaching FSU Valencia students and to having served as the former dean and academic director of FSU Valencia, Nordlund teaches U.S. students studying abroad at the Berklee College of Music’s program in Valencia.”

And from 2008-2013, Nordlund worked for the U.S. Department of State, managing
Spanish café culture hits the spot with students

NOMADIC NOLES

Article and photos by Rachel Townsend

It down, order, eat, pay, leave. Sound familiar? Not in Spain. America and España are worlds apart when it comes to their respective café cultures.

“Eating in the Mediterranean context is a social act more than a survival fact,” says Valencian-born Juan Salazar Bonet, an archaeology professor with FSU Valencia.

In the U.S., everything is fast paced and focused mainly on the food. In Spain, socializing is the focal point of every meal.

“We take our time at lunch, especially in the middle of the day because it is our main meal,” says FSU Valencia Associate Director Alicia Martínez, a native of Spain. “It’s not only for eating, but after eating, we have coffee time and talk to the people that we are eating with.

“This is our way to live—our concept,” Martínez says. “We work a lot here so we need to maintain relationships with our family members and friends as a part of our lives.”

Taking time out of the day to sit and enjoy company is vastly important in Spanish culture. At first, most students who study abroad are taken back by the idea of spending two hours at a café, but it doesn’t take long to get used to and even come to enjoy.

“The experience of going to Spanish restaurants was a culture shock for me,” says summer 2015 student Erica Pope. “I am used to quick food, quick drinks, and quick service. While at first I found dining in Valencia to be rather annoying, I eventually developed a gratefulness for it.”

Pope found herself enjoying the food more, appreciating the company more, and relishing her surroundings more.

“Instead of speeding through a meal, I was truly in the moment,” she says. “Although every mealtime is a social hour in Spain, lunch is the biggest deal of all. Meals are typically eaten later in the day than in the States, which means lunchtime generally falls around 2 p.m. This is the most important part of the day for the Spanish. Small shops will even shut down for a few hours to allow their workers time to enjoy a big lunch with family and friends and then re-open in the early evening—this time is often mistaken as a time for a siesta, or nap, by non-Spaniards.

Lunchtime holds a Spanish-wide cultural importance, but it is not the only meal of value in Valencia. Almorzar, as it is called in Spanish, is a mid-morning eating stop when businesswomen and men take a break from what they are doing and sit down for a coffee or drink with a bite of bread.

“In Valencian, the language of the city, we call it ahorcar . . . and it is like a religion,” Salazar says. “It is the time to talk about the news or other general topics—fútbol, politics, etc.”

Because the restaurant and café atmosphere is so centered on socialization, going out to eat generally calls for a more laid-back atmosphere.

“Opposite to the States, it is rude if a waiter or waitress approaches the table and gives you the check directly. We don’t like that at all,” Martínez says, with a soft chuckle.

Locals are used to taking their time with a meal, in part due to the climate in Spain.

“It gets hot during the summer and most people do not own air conditioning—it is considered a luxury due to its high expense,” Martínez says. “So we leave the hot and go outside in the street and meet a lot of people,” she says.

Rather than sitting inside and cooking in the heat, going out is the preferred option. It is even fairly common to see dogs walking alongside their owners as they journey to a nearby café.

In good weather, which is year round in Valencia and most of Spain alike, most people sit outside when they go out for a bite to eat, or even if it’s just for a cup of coffee. No matter what part of town, no matter where you are in the country, sitting outside at a café is simply part of the Spanish culture.

“You always have excuses to say: Let’s go have a coffee,” Martínez says. “And you don’t necessarily have to drink a coffee. If you mean, you can drink a Coke, you can drink a horchata in summertime, or you can drink whatever you want. But the excuse is always coffee.”

You might be curious as to what types of dishes are ordered in these cafés. Valencia is located on the Mediterranean, so seafood is a large part of the diet, although seafood options are a bit different than what you might be used to in America.

“Try new foods—it’s definitely worth it,” FSU sophomore Samantha Arvin says. “I tried a whole octopus and didn’t like it, but I’m glad that I tried it. It was a new experience. Just take it all in because it’s an important aspect of the culture here. You can live how the locals live.”

Paella, eels, patatas bravas (fried potatoes with a mild spicy sauce), croquetas (fried bread crumbs with a creamy filling), and gazpacho are just a few traditional foods to be found in Spain.

Although not all people like such cuisine, all should at least try. As pointed out by Arvin, the food is part of the Spanish culture, and the best way to enjoy the culture is to immerse yourself in it.

“You just don’t get this back in Florida,” Arvin says. “Nearly every street in Valencia has some historical rel-

Valencians and tourists alike socialize as they enjoy a meal in the city’s historic Plaza de la Virgen.
Home is where the heart is
A look into the lives of Enrique Álvarez and Michael Leeser

By Sarah Tatum

The study abroad program in Valencia offers students and faculty members the opportunity to create a home away from home. With the help of Florida State University’s International Programs, they are able to establish temporary roots in a new culture and environment.

Enrique Álvarez and Michael Leeser are associates of professors at FSU, where they have taught for the past 11 years. Since 2012, they both have been establishing their own sense of place in Valencia when teaching during various academic sessions. They also have been partners for almost 20 years.

Their home environment in Tallahassee is well established, but they appreciate being able to create a second, comfortable home in Valencia.

“I love being in a place where we can walk everywhere, and you walk out of your building and are confronted with life,” Leeser says. Both feel that the culture and structure of Valencia’s program creates a unique learning environment for students as well as for themselves.

“In the summer sessions, we establish a very specific kind of relationship with our students that you don’t get in Tallahassee,” Álvarez says.

Álvarez’s academic focus in Tallahassee is modern literature and cultural studies. He then moved to the United States in 1997 and received his Ph.D. in 20th-century Spanish literature and cultural studies. Leeser completed his B.A. at Wheaton College in Illinois and his M.A. at Middlebury College in Vermont. He received his Ph.D. in Hispanic linguistics and acquisitions.

“The student gaining enthusiasm and classification, and he has published his dissertation on second language comprehension, and he has published several journal articles on the topic. One of the classes that Álvarez teaches in Tallahassee is titled Queer Theory. “Queer studies is a growing field of inquiry in the humanities,” Álvarez says. Original work offered to just graduate students, the class is now open to undergraduates.

“Because my students are [activists], and they come to us with questions, and we provide them with answers, and I might not be upfront as an activist but I certainly feel one,” Álvarez says.

The two are excited to see America enter a time of change, and move toward a positive view of marriage equality. They are pleased that recent events are starting to encourage the view that love is equal for everyone.

“Love is having a simple dinner, and feeling like you are dining at the Ritz,” Álvarez adds, causing both to laugh in agreement.

Enrique Álvarez’s three favorite Spanish poets

Olivio García Valdés: Born December 20, 1930, Valdés has written poetry, prose, and translations. She has three major stages of writing. The first includes her first three verse collections. The second includes her prose book Caro Nudismo. The third in- cludes her poetry that brings a profound awareness of death. In her third stage, her collection titled Y todos están muertos was published in 2007. She is currently a professor of literature and Spanish in the Instituto de El Greco of Toledo, Spain.

Federico García Lorca: Born June 5, 1899, he was part of the Generation of ’27. His most famous work, the Ramonete Galán, was published in 1928. The ballads highlight the gypsy lifestyle and the trials and tribulations the gypsy people go through. The book brought him fame across Spain and the Hispanic world, and he went on to write many more poems and plays until his death. García Lorca was arrested on August 18, 1936, at the outset of the Spanish Civil War, and he was executed by the National Militia on August 19, 1936.

Jaime Gil de Biedma: Born November 13, 1929, Biedma was a Catalan post-Civil War poet. His earlier poems showed a strong opposition toward Spanish dictatorship, and his first publication, Compañeros, took into the Teatroexistentialist expression for Communism sympathizers. Along with Francisco Brines, he was also famous for helping to reintegrate homosexual topics in poetry. Biedma belonged to a group of poets known as the Generation of ’50, individuals who were inspired by social realism after the Spanish Civil War. He died in 1990 from AIDS.
When thinking of Spain a few things come to mind: bulls, flamenco, siesta, and soccer. One is much more to the country than those common stereotypes, however, which Florida State’s Study Abroad Program in Valencia tries to teach students by taking them on field trips around the region.

“Spain is a very diverse country” says Melissa Claessens, FSU’s cultural program coordinator. “Every province is different, and they even speak different languages. We just want to give you the Spain experience, not just the Valencian.”

Through the program, students in the summer B session for 2015 traveled to Peñíscola, Segovia, Madrid, and Toledo. In other sessions, students have traveled to Barcelona, Seville, and Granada.

The small, seaside town of Peñíscola, about 90 miles from Valencia, was the first trip of the session. Students visited a historic castle nestled on a hill overlooking the town and were given a brief tour of the fortress. Some students climbed to the highest point of the hill, where they enjoyed picturesque views of the turquoise waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

“One of my absolute favorite parts of the trip were the breathtaking views from the top of the castle,” says Melissa Betters, an FSU junior majoring in marine biology. “With a relatively easy climb, it was amazing everything that you could see. The white-washed buildings with the red roofs and the impossibly bright blue water were all breathtaking and actually looked a little Greek.”

While views from the top were the most sought after, some students ventured farther into the rooms of the fortress and received additional views from inside.

“My other favorite part of the trip, though, was actually getting in the water,” Betters says. “It felt as beautiful as it looked; it was almost crystal clear and perfectly warm.”

Students took part in different activities while at the beach. Some adventurists went paddleboarding, some sunbathed, and some dove into the silky smooth sea.

Soon, the 3 p.m. departure time rolled around and everyone was back on the bus, exhausted from their explorations. This short day trip only increased the students’ excitement for what was to come one week later a weekend in Madrid.

After a night of exploration and discovery of Spain’s capital city, the large group divided into two with one group staying in Madrid for the day and the other heading to Segovia, a city about an hour and a half away from Madrid. The trip to Segovia included another stop not far from Madrid, though, the Valley of the Fallen.

Located above a forested valley, the site is beautiful. Francisco Franco, the former Spanish dictator, commissioned the gigantic monument to be built, and much controversy comes with this place.

“Not only is it meant to honor some of those who died during the Spanish Civil War, but it also is home to the church where Franco is buried. Critics of the monument say that it does not honor those who fought against or suffered under Franco.

“I didn’t expect it to be so huge,” says Claudia Gonzalez, an FSU editing, writing, and media major who graduated at the end of the summer. “Then I walked in, and that too was larger than I had expected. It was eerie. What surprised me was the fact that this is a huge church.”

There was a sense of peace that came from looking out over the valley, however, considering the calm, serene nature that engulfed the monument. Still, having been carved out of the side of a mountain, the entirety of the basilica felt cove-like and haunting.

“The building was breathtaking—the views, the architecture—but it was unsettling,” says Christine Allston, an FSU junior majoring in international affairs. “I enjoyed going to the Valley of the Fallen and learning about the Spanish Civil War, but it was an intense and heavy place to be.”
FSU students who studied during the summer 2015 B session experienced flamenco at least once during their time in Spain during a program-wide trip to Madrid, when they visited Tablao Carboneras for dinner and a show. Before entering the venue, Associate Director Alicia Martinez prepared students by describing what they would see and calling it a “magical” experience. “I witnessed true passion that night,” says Corbin Ryan, a student with the FSU program. “I could see raw emotion on the faces of the performers as they vigorously danced and sang, conveying feelings of regret, sorrow, and anger to name a few. Flamenco dance is no mere spectacle to be taken lightly. It is a window into another way of life.”

“The flamenco song involves a combination of cante (singing), toque (guitar playing), baile (dance), palmas (handclapping), and pito (finger snapping). During the period from 1765 to 1860, the first flamenco schools were built in Cadiz, Jerez de la Frontera, and Triana (Seville). During this time, flamenco was mainly performed in ballrooms. Flamenco first became a public, interactive art form in ballrooms. Flamenco has become popular around the world thanks to artists such as the Gipsy Kings and Paco de Lucia. This type of music fuses together other musical genres including jazz, rock, reggae, among others. What makes people enjoy it so much because what makes people enjoy it so much because it allows the audience to be a part of an intimate experience that the performers create. What makes flamenco so distinctive from other music is that it is not designed to impress the audience and catch people’s attention, but is more intended to draw the audience to it. This uniqueness is what makes people enjoy it so much because it allows the audience to be a part of an intimate experience that the performers create. While flamenco puro, or traditional flamenco, typically involves just a singer and a dancer, flamenco musicians have also branched out to create new flamenco, or new flamenco, which has become popular around the world thanks to artists such as the Gipsy Kings and Paco de Lucia. This type of music fuses together other musical genres including jazz, rock, reggae, among others. Not only were students given the opportunity to experience flamenco in Madrid, but many also saw flamenco shows in different Valencia locations. Gerber took a large group of students to see a performance at Radio City during the first week of the summer B session, something he has done for hundreds of students in the past years. Café del Duende is another Valencia venue where students can see a more intimate flamenco show. The name comes from the feeling of heightened emotions audiences can get during the performance. Students also may have seen flamenco without planning to while walking the streets of Valencia in areas around La Plaza de Patriarca and La Plaza de la Virgen, where impromptu performances might feature a guitarist and a singer. Sometimes these can be the best shows to watch and listen to because of their authenticity and passion.

Flamenco is an important part of Spanish culture and prevalent in Valencia, but Gerber encourages FSU’s study abroad students to “look up flamenco artists and keep it alive,” when they return to the U.S., “because once you hear that, it’ll draw you back to your time in Spain.”

Y

ou find yourself in a restaurant. The menu offers a variety of gourmet burgers, with names such as the All-American, the Bar-B-Q Burger, the Chiliburger. Movie posters cover the walls, advertising Holly-

wood blockbusters such as The Terminator, The Edge of Tomorrow, and Twilight. Billy Joel's “Piano Man” plays over the speakers.

This is a familiar environment, similar to many other eateries you have found yourself in while growing up. But there is one major difference to the experience you are having in this burger joint: You are in Valencia, Spain.

Students preparing to study abroad in Valencia may anxiously anticipate the culture shock they will experience, but bits and pieces of the US can be seen and heard in many places throughout the community to ease their worries. You are able to see that influ-

ence from the restaurants, to the films that are advertised, to the music that is played in restaurants and over the local radio stations.

Though it is both appreciated and criticized in Valencia, there is no mistaking that aspects of American culture are very much part of the city's identity. Some professors with FSU’s study abroad program have at least one simple answer to America's presence in Valencia.

“American culture solely in their presence in Valencia.”

FSU’s Pro-

gram Director Iac-

gio Messana titled “Fallus or New Orleans Carnival? Who celebrates a festivity better?” FSU Professor David Nordlund, who teach-

es in Valencia, led one called “American Americans in Valencia, from Hemingway to the America's Cup (and much more).”

American influence can begin at an ear-

ly age for many Valencians. Sometimes they might even take on American symbols and figures as a part of their own identities. Salazar says he and his friends, in their adoles-

ce, loved NBA basketball, without much thought of what culture it came from.

“They played well, we watched the games, and enjoyed the games—that was all,” he says, and adds that his parents grew up listen-

ing to American music, like Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and other English music. “When I say the ‘American influence,’ you could also say ‘the English influence.’ We don't distinguish that much between the two.”

In essence, Salazar's com-

ments on this echo the passage in Barres I Estels, els Valencians I El USA. A book published by a Valencian professor in 2015 that took place in

early 15 that was devoted to analyzing the American influence in Valencia culture and vice versa.

Several discussion panels made up the conference, including one led by Biringer and Biringer points out that because there is an energy that is very conspicuous of what Ameri-

can culture is,” says Alvarez, a Spaniard who has attended law citizenship in his home country and in the United States. For example, when Alvarez comments on Starships, one of the most internationally recognised corporations, he says, “As you know, in Spain we have very good coffee. I don’t know why we need Starbucks in this country. I believe that there is no need, yet, it is a very successful business.”

Biringer points out that because there is a strong corporate influence from the U.S., there also is a demand to learn Ameri-
can English, especially among the younger generations.

“For young, America has been the number one world economy, and defines what hap-

pens to the world economically,” he says. “Moreover, English is the technological lan-
guage of the world. Million and billion dollar deals are brokered every day and every min-

ute around the world in English. Therefore, if you want to be something and advance em-

ployment wise in Spain, you need English.”

Not all of the influences flow from Amer-

eica to Valencia, however. You want to ap-

pear as if you could be from any coun-

try. Also, cover your shoulders and kne-

es. “You can never be overdressed or overeducated,” Oscar Wilde said.

“Spanish students tend to socialize a lot lat-

er than Americans do in the States. A typical Friday or Saturday night in Valencia will start with dinner around 9 10 p.m., and a drink or two with dinner. Then, to a bar or tavern at midnight. Then, out to the clubs at 2 or 3 a.m. Finally, arrive home at 5 or 6 a.m.

• Almost all bartenders and waiters earn a decent salary in Spain. Because of this, it is usually not necessary to leave a tip. Sometimes for bigger groups it can be considered a nice gesture to leave a few extra euros.

• At the end of your meal, the server will bring you a little basket with a slice of bread, cheese, and ham. It is customary to eat these and then notify the server to bring the bill. If you don’t want to pay, you can leave the bread and cheese.

• Tip servers 5 to 10% of the total. If you use a credit card to pay, the server will bring you a credit card reader. These machines can be considered a nice gesture to leave a few extra euros.

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Open to change
Valencia’s new mayor Joan Ribó Canute rings in a progressive era for the city
By Ashley Tressel

Editor’s note: Author Ashley Tressel, who hopes to become a foreign correspondent, immersed herself in learning about local politics while studying in Valencia in summer 2015.

Valencians awoke on May 25 to a change that some would say was a long time coming.

New mayor, Joan Ribó Canute, won the election for Coalició Compromís, a relatively new coalition that supports nationalist, progressive, and ecological politics. Ribó replaced Rita Barberá Nolla, who had held the office for 24 years.

Ribó is now the highest leader of the city of Valencia. Valencia is the capital of the Valencian Community, an autonomous community in Spain. Separate from these two, the province of Valencia is also a central part of the Valencia Community and includes the city of Valencia.


The coalition, formed in 2010, was founded on the sentiment “compromís means commitment.” Met with widespread enthusiasm, Ribó was sworn in as mayor of Valencia on June 13. However, the initial enthusiasm quickly transformed into skepticism for some.

“I think [the local citizens] went from immediate excitement about a new opportunity to immediate doubt,” says David Nordlund, a professor in residence at the FSU Valencia Study Center who has lived in Valencia for 16 years and who previously worked for the U.S. Department of State.

These doubts concern the ability of Compromís to actually take care of business in the city, since there has been a history of disagreement within the coalition. Voters are now concerned that the leaders of Compromís will be too busy worrying among themselves to agree on important decisions, since the coalition contains so many views: those of the Valencian Nationalist Bloc (BLOC), the Valencian People’s Initiative (Iniciativa PV), and The Greens — Environmentalist Left (Verds-LE).

Referring to itself as “Valencia’s third political force,” Compromís “was born as a viable electoral alternative for the citizens of the Valencian Country,” according to the party’s website.

This “electoral alternative” is no doubt in response to Ribó’s predecessor, Barberá. Such a long term is almost unheard of among Americans, who often tire of politicians after just four years. Barberá is the only mayor that young Valencians know. Although Barberá held the highest percentage of the popular vote with 25.7 percent, the Partido Popular (PP), to which Barberá belongs, lost over half of its city council seats to the more progressive Compromís.

Compromís was a close second with 23.3 percent of the popular vote. There were six parties total in the election, but none of the others managed to garner 20 percent.

The Valencian people, upon hearing the election results, were optimistic about the change in leadership. To her credit, Barberá, referred to familiarly by her constituents as Rita Barberá, effected plenty of positive change during her time as mayor.

Starting right at the beginning of her term, she cleaned up the city, which had a major drug problem in the 1980s, and transformed it into an area that local citizens could be proud of. She also directed effort into maintaining historical buildings and pushed the city to utilize greener methods of transportation, such as Valenbisi, a public bicycle rental service.

However, her positive influence on the city was not enough to stop the decline in her party’s seats.

This decline was likely due to several financial scandals surrounding the PP, the most famous of which occurred in July 2013. Named the Bárcenas Affair after Luis Bárcenas, former treasurer of the PP, the scandal centered on claims that Bárcenas took donations from construction bigwigs and distributed them to PP party leaders in cash.

Furthermore, given the current state of recovery after the recession, voters had seemingly become disenchanted with the PP, and were craving a fresh start. And they have certainly found it in Ribó.

In the weeks after the election, Compromís was focusing on popular, superficial changes to try to boost its image. Ribó announced a few changes concerning the perks of his position, including decreasing his salary and selling one of the luxury cars that he used to get around the city.

“There are gestures that show one wants to seem above the rest, but I like to be just a...
El almuerzo
Coffee break
The second “meal” of the day is a coffee break around 10 a.m. This is exactly what it sounds like: a break from work to drink more coffee and maybe eat a small sandwich, or montadito. If you haven’t caught on yet, Spaniards really like their coffee, and as a result, it has become one of the perfected arts.
“I am going to be a spoiled brat when I go back to America because the coffee here is just so good,” says 2015 study abroad student Sarah Tatum. “Nothing can compare.”

La comida
Lunch
The time between meals in Spain is extensive, hence the many snacks. Lunch doesn’t begin until 2 p.m. This is the biggest meal of the day in Spanish culture; you probably know it as la siesta, or the time in the middle of the day when everyone takes naps. However, people don’t really sleep during the three-hour lunch break. Instead, this is a time for family, when small-business owners close so they can go home to their loved ones. Or occasionally Spaniards may eat lunch at a café.
Lunch generally consists of three or more courses. It begins with something light like soup or salad. Two popular soups in Spain are gazpacho and salmorejo. Gazpacho is a tomato soup, served cold, and made with garlic, red and green pepper, olive oil, vinegar, and small pieces of bread on the side to mix in later, like croutons. Salmorejo is very similar.

Coffee is the main form of sustenance for breakfast—keep in mind this is a small, non-American sized coffee. Some common coffees include café con leche (half coffee, half milk), el capsuccino (or coffee with milk and a dash of chocolate), and café cortado, for those who don’t like a lot of milk. The rest of the meal may consist of croissants, pastries, toast with jam, and other dishes centered on bread.

Paella Valenciana
For the main course, dishes of meat and fish are served. According to FSU Valencia instructor Leda Pedelini, most of Spain’s rice comes from Valencia, so naturally the city is famous for its rice dishes. Paella is probably the most well-known of these—after all, some call Valencia the city of paella. This social dish, made to be shared between two or more people, has several variations.
Paella Valenciana, named after the city, is the most common. It is made with chicken and/or rabbit, sweet pepper, tomatoes, olive oil, and green beans, all on top of Spanish rice colored yellow by saffron and other spices. Paella can also be made with seafood and squid ink, which turns the rice black. There is even a paella, made with nudles instead of rice, called fideuá. This creation came about when a fisherman had to improvise to provide food for his whole crew.
Following the main course is dessert, which could be pastries, custard, or ice cream. Bread usually accompanies the meal, as well as wine or a beer, and of course there is almost always more coffee at the end.

La merienda
Snack
After the oh-so-famous siesta, there is another snack time from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. once people get off work. Tapas are a famous Spanish food usually eaten during this time. There are a variety of these small dishes, meant to be shared between friends.
Some tapas include croquetas de jamón (ham tacked inside fried balls of potatoes), and patatas bravas (fried potatoes dizzled with tomato sauce and aioli). Sometimes tapas are meats and cheeses or other delicacies piled on a slice of French bread and held together by a toothpick.
Aside from the perpetual option of coffee, horchata is another available beverage offered all day but usually served for la merienda. Horchata is a sweet liquid that looks like milk but is made from the tiger nut (a tuber) and is usually served with a sweet bread called fartón.
“I am not a milk person, so I was hesitant to try it,” says Kathleen Keenan, a summer 2015 student. “I was surprised by how sweet it was, but it tastes better with the fartón.”

La cena
Dinner
Finally, dinner comes around at 10 p.m. If you try to eat much earlier, you will be the only one on the restaurant scene. Many restaurants don’t even open until after 9 p.m. The final meal of the day is also a light one because it is eaten so late.
As with most meals late in the day, dinner is generally accompanied by wine and other alcoholic beverages. Agua de Valencia has become especially popular among the younger generation.

Finding fresh food at Valencia’s El Mercado Central; see page 38.

Coffee break
El almuerzo
Coffee break
Finding food in Valencia
What to eat and when while studying abroad
By Jennifer Knauf

You’re showered and ready to start the day, a day like any other, except that you’re studying abroad in Valencia, Spain. You have a few extra minutes before class to grab breakfast, but what should you eat? What is there to eat?
You have probably had a decent amount of practice feeding yourself, after all, college life is a culture shock in and of itself, and you have obviously been surviving somehow. However, Spain is a whole different kind of culture shock: the food is different, the meal times are backwards and upside down, and then there is the small issue of needing to speak enough Spanish to order and pay.

“Of course there is almost always more coffee at the end.”

El desayuno
Breakfast
The all-American breakfast of eggs, bacon, and sausage with a side stack of pancakes drowning in syrup doesn’t exist in Spain. In fact, breakfast is considered the least important meal of the day and is often skipped. This meal, if eaten at all, is typically at 7 a.m., or whenever you wake up for work or school.

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Traditional breakfast at Panaria.

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Traditional breakfast at Panaria.
Let the numbers talk

By Claudia Gonzalez

FSU Valencia more than doubles its enrollment in the past five years

During the summer 2008 study abroad sessions, 198 students set out to study at the FSU center in Spain. All of the students were housed in one building, where they quickly became a close-knit group.

Now fast-forward seven years to the summer of 2015, when 367 students arrived at FSU Valencia. Instead of one building, students were housed in three apartment buildings: Garnet, Gold, and Seminole.

Growth has spiked dramatically at the center in the past two years. In the academic year from the fall 2014 semester through the summer 2015 sessions, 679 students studied at FSU Valencia, up from the year before when 529 students studied at the center—and up dramatically from years before that. For example, from the years 2000 through 2010, annual enrollment hovered steadily between 250 to 300 students per academic year.

There are many reasons to study abroad, and choosing a location may not always be the easiest decision a student will ever make. But the word is out that the Valencia study abroad sessions, 198 students set out to study at the FSU center in Spain. All of the students were housed in one building, where they quickly became a close-knit group.

Now fast-forward seven years to the summer of 2015, when 367 students arrived at FSU Valencia. Instead of one building, students were housed in three apartment buildings: Garnet, Gold, and Seminole. Growth has spiked dramatically at the center in the past two years. In the academic year from the fall 2014 semester through the summer 2015 sessions, 679 students studied at FSU Valencia, up from the year before when 529 students studied at the center—and up dramatically from years before that. For example, from the years 2000 through 2010, annual enrollment hovered steadily between 250 to 300 students per academic year.

There are many reasons to study abroad, and choosing a location may not always be the easiest decision a student will ever make. But the word is out that the Valencia study center provides students with great weather, beautiful beaches, delicious food, and gorgeous scenery for those Instagram photos.

“There are a number of reasons why I chose to study abroad in Valencia, language and location being two big ones,” 2015 student Kathleen Keenan says. “I had studied Spanish in high school and college and was excited to finally put my Spanish to the test. It ended up being a great decision.”

Program Director Ignacio Messana and his staff were as surprised as anyone at the dramatic growth.

“We didn’t know that the program would become so popular so fast,” Messana says. “We didn’t have any specific goal in mind of growing to a certain number.”

Messana mentions two main factors that contributed to FSU Valencia’s expansion. “One is that our colleagues in the International Programs office in Tallahassee do a wonderful recruiting job, both for the freshman students and for the broad curriculum students, including people like the ones that recruit for Editing, Writing and Media,” Messana says.

“Point two: We know it has been word of mouth. That is, the students who go back speak well about our program, and that means many of the students want to come here for that reason,” he says.

Clearly, studying at FSU Valencia is more popular than ever. But with such success comes some logistical challenges.

“The same problems arise with anything that has high volume,” says David Lanza, a PA in summer 2015, summer 2009, and spring 2009—as well as one of the students who studied at Valencia in spring 2008.

Lanza, who has first-hand experience of the dramatic growth, gives an example. “You have a lot of students who need to do a lot of different things,” Lanza says. “We have six PAs. We take students to the doctor almost every single day, and that changed because it used to be a once a week thing, and now there are just more students.”

From coordinating daily doctor visits to organizing field trips for 367 students, FSU Valencia staff members have had their hands full, not just during summer 2015, but also throughout the 2014-2015 academic year. “I used to know the name of every student, and now that’s impossible,” Messana says.

With all of this growth, you might think that staff members would be discouraged or overwhelmed. This, however, is not the case. “Yes, we have noticed this increase so much that it has affected the staff, faculty, courses, classrooms, housing (of course), and assistants in the different offices,” says Alicia Martinez, associate director of FSU Valencia.

“But we are super happy with this increase and happy to be able to give the opportunity to many other students coming through FSU to experience this beautiful study abroad program.”

Like Martinez, Messana is pleased that the program is so popular, and he is quick to credit his colleagues for the center’s success. “It is a wonderful achievement of FSU Valencia as a team, not of mine only. As a team, we are very proud.”

Moreover, Messana and his staff are determined to keep the quality of the program high for each student who studies at FSU Valencia.

“If students leave here feeling like they’ve learned a lot and at the same time they’ve enjoyed a lot, that’s the best feeling,” he says.

Top left: While visiting the Valley of the Fallen during the 2015 summer session B, one half of the entire student group meets for a picture. Photo by Emily Larson

Top right: The rest of the students visit Valley of the Fallen on a different day and pose for the same photograph. Photo by Ryanne Doumet

Bottom center: The entire fall semester class of 2005 during a trip to Cordoba. Photo courtesy of Melissa Claessens
Studying abroad for a year changes a student's perspective. But living in a different country for 12 months forces students to become comfortable in situations they would not normally have to deal with in the U.S.

While culture shock may occur when students engage with a culture dissimilar from their own while traveling or studying abroad, they do not have to go through it alone. "We would like to examine the possibility of doing another type of study center in either Asia or Africa," Pitts says. "Asia is certainly an attractive location in terms of the Pacific Rim and commerce, as well as a representation of the world's populations. As it relates to Africa, we have a lot of students in the U.S. and at FSU who trace their roots to Africa, and I think it would be good to give those students an opportunity to learn more about the culture of Africa." FSU has consistently been ranked in the top 20 of U.S. study abroad programs by the Institute of International Education, yet IP is always looking for ways to make the programs more attractive and accessible to students.

"We would like to certainly make it more affordable and attract more students because I think studying abroad is an essential element of a 21st-century education," Pitts says. "We would like to provide more scholarships and generate the funds to allow that." Choosing to study abroad can be a life-changing decision that not a lot of students get to experience. Pitt himself regrets not having the opportunity to study abroad. "I did teach abroad in the London program though, and I saw how it changed the lives of students," he says. "And it also broadened my own understanding of other cultures in the world. So I'm very passionate in trying to encourage students to do it."

FSU tries to make it easier for students to study abroad by focusing on scholarships and by finding interesting places to expand to. If you decide to study abroad, you can rest assured that you will be part of a long history of students and will participate in one of the top-ranked programs in the country. "I really enjoy seeing the impact that studying abroad has on students as they have their first-world perspective broadened and they come back with a new understanding of global issues," Pitts says.

FSU anniversary events

- Valencia's 20th: January 2017
- Panama's 60th: February 2017

To RSVP, contact FSU International Programs
Phone: 850-644-3272
Toll-free: 800-374-8581
Fax: 850-644-8817
Email: fsuipanniversary@gmail.com

Anniversaries from page 8

FSU students will participate in a Florence gala dinner to celebrate the celebration when Spain won the title. FSU has consistently been ranked in the top 20 of U.S. study abroad programs by the Institute of International Education, yet IP is always looking for ways to make the programs more attractive and accessible to students.

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— International Programs Director Jim Pitts

Swing dancing the night away

Story and photos by Erica Pope

Flamenco is just one form of dance that can be found in Spain. Swing dancing performances are held every Sunday near the Torres de Serrano, and they typically involve around 20 to 30 swing dancers and people who are watching the dancers.

The music ranges from older jazz music to more modern music and doesn't have any lyrics. The event allows Valencians and tourists alike to let loose and enjoy judgment-free dancing. "I actually learned how to swing dance in Valencia from walking by the dancers one Sunday night," FSU senior Kenzie Hendrix says. "It was really random but also really fun."

Many other musicians and dancers — violinists and fire dancers, for example — perform in Valencia at night, and can be found in the plaza near the FSU study center, such as the Plaza de la Virgen.

"I love to travel, but my building is like a little slice of America here. I am near the FSU building, those at the Valencia, Florence, and London centers are housed in apartments. For example, in Valencia the FYAs are spread out between the two FSU-owned buildings, Garnet and Gold.

These study centers become home to students. It is not only a place to hold their belongings or lay their head at night, it is a space that feels safe and secure.

Emily Larson, a Valencia FYA, says, "I love to travel, but whenever I am near the end of my trip, it is such a relief to get back here, to Valencia. This apartment has pretty much been my safe place for the last 11 months."

Studying abroad for a year changes a person. Going into the experience, the student may not know anything about the host country's culture or even speak the language. But living in a different country for 12 months forces students to become comfortable in situations they would not normally have to deal with in the U.S.

While culture shock may occur when students engage with a culture dissimilar from their own while traveling or studying abroad, they do not have to go through it alone. "What was really helpful was that I am in a program with about 200 American students," Mackie says. "So, I can go outside and get my fair share of the Spanish culture, and if I am not feeling up to it the next day, my building is like a little slice of America just chilling there."

FYAs from page 4

The housing system varies from study center to study center. While FYA students in Panama enjoy living in their own house, those at the Valencia, Florence, and London centers are housed in apartments. For example, in Valencia the FYAs are spread out between the two FSU-owned buildings, Garnet and Gold.

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FYAs reminisce about their favorite memories at a local cafe. Clockwise from lower left: Asha Jackson, Charles Evers, Dylan Geller, Victoria Oesterle, and Julianne Mahoney.

Kathleen Keenan and Corbin Ryan participate in one of the swing dancing performances, which are held every Sunday night near FSU's Valencia study center.
Summer 2015

Biringer has not just assimilated to life in Valencia but because he’s just that likable. Right away that he is the guy who knows everyone; the teacher. He sets the tone for the entire classroom, from the day he sets foot inside. ‘The State Department told me I had to learn to speak Spanish, it was part of the job,’ Biringer says. ‘Currently, I’m a Fulbright Commission for educational exchanges between the U.S. and Spain. In spite of Nordlund’s Swiss-army-knife role, he has become one of the faces of the program. He is a mentor for students around Valencia but also to local flamenco shows. He aims to provide a cultural experience.

Gerber has accomplished quite a bit. Attempting to sum up his entire career in just one article has been just that—an attempt. ‘It feels impossible to sum up everything. He seems to be loved and admired by all. He has been in Valencia since the birth of the program. In many ways, he has become one of the faces of the program.’

The very idea that we are all interconnected—we are all part of this greater whole;’ says Gerber while finishing his soda. ‘We must be global citizens. If I can display that through music—wonderful.’

It is safe to drink the tap water? Students come out with academic know-

Is it safe to eat the dried ham? Jamón serrano (Serrano ham) is a type of dry-cured Spanish ham, which is generally served in thin slices, or occasionally diced. In Spain, students are always surprised to see legs of ham hanging from restaurants and shop windows; however it is completely safe to eat. All restaurants and shops have a safety measure that they follow to carry this type of meat, so don’t be afraid to try it in your bocadillos [sandwiches] and other meals.

What advice would you give to incoming students? Students tend to seek out familiar food like pizza and hamburgers while abroad. Take advantage of the Hispanic diet. Start out with some tapas [tapas starters and five main dishes] and work your way up to the fish, meat, and other dietary options Spain has to offer. In Valencia, you will find that the meals are plain in flavor, typically substituting olive oil for sauce. This will allow you to fully embrace the flavor and immerse yourself in the Valencian diet.

The Mercado Central is a great place for students and instructors to buy locally grown produce and to interact with market vendors.

The powerful sense of community Biringer brings always talks about exactly what students gain from his Kingdom of Valencia class. This is typically the only 4000-level course in the Valencia program and is reserved for Spanish majors, minors, or heritage speakers. Biringer leads students on a journey all over the region to speak with locals, see popular culture, hear music, taste food, and everything else that encompasses the Valencian identity.

“I want [students] to act like they’ve been here before. You’re a guest, you are privileged,” says Biringer. “I want them to respect the culture.”

Both men are more than just professors; they are mentors. They mold young minds through direct instruction and as inspiring role models. In fact, both take great satisfaction from their students’ success. ‘There’s no greater feeling than when the pupil surpasses the master,’ says Biringer, beaming with joy.

This past spring, one of Biringer’s former students earned her PhD in political science from Duke University. Although she was longer his student after the Valencia program, she was still learning from him, always asking questions and seeking his counsel. ‘I felt like I was coaching her from the sidelines,’ says Biringer. ‘And there’s no greater feeling than that.’

Nordlund too takes pride in mentoring students. A bright pupil who matured and flourished under Dr. No’s tutelage earned an internship at the White House.

“Students come out with academic know-

What are some options for vegetarians? In the last 15 years, Spain has become more open with different types of foods. Before you couldn’t find tofu, soy milk, or broccoli; however now there are specialty shops that can go to. Students have the option to cook at their apartments and can go to Mercado Central [the central market] to choose from a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

What problems do students typically encounter? During the first few days abroad, students are hesitant to try the Mediterranean diet and will sometimes feel ill. Make sure to give your body time to adjust, eat well, and get plenty of rest.

Is it safe to drink the tap water? It is safe; however it is recommended that students drink bottled water during the first few days abroad to help them transition better.
Ribó said in a statement.

By August, there was even a video game
featuring Ribó bicycling around the city
“while dodging obstacles on his way towards
the City Hall,” according to
Costa News, a regional newspaper.

Surprisingly, the Water Court is not made
up of lawyers; rather it is composed of nine
farmers who are democratically elected, each
representing a different irrigation community.

They are tasked with settling conflicts
and disputes regarding the use of irrigation
water users in Valencia. But because of im-
proved irrigation technology, there are not
many complaints.

However, when there is a complaint, the
proceedings are carried out orally and publicly.
Considering the backdrop of the
cathedral, the robes, and the fact that the
tribunal is carried out completely in Valen-
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-Kathryn Kane

Perhaps the most interesting fact about the aqueduct is that its approximately 25,000-gallon blocks are held together without any mortar. A walk through Segovia gave everyone the opportunity to see even more sights.

"I loved seeing the architecture of the city, and it felt like every five steps you would come across another ancient building," Betters says. "The city itself just seemed so historic and beautiful, and it was incredible to be able to walk the streets and see that close-up."

The group also received a guided tour of the Alcázar de Segovia, a medieval fortress once home to kings and queens of Spain. "I really enjoyed the castle," says Kathryn Kane, an FSU junior majoring in art. "The guided tour taught me interesting tidbits of information like that there are golden pine cones decorating the ceiling and who the murals were inspired by."

But, the day had to end, and everyone boarded buses for the return to Madrid, where they would await the adventures that were in store for them the next day.

Students were eager to explore Spain's capital, and the day started with a guided tour of the city center. The guided led the groups while explaining the history and importance of various places, and the tour ended where many had been anticipating since the beginning, the Prado Art Museum.

"Seeing the masterpieces of Velázquez, Goya, El Greco, Rubens, and Rafael was beyond incredible, as was seeing the Garden of Earthly Delights by Bosch and Las Meninas by Velasquez," Betters says, referring to the priceless treasures housed at the Prado.

Students even had a rare chance to see more works than usual by Pablo Picasso that were on loan to the museum. Students also were encouraged to take a short walk to Reina Sofia, a modern art museum, which holds the works of Salvador Dali and Picasso's Guernica, one of the most significant anti-war paintings in history.

"Picasso is my favorite artist, and I was so happy to be able to see some of his work," Kane says. "Both museums are extremely large so it was impossible to see everything, but the tours showed us some magnificent highlights. It's one thing to read about artists and their work, but it's another thing to see it in person, observe the details, and just be in physical awe." Students were given free time during the afternoon to explore the city on their own, and some headed farther into the shopping district to pick up some new clothes or souvenirs, while some walked to Retiro Park to take in some of the green spaces of the city.

Others simply wandered around seeing what the city had to offer and finding themselves a little lost, before heading back to the hotel.

"I was very impressed with the flamenco show," says Samantha Arvin, an FSU sophomore majoring in communication disorders. "I tried tap dancing when I was younger and [flamenco] was like tap dancing on steroids. I was so impressed."

The four dancers were dressed in a variety of outfits all in traditional style. "Only a couple of the people are the same," says Kathryn Kane, an FSU junior majoring in art. "Toledo was the first place in Spain I've been where the different kinds of churches were preserved and celebrated for what they were," Kane says.

Even though only a few hours were spent in Toledo, Betters, Kane, and Arvin say they would love to return. Upon arriving back at the study center in Valencia, all of the students were tired and dreading the return to classes the following morning, but the trip had all been worth it.

"During Spanish classes we were always taught about the culture and history in Spain, but to actually see and experience their daily lives firsthand is an experience that you can only get abroad," Allston says.

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"It almost looked like a movie set or fairytale."

— Melissa Betters

"It honestly felt like going through a time machine and winding up in an intricate, stone medieval city," Betters says. "The entire city looked like a place where time had stopped—the cobblestone streets, the stone buildings, the winding, narrow paths and roads, the soaring steeples of the different churches and temples. It almost looked like a movie set or a fairytale."

Before entering Toledo, the buses stopped on a hill overlooking the city, and students reacted with awe and excitement.

"The panoramic view was my favorite part," Arvin says. "I knew that we were in Spain, but it reminded me of Tuscany in Italy. It was very quaint, and I love quaint. After leaving the business of Madrid, it was refreshing to be in the rustic countryside. Plus, I am always one for a good view!"

While on a walking tour of the city, the groups stopped at two churches and one synagogue.

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"It was so impressed."
A walk through El Mercado Central

By Jennifer Knauf

I f you are visiting Valencia, Spain, you cannot miss the Mercado Central. It is the main market in this city, and it is one of the largest in Europe. It is located in the city center, just a short walk from the main tourist attractions.

The market is divided into several sections, including butcher shops, vegetable and fruit stalls, and stalls selling fish and seafood. You can find everything from fresh produce to seafood, meats, and cheeses. The market is open daily from early morning until late afternoon.

The market is famous for its seafood, especially the famous black rice (arroz negro). You can find all sorts of seafood, such as fish, shellfish, and octopus. Many of the stalls will even cook the seafood for you.

The market is known for its fresh produce, and you can find a variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs. The produce is fresh and comes from local farmers.

The market is also known for its variety of sausages, cheeses, and olive oil. You can find a wide range of these products, from traditional Spanish varieties to more exotic offerings.

In conclusion, El Mercado Central is a must-visit destination for anyone visiting Valencia. It is a great place to experience the local culture and sample some of the best food in Spain.
About the contributors

Milagros Aburto
Aburto is a Florida State University (FSU) senior majoring in English with a concentration in editing, writing, and media (EWM) and minoring in communications. She is a Florida native who moved to sunny South Florida when she was 10 years old. She is passionate about traveling, music, and film. Upon graduation, she will pursue a career in editing or desktop publishing. She aims to never stop learning and to continue to discover her talents.

Claudia Gonzalez
Gonzalez, from Coral Springs, Florida, graduated from FSU at the end of summer 2015 with a major in English (EWM concentration) and a minor in communications. After graduation, she is being forced into the real world, where she has hopes of returning to Spain to teach English. Some of her favorite things include cats, sleeping, and traveling.

Kathleen Keenan
Originally from Vero Beach, Florida, Keenan is a senior and she will graduate from FSU in December 2015. She is majoring in English with a concentration in EWM and minoring in communications and political science. Her love for reading started at a young age, and now, with graduation approaching, she hopes to have a future in publishing. Her perfect day starts with a Dunkin Donuts iced coffee, followed by reading a good book on the beach.

Jennifer Knauf
Born in Orlando, Florida, Knauf is majoring in English (EWM). She is a junior at FSU and hopes to one day edit books.

Sarah Polissky
Polissky, who grew up in South Florida, is a senior at FSU majoring in English (EWM) and minoring in business. She aspires to work in a marketing or public relations firm, where she can put her creativity to use. She enjoys traveling, photography, and spending time with her loved ones—especially her adorable puppy.

Erica Pope
Pope is a junior at FSU from Gainesville, Florida. (Go Noles!) She is majoring in English (EWM) and minoring in sociology of law, and she also is pursuing a certificate in leadership. She has dreams of becoming a lawyer and traveling the world along the way. She has a passion for good books, Chipotle, and puppies.

Joseph Quintana
Quintana is a senior at FSU majoring in English (EWM) and minoring in film studies. He grew up in Miami and his future aspirations range from writing for an online news publication to writing and directing for the silver screen.

Corbin Ryan
Hailing from the city of Tampa, Florida, Ryan is a junior at FSU. Deviating from his creative writing concentration for his English major, he decided to give journalism a try by working on Nomadic Noles. His passions include reading, cooking, and surfing.

Katherine Sinner
Sinner is a senior at FSU majoring in English (EWM) while minoring in communications. Her roots are in St. Petersburg, Florida. She enjoys a good book, her pug puppy, and the beautiful beaches of her hometown. Through her time in Europe, she discovered a borderline obsession with any pistachio-flavored dessert. Her long-term passion and goal is to one day work for a fashion magazine.

Rachel Tressel
Tressel is an FSU junior majoring in English (EWM) and minoring in environmental studies. She has lived in Tallahassee, Florida, since the age of 5, and she aspires to write for a nature magazine such as National Geographic. She thoroughly enjoys immersing herself in the outdoors and playing with nearly every dog to cross her path.

Ashley Tressel
Tressel is an FSU junior majoring in English (EWM) and media/communication studies. She has interned in the Executive Office of the Governor (Tallahassee) and worked as a freelance writer for Carbonated.tv. In fall 2015, she will be a journalism intern for The Borgen Project. She hopes to be a foreign correspondent or news editor. Her favorite city in Europe so far is Brussels, Belgium.

Advisor: Susan Hellingstrom and Jack Clifford
Student editors: Kathleen Keenan and Ashley Tressel
Student design assistant: Sasha Polissky

Students in the summer 2015 Editing, Writing, and Media Program visited Valencia’s La Beneficencia and found a break from the July heat in the center’s inner courtyard.
What will I miss the most about Valencia?

“Taking two steps out my front door and being instantly surrounded by century-old buildings is one of the things I will miss most about living in Valencia, Spain.”
– Rachel Townsend

“I will miss the castles that had unbelievable views of the Mediterranean.”
– Claudia Gonzalez

“I’m going to miss the unforgettable adventures we had including dorking out on the top of the Torres de Serranos with our daggers.”
– Sasha Polissky

“Just a short metro ride away from the study center is the beach and the beautiful Mediterranean Sea, and this is one of the many things that I will miss about our time in Valencia.”
– Lauren Thompson

“I will miss having the Torres de Serrano as my front door.”
– Milagros Aburto

“I will miss walking along the streets and encountering beautiful street art each day.”
– Sarah Tatum

“No single adventure or monument compares to the unforgettable people I’ve been blessed to meet.”
– Joseph Quintana

“I will miss walking around the streets of Valencia and marveling at the beauty and history of this city.”
– Erica Pope

“Of all the wonderful things about Spain, I will miss the story-book like scenes the country has to offer.”
– Corbin Ryan

“I’ll miss the unforgettable adventures we had including dorking out on the top of the Torres de Serranos with our daggers.”
– Sasha Polissky

“I will miss the unforgettable adventures we had including dorking out on the top of the Torres de Serranos with our daggers.”
– Sasha Polissky
What will I miss the most about Valencia?

“I’ll miss the unbelievable architecture, palaces, and museums that are always just a short walk away.”

– Katherine Sinner

“I will miss the unique live entertainment you can find simply walking down the street, from music to magic.”

– Jennifer Knauf

“I will miss all of the crazy adventures and memories that brought us closer as a “family” that we shared while being abroad.”

– Kathleen Keenan

“What I will miss the most is being surrounded by a neverending supply of delicious food.”

– Ashley Tressel