Vicky Pacheco has worked at FSU Valencia since 2001, and her behind-the-scenes role helps the program run smoothly and efficiently.

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The Ruzafa neighborhood, the “Brooklyn of Valencia,” attracts locals and students who want an artistic and cultural experience.

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From the Olympics to CNN, from entrepreneur to climate expert, four study abroad alumni make their mark on the world.

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Letter from the program director

We are PROUD, very proud, of you, the students and faculty who choose to study and teach abroad. It is not an easy choice, and it includes costs and other personal efforts. But we know—and those who have experienced it are our best promoters—that the effort pays off.

You, brave students and faculty who leave your comfort zones, homes, cars, families, and loved ones behind for a few weeks or months, are choosing to do something that will change your view of the world and ultimately, your view of life. You will learn and experience many new or different things. And, trust us, you’ll like some, love many, and hate a few of those experiences, but they will become amazing memories and personality-shaping moments that you will have forever.

This year FSU International Programs marks 60 years of educating students abroad, of helping students and faculty make this eye-opening experience possible. FSU International Programs has been in Panama for 60 years, in Florence for 51 years, and in London for 46 years. In summer 2017, we marked the 20th anniversary of the Spain (Valencia) program, during which time we have hosted around 30,000 students in Spain. For the celebrations, for the hard work and camaraderie, we thank all of the administrators, staff, program assistants, and recruiters who made it possible to change the lives of so many people through study abroad.

Having said this, we would like to make a special call to you students to share these memories with your friends. Some of us in Spain come from a more collectivistic culture, and we know well that other countries and cultures tend to be a bit more individualistic. This collectivist culture gives us a perspective that we share with students every semester, every week. As human beings, we grow and mature in a much more positive way if we can share things—if we can have another person or group to talk with, laugh with, cry with about whatever is happening in our lives, from a very important moment to a more casual but meaningful “something” that just occurred yesterday.

Please, neither be closed to sharing, nor be closed to listening to others. The more you talk with others about your experience, the more it means to you and to them. Many of those 10,000 students have passed by our offices, so we give you this advice from personal experience.

—Ignacio Messana

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any students who study abroad as Valencia, Spain, may not be fa-
miliar with Vicky Pacheco. As the
program’s accountant and facili-
ties manager, she works in the Garnet study
center and focuses on financial issues rather
than hands-on student matters.

Working behind the scenes for Florida
State University’s Valencia program keeps
Pacheco from having a lot of direct interac-
tion with students, she knows, but she still
feels an emotional attachment to them.

“I do not have as close relationships with
the students, but when I go to farewell
lunches or trips, it fills me with happiness to
see the students so content,” Pacheco says.

As the financial aspects of the program, she has
seen the students so content,” Pacheco says.

Because her welcoming smile, she is a pow-
ful presence at the program. In addition to
overseeing the program needs, and her work and efforts
are well coordinated with the other offices,” Martinez says. “Vicky is coordinator of the
Administration office, and she, the staff
manager, and the office staff all work synergistically between
offices. Even though her work in the back-
ground may not be as visible, it is essential to
the program functioning.”

Born and raised in Valencia, Pacheco at-
tended high school nearby, where she met
her husband, Ignacio Messana, during their
senior year. He is Valencia’s program direc-
tor, dean of studies, and a professor who
teaches business and communications cours-
es. Through high school, Pacheco and Mes-
sana had opposite academic schedules—one
with morning classes and the other with
the afternoon classes—being in a mutual group of
friends sparked their relationship.

After graduation, both Pacheco and Mes-
sana attended the School of Economics and
Business Administration of the University of
Valencia, and eventually earned their master’s
degrees. Pacheco in economics and account-
ing and Messana in business administration.
The couple has been married for 19 years,
and they have a daughter, Victoria, just shy
of 8 years old. In Pacheco’s free time, she
enjoys activities with her daughter such as
assisting Victoria with her homework or taking her to the park.

“Vicky is a huge family person,” says Cri-
sila Gil, a longtime friend of Pacheco. “Her
loved ones are above everything. Vicky is a
good friend, a good sister, a good wife, and a
good mother. I feel very privileged to have her very close.”

In addition to her work and family,
Pacheco enjoys a daily dose of the outdoors
by swimming and riding her bicycle around
town. On weekends, you can catch Pacheco
with her family in the beautiful coastal town
Javea, sailing and enjoying the beach.

Pacheco and Messana enjoy their privacy
and keep a very professional appearance in
the program.

“When I go to work, I keep a very profes-
sional appearance in
the program. I think it’s much more professional keeping it that way.”

The two have their own personas, he says, and while sometimes they have different
opinions on program issues, they both stress
that they rely on all opinions from team
members to navigate the differences.

During college, Pacheco worked for Red
Bull to help promote its brand to earn extra
income, but her roast and interest has always
been in all things accounting. She used her
knack for numbers right out of university
when she went to work for Banco Santander,
analyzing the risks of granting mortgages
to potential borrowers. Pacheco worked for
that bank for about three years, before she
transferred to Caixabank, which is where she
met Bob Smith, a client of hers at the bank
who at the time was the program director of
FSU Valencia.

This is how her path to working for FSU
began. “The development of this friendship is ac-
tually how I got informed about FSU,” she says.

One day when a job for the program be-
came available, Pacheco referred Messana to
Smith. She believed her husband was a suit-
able candidate for the job. Messana spoke
English, had a university degree, and was
looking for new employment. Messana
joined the FSU Valencia team in 2000 as as-
sistant director, and one year later FSU pro-
moted him to director.

Fortunately, the FSU Valencia pro-
gram was increasing in student enroll-
ment each year, so Smith approached
Pacheco about a job with the pro-
gram and she accepted. She never
thought she would work for FSU, but
the work, she says, turned out to be
the best job she could have imagined.

“I never thought I would end up
working for FSU International
Programs; however, it resulted in
being the best possible job
imagined.”

Pacheco has accomplished a great deal
toward her 16 years of service to FSU. Whether it is managing accounts, oversee-
ing the maintenance of current facilities, or
helping to purchase new ones, Pacheco
Photo courtesy of FSU Valencia

Photo courtesy of FSU Valencia

Photo courtesy of FSU Valencia

Photo courtesy of Vicky Pacheco

Photo courtesy of Vicky Pacheco

Photo courtesy of Vicky Pacheco

Photo courtesy of Vicky Pacheco

Photo courtesy of Vicky Pacheco
A dream of gold

In 2013, Colleen Quigley was a college sophomore spending five weeks studying abroad in Valencia; now she is chasing gold medals with the U.S. national track and field team

By Carter Floyd

head of sweat drips down her back as she takes her place on the starting line. The heat is stifling, and not just because she is in one of Spain’s hottest cities. An entire lifetime of work culminates here, in the next 10 minutes. She is used to pressure—she is a former national champion, after all—but this is something else entirely.

Three years earlier, in 2013, then-Florida State University sophomore Colleen Quigley runs through Turia Park in Valencia, Spain. Though she is breathing hard, she feels no pressure, only tranquility, as she pushes onto the next mile. Four. There are no bright lights, roaring crowds, or records to break. She is running because it is what she loves to do.

In 2013, Colleen Quigley was a college sophomore spending five weeks studying abroad in Valencia; now she is chasing gold medals with the U.S. national team in the Summer Olympics. Despite her accomplishments, Quigley is still a professional runner,“ she says. “I had people to work out with, people to push me. I was not winning the workouts. I was being crushed, but it was awesome. They made me better,” she says with a smile during a Skype video call.

That hard work paid off in the form of an extremely impressive resume as a student-athlete. In high school, at Nerinx Hall in St. Louis, she was a National Merit Scholar and was offered track scholarships to some of the best programs in the country. At FSU, she earned All-American honors nine times, All-ACC academic honors six times, and NCAA All-Academic honors four times. Also at FSU, she won the 2015 steeplechase national championship, as well as conference championships in the steeplechase, indoor mile, and 1500-meter.

Despite her accomplishments, Quigley is remarkably down to earth. She has a warm smile, an infectious laugh, and dislikes talking about herself. When asked about her individual accomplishments, she inevitably redirects the conversation to instead credit those who have helped her: teammates, coaches, agents, administrators, and family members. FSU Valencia Program Director Ignacio Messana keeps in regular contact with Quigley, and he has a similar impression of her.

“We knew she was going to be a great professional runner,” he says. “She knew it. She knew she was smart. She knew she was competitive. But she was hyper-competitive, and struggled with rejection.”

FSU to offer spring break classes in Valencia, one in 2018 and another in 2019

By Brittany Argote

S tudents who want to study at FSU Valencia but can’t afford the time or the money for a whole semester or summer session are now in luck. FSU Valencia will offer its first spring break class in March 2018 and will add a second course in 2019.

The 2018 course is Principles of Macroeconomics (ECO 2020), a humanities course during which students will walk part of the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain.

The bulk of each course will be taught on the Tallahassee campus over the whole spring semester, and then the students who choose to go abroad will join their instructor in Valencia over spring break.

The idea to add spring break courses comes from FSU Valencia Director and Dean Ignacio Messana, who believes that all students should have the chance to go abroad.

“It would be beautiful for the Tallahassee students to have the opportunity to come to Spain,” Messana says. “And then we thought that we need to find the opportunity to come to Spain,” Messana says. “And then we thought that we need to find the opportunity to come to Spain.”

Students will be housed in hostels and hotels along the camino.

“The camino relates in numerous ways directly to HUM 2020,” Cashin says. “The course already has a component on the importance of pilgrimages, and in addition to HUM 2020, it will cover the Roman and Islamic influences on Europe and the consolidation of Christianity. Moving forward, it investigates the influence of architecture and art, the impact of Napoleon and 20th century conflicts. HUM 2020 and the camino fit together seamlessly.”

Camino de Santiago

Teaching the 2019 humanities course will be Kathryn Cashin, a member of the humanities teaching faculty who supervises multicultural film and who has choreographed many operas and ballet productions. In the course, students will trace the Camino de Santiago, a collection of hiking paths originally used by Christians during the Middle Ages to stone for their sins and to pay homage to the Apostle James, who supposedly is buried in Santiago in northwestern Spain.

The walk, which can be completed in 30 days, will be partially completed by the students in 10 days. The camino is best known for allowing hikers to gain a sense of tranquility, as the scenery is notoriously stunning and the lack of phone connectivity allows for a clear mind.

“The camino relates in numerous ways directly to HUM 2020,” Cashin says. “The course already has a component on the importance of pilgrimages, and in addition to HUM 2020, it will cover the Roman and Islamic influences on Europe and the consolidation of Christianity. Moving forward, it investigates the influence of architecture and art, the impact of Napoleon and 20th century conflicts. HUM 2020 and the camino fit together seamlessly.”

Cashin says precautions will be taken to ensure students’ safety.

“Students will be told they need to be able to walk about 12 kilometers a day,” she says. “However, a mini-bus will travel with the group in case someone is injured or ill, or simply needs a break. Safety will be the top consideration.”

Cashin and Calhoun expect about 12 students in each course, and both instructors have previously taught at FSU Valencia.

Two students hike the camino in northern Spain.

Spring break in Valencia

International trade

Teaching the economics course will be Joe Calhoun, a member of the teaching faculty and the assistant director of the Stavros Center for the Advancement of Free Enterprise and Economic Education at FSU. In Valencia, Calhoun will focus on international trade.

“When Valencia being a coastal city with foreign goods coming into the port, it is perfect to illustrate trade,” Calhoun adds. “Looking at a label and seeing ‘Made in —’ isn’t seeing trade. By visiting a country where goods come from, seeing the goods move, and literally buying something with different currency should allow students to understand trade in a deeper way.”

“When students return to Tallahassee, they will share their experiences and photos with the rest of the class, in turn encouraging those students to travel on their own later, Calhoun hopes.

Nicolas Gonzalez, a friend of the author of this article and a student at Florida International University who hiked the camino in 2016, recalls his own experiences and gives FSU students who take HUM 2020 a preview.

“It is a journey one takes to repent for sins and . . . to be [absolved] of all sins in the end,” he says.

Gonzalez first heard of the journey through family members who had completed the walk and was captivated, recalling “stories of hard days of walking through ancient trails braved by millions before us [as well as of] the scenery of the farmland and the mountains [in the region] Galicia.”

The camino is said to be rigorous, but Cashin says precautions will be taken to ensure students’ safety.

Two students hike the camino in northern Spain.
Everyone loves a good story—of success, of failure, of romance, of heartbreak. We’re handwoven to listen carefully for the interesting, the unexpected, and the inspiring. But to do so, first we must listen to the stories of others, only then can we weave their narratives into our own, to be shared.

FSU alumnus Lee Alexander has always loved storytelling; so when he went to FSU to study theater, he was most interested in how to best share a great tale.

In 2000, Alexander found himself abroad, studying in the London theater program. Now 17 years later, he has found a way to share others’ stories as a producer at CNN.

In a phone interview, he shares his story of learning the value of traveling, sharing a good narrative, and asking, “Why not?”

A native Georgia boy, Alexander grew up in a family from two different worlds. His father’s family preferred to stay close to home, avoiding travel outside of a few states. His mother’s family, however, were more adventurous. According to Alexander, they were “willing to drive four or five hours to meet for lunch somewhere” with family members who had found roots elsewhere.

While traveling throughout the United States with his mother, brother, and grandmother, Alexander learned that things he had heard from other family members of another country wasn’t necessarily true, that he could spot similarities between himself and people from different backgrounds. And so, when given the opportunity to experience people of another culture, he jumped at the chance.

He chose the Florida State University study abroad program in London, the very heart of theater and playwriting—the perfect setup for a theater student like Alexander. In fact, one of his favorite things to do in London was to visit the local theater, pay 10€, and enjoy a play.

Despite the price, “it was super high-quality,” Alexander says. “Even if it was a bad performance, there was still something that you could learn from it.”

And, as any study abroad student learns quickly about most countries in Europe, “[London] was a great hub to get to the rest of Europe. I was able to do a lot of travel to different countries on long weekends,” he adds. In all, he visited nine countries during his time with FSU London, including Sweden, Italy, Spain, Greece, and France.

Though Alexander enjoyed exploring these new places, not every weekend excursion went well.

“I traveled with another student [Helen] to Italy for a week, and we arrived in Venice with nowhere to stay and walked hours before my friend Helen found a bed in a convent and I found [one] in a male dorm... We were exhausted from drudging through the flooded narrow canals, and she had packed a ridiculously large suitcase. Neither one of us spoke Italian. By Rome, I had gotten sick and had to stay in bed for a day, and then we ended our trip in Florence.”

Even still, Alexander didn’t let difficult trips get in the way of a learning opportunity or of strengthening the bonds of friendships.

“Every trip is going to have its pitfalls, but it teaches you lessons for the next trip,” he says. “And it teaches you a lot about yourself, as well as the person you’re traveling with. I spent three months with Helen and a very intense week with her in Italy, and even though I haven’t seen her since, we are still in touch.”

On the weekdays, Alexander focused on his theater studies, and the London program allowed him to explore his interests in playwriting and storytelling. At the time, the humanities community was engaged in a heated cultural debate over whether film was killing theater, so his time in London inspired him to return as a graduate counselor (now called a program advisor) with the FSU London program.

During his time in London, Alexander learned that things he had heard from other family members of another country weren’t necessarily true, that he could spot similarities between himself and people from different backgrounds. And so, when given the opportunity to experience people of another culture, he jumped at the chance.

Alexander’s experience as a student with FSU London inspired him to return as a graduate counselor for storytelling. At the time, a friend who worked for the London program at King’s College London inspired him to return as a graduate counselor for storytelling. At the time, a friend who worked for the London program at King’s College London inspired him to return as a graduate counselor for storytelling.
Humans of Valencia
Stories

By Sarah Silva

Located 4,618 miles from Tallahassee in Valencia, Spain is a little slice of Florida State University that is the temporary home to some unique and adventurous students. Eager to jump out of their comfort zones, these students have gotten a taste of what life is like in other cultures all around the world.

During their time at FSU Valencia, these students have the chance to participate in important festivals, break common stereotypes about other cultures, and have once-in-a-lifetime opportunities.

Not only is this program open to FSU students, but to students around the world. For example, in Summer Session II of 2017, there were students from the University of Miami, Florida Atlantic University, and Carnegie Mellon University—and even a few students from the University of Valencia.

The FSU Valencia Study Center unites students under a common characteristic: their love of travel. This article takes an up-close look at six of the nearly 200 adventurous students studying in Valencia in July 2017, live from FSU and one from the University of Valencia.

Of the five FSU students interviewed, four ventured to Valencia without any previous friends, but they agreed that they wouldn’t change that fact for the world. Making new friends and unique memories is a big part of what FSU Valencia is all about. Here are their stories.

“Come in with an open mind … because once you open yourself up to the culture, the mindset, and branch out of our American bubble and meet the locals, I’d say that’s the best thing you can do for yourself.”
— Noah Wright

Noah Wright

Noah Wright, a First Year Abroad (FYA) student from Los Angeles, arrived at the study center for the fall 2016 semester and stayed through Summer Session II, which ended in early August 2017.

“I never saw myself as one of those people who would travel the world or have cool stories about all the places they’ve been,” he says. What caught Wright’s eye before he made the decision, though, was the part of the brochure that says FSU offers in-state tuition to those who study abroad the first year.

“This is the best decision I have ever made,” he says. He even jokes about how his new goal is to be one of the students in the FYA brochure that he found so convincing.

One common issue people tend to encounter when living in a new country is culture shock. But Wright says he instead experienced “reverse culture shock.” He sits back in his chair and starts to laugh.

“I went to Wendy’s in America [during my visit home in December], and I ordered a medium drink, and it was humongous,” he says. “It was the biggest drink that I had had in a semester. It was bigger than any ‘large’ in Europe.”

During his time in Valencia, Wright traveled throughout Europe and to several cultural festivals, such as Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany and to Pamplona, Spain for the San Fermin Festival.

“You learn so much, even in a weekend, about the country and the people,” he says, smiling. “My favorite thing to do when I travel, especially when I travel by myself, at my hostels I just talk to people from different cultures and I ask them what it’s like—what they like about it, what they don’t like about it.”

Noah Wright spent his first year abroad traveling throughout Europe, including riding a gondola down a canal in Venice, Italy. Photo courtesy of Noah Wright

Through the opportunities at FSU Valencia, students are able to fully immerse themselves in new cultures. Wright’s advice for future study abroad students is to “come in with an open mind … because once you open yourself up to the culture, the mindset, and branch out of our American bubble and meet the locals, I’d say that’s the best thing you can do for yourself.”

Taylor Goggin

Taylor Goggin, a junior from Miami, is no stranger to Spanish culture. With both a mother and grandmother from Seville, Spain, Goggin was getting a chance to embrace her roots in summer 2017.

“I feel a sense of connection with them because they’ve done the same,” she says. “I wish they wouldn’t have deprived me of living here. I love where I grew up [Miami]. This experience has just made me want to pursue getting a master’s abroad.”

Before studying in Valencia, Goggin had already visited Spain many times and had been to several cities, including Madrid and Barcelona. But 2017 was her first time in Valencia.

“It’s really cool because, even though it’s one country, every part is really different,” she says. “Living here is definitely an eye-opening experience—actually having an apartment here and going grocery shopping and having to convert money. I’ve only visited here and stayed for small periods of time, but I’ve never been indulged in the culture. So, I think that is pretty cool.”

As for what it’s like living in her family’s country with a bunch of foreigners, she says with a smile on her face, “I thought when I was going to come here I wasn’t going to speak Spanish whatsoever because we’re surrounded by everyone who speaks English. But the other night I went out to dinner with eight girls, and I literally had to translate around the table.” She starts to laugh, then says, “At least I’m getting a lot of practice.”

Ben Seaman, a junior from Miami studying business, took on the unofficial role of the program’s photographer during Summer II.

“I’ve been taking pictures left and right,” he says. “Studying abroad gives us the potential to change so much, and through my camera I’ve been able to watch everyone around me grow. I think they all should be able to look back on all of these special moments.”

After returning to Europe for his second semester, Seaman was getting to see the continent through a new lens. “The most eye opening experience for me is just seeing how different the lifestyle here is. The quality of life here is just as good, if not better [than America]. And by quality of life I mean people’s happiness. People here seem way happier here than they are at home.”

Ben Seaman feels on top of the world on this rooftop bar in Madrid. Photo courtesy of Ben Seaman

Taylor Goggin, in Morocco, rides a camel into the desert. Photo courtesy of Taylor Goggin

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NOMADIC NOLES
Ruzafa revamped

By Amber Lewis

However, people have not always been as embracing as Salazar is of this diversity. Still to this day there are parts of the world that are not comfortable with racial or religious differences, so it is no surprise that back in the 1600s, diversity was a tremendous problem in Valencia. The Moors, who were Muslims mostly from North Africa, ruled Spain from 711 until the fall of Granada in 1492, according to the BBC. This history helped create a large Islamic population in Ruzafa for many years. However, in 1609, the Spanish monarchy banned the practice of Islam in Spain. This move against Islam, including against Moors who had been forced to convert to Christianity (Moriscos), is called the Expulsion of the Moriscos. “So [the Moors] were thrown out of Spain,” Salazar says. “Some of the kids were kidnapped, and they kept them here as slaves in the houses for the [other] families. So, the demographic history of the neighborhood was broken—I mean absolutely broken.”

But in modern times, Ruzafa offered inexpensive housing, so Muslims, as well as immigrants of other faiths, moved into the community. “My father lived in Ruzafa many years ago, and it was also for many poor people,” Salazar says. “What happened is that many people in the early 21st century started coming to Valencia to find a job. People mainly from Latin America and Northern Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Mali) came to the neighborhood.” Unfortunately, some of the previous neighbors started leaving because they thought the coming of the new people meant the neighborhood was not good, a belief that was echoed in the media and by developers and city officials, Salazar says. “They created in the media the idea of danger,” Salazar says, “mostly, I guess, because people from Northern Africa and Islamic people were living there.”

Realistically, the various newcomers were coming to Ruzafa for the same reason most immigrants move to an unknown and different area: jobs.

When discussing the idea that Ruzafa was somehow dangerous, Salazar says, “It was not true. It was created from outside.” The various immigrants were truly coming to Spain to create their own businesses and their own networks. “At the time, most of the people who came at first were young men,” Salazar says. “But eventually their families came. It was an absolutely normal neighborhood, but it was good for the interest of the developers to give this idea of a negative [area].”

Even though a strict government was once able to scare away outsiders, recently Ruzafa’s low cost of living has been able to draw people from all over back in, according to Salazar. As the rumors of Ruzafa being a dangerous neighborhood grew older, more and more people started going there to see if what it really is: a cheap and nice place to live.

Similar to many cities and neighborhoods in the United States, after a lot of young and creative people started moving there, the area began to change into a popular place full of bars, bookstores, cafes, and art galleries.

The diversity also enhanced the community, Salazar says. “I have a Japanese friend that is a chef in an Italian restaurant and another friend doing classes of [Senegalese] drumming.”

While the popularity of the neighborhood sounds like a positive shift for the community, sometimes you can't see things for what they really are until you name them, and Salazar has given it one that Americans know all too well: gentrification.

In theory, gentrification is supposed to improve and revitalize a certain area. However, while this process can benefit newcomers and tourists, it can also leave the original locals feeling betrayed.

“It was bad luck for the immigrants living there, because they were living in the center of the city, very nicely,” Salazar says. “Then, all of a sudden, all of these new people came.”

Due to all of the recent changes in the area, the neighborhood has become more of a place to go out in or to eat at, but not to live, says Salazar. The cost of living has started to rise in the past decade, and more accommodations have been made for pedestrians and visitors, so parking is also a problem. Other changes are in the works, too. There are plans to build a brand new park in Valencia called Parque Central, which will be placed right next to the Ruzafa neighborhood.

On Ruzafa’s website, a map shows the area, almost as big as the neighborhood itself. This new park could not only push up the cost of living, but also draw in more people. While it’s true that many people have moved out of the area due to the recent changes, the overall culture that engulfs Ruzafa continues to lure people to the neighborhood.

When asked if he still visits the area, Salazar says, “Yeah, absolutely... it has this intellectual cultural atmosphere.”

Despite the increased number of bars in the area, the neighborhood still radiates an intellectual vibe, thanks to its cafes, restaurants, and bookstores that are different from the ones in El Carmen, where the FSU Study Center is situated. But Ruzafa attracts many FSU students who are willing to walk a little farther from the study center. For instance, FSU student Taylor Goggin visited Ruzafa in July 2017. “It was a cool neighborhood with a young vibe that was close to El Carmen, but offered a different scene and atmosphere,” Goggin says, calling it the “Brooklyn of Valencia.”

Just like Brooklyn, Ruzafa is an increasing-ly popular section of a big city that continues to burst with art, culture, and diversity.

“I think in that neighborhood, at least for me, it was the first opportunity to see that people from all over could go there and you could meet people from all over, and that’s a very nice experience.”

— Professor Juan Salazar
El Mercado Central

Explore
enjoy eat

‘Vibrant’ and ‘magical’ market is a fresh alternative for locals and FSU community

Article and photos by Kamille Catala

Just a few minutes’ walk from Florida State University’s Valencia study centers lies a gem: El Mercado Central de Valencia. When you first walk up to this eye-catching building, known in English as the Central Market, you immediately notice the impressive architecture with patterned tiles that add to the building’s grandeur. People stroll in and out of the building, giving a sense of a thriving ant colony’s food hub. Already you feel the energy from the outside. As you step through the doorway, the buzz of the market awakens you with an overwhelming number of vendors, foods, colors, and smells.

As you start to take everything in, you begin your journey into the deep abyss of vendors. Since Valencia’s expansion in the early 19th century, a marketplace has been present at the current location because of its recognition as the city’s market area. Once the outdoor market became too small for thriving Valencia, a new market building was completed in 1928, which is what still stands today. TripAdvisor ranks the market as the #1 thing to do in Valencia, and for good reason. The Central Market is one of the biggest indoor markets in Europe, and recent renovations have allowed it to continue being a huge tourist attraction and a central part of the lives of local people as well as of FSU students.

When you first walk into the market, you may wonder where to go first. This happens to everyone, but just walking around allows you to see everything and begin to understand the market, and which stalls interest you.

“It’s something that you don’t really see much of in America,” says FSU senior Kristen Prue, who studied in Valencia in summer 2017. “There are a bunch of different stalls, such a wide variety of things, and everything is just so fresh, so vibrant, and so colorful, and to me it’s just magical!”

Throughout the market, which has more than 900 stalls, there is something for everyone, even adventurous types. From ostrich eggs to Valencian oranges to traditional Spanish meats, you never know what you may find.

“You get to see foods you are not used to, and it’s interesting how immigration in Spain has created booths of things we would have never seen,” says FSU Valencia Program Director Ignacio Messana, a Valencia native.

This bustling and thriving market not only provides a variety of foods, but more freshness than a typical supermarket. Since many booths are locally owned, interactions between buyer and seller can be more one-to-one.

“My house would always buy at the Central Market, because the product is very good, it is very fresh, and also when you start going more and more often, you get to know the vendors that you buy from and it becomes something personal,” says Pilar Tarazona, another Valencia native who works with the FSU Valencia program.

Most booths even offer free samples to allow potential customers to try before they buy. Compared to supermarkets, which displays most items in packaging, the market has it all lying out in the stalls.

Meat stalls are typically seen displaying meats hanging, creating a flowing space that doesn’t have air conditioning but that relies on letting the outside breeze flow through the windows and out through the open doors, which helps keep out bugs.

“Since Valencia is a busy area with the animal just laid out in the display case. Most foods are visually shown in a way we are not accustomed to in the US, and in most cases vendors make sure to put up “Do Not Touch” signs. They pride themselves on having food items that have only been handled by them, which is a plus for potential customers.

One specific place in the market that is noteworthy to mention, Central Bar, is situated amid various vendors. Michelin star chef Ricard Camarena opened this small eatery in August 2012. Since then, the always-crowded eating place has grown into an integral part of the market, usually with a line of people waiting to sit and eat. Camarena currently has three other restaurants that are also located in Valencia and that are constantly busy: Ricard Carmen Restaurant, Habitual, and Canalla Bistro. The food at the Central Bar changes depending on what is in season, but always has some consistent items to munch on, such as arepas (sandwiches).

Not only is this place highly rated online, but also, according to the bar’s website, it relies on the “fresh produce sourced from nearby stalls in the market.” This allows for customers to enjoy Camarena’s creative dishes and the local vendors’ fresh ingredients.

One common complaint about markets such as this one is bugs, but in the Central Market things are different. When it was designed, the architects made sure to create a flowing space that doesn’t have air conditioning but that relies on letting the outside breeze flow in through the windows and out through the open doors, which helps keep out bugs.

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“Since Valencia is
FSU students in Valencia had a unique opportunity and several found distinctive ways to record the time

By Teaghan Skulszki

P

eople try to capture indescribable moments in pictures, videos, and words. Although we can never capture a moment perfectly, we can try our hardest and appreciate the memories we’ve shared.

At Florida State University’s study center in Valencia, Spain, students are doing just that, making memories that will last a lifetime. However, the way in which these memories are recorded is unique to each student’s experiences and interests. Likewise, the way in which students choose to document their memories varies from person to person.

Over the five weeks in Valencia in the 2017 Summer II session, students documented their adventures through various media platforms, the most popular being Instagram, due to the layout of the site, which is centered on posting photos. However, that didn’t limit FSU students, as they branched out from the norm and displayed different ways of documenting their time abroad. Even a Lego man was involved.

Ian Tramm, a second-year senior at FSU majoring in English with a focus on creative writing, has lived abroad before. Currently, when he is not in Tallahassee, he and his family live in Vicenza, Italy.

Even though Tramm has lived in Europe for a great part of his life because of his father’s military career, he still finds himself documenting his time abroad. What makes Tramm’s records so unique is the subject he chooses to document: the graffiti or “street art” throughout Valencia.

He uses the social media platform Snapchat, which means the photos only stay on his feed for 24 hours. There is an option to save the photos, but Tramm prefers not to and keeps them locked in his memories rather than in his camera roll.

He chose to use Snapchat for himself rather than others. “It’s more for me,” he says. “I like putting things on my story that I would enjoy and I would laugh at.”

In this case, Tramm is not focused on his audience, but he has shared the images with his family. While there are myriad amazing things to photograph in Spain, he connected to the graffiti on a personal level. He describes it as “a manifestation of a feeling inside someone; I do the same thing for writing, and I relate to it.”

Unlike Tramm, Paige Argote found her moment in Europe for the first time, and she created a blog to document her travels. The title of the blog, “La Pagina de Grayson,” is a play on words that translates to “The Page of Grayson.” As of the end of July 2017, Waldberg was still creating it, but the blog at that point took a chic look at some of Valencia’s best views.

Waldberg wrote an introduction post based on her first 24 hours in Valencia and was planning to circulate the blog through various media outlets, including Instagram and Facebook.

“I’ve gotten lots of positive feedback through likes and comments, which definitely makes me want to keep posting,” she says. She was also planning to travel to other places after the summer study abroad program and hoping to write about those experiences as well.

Brittany Wallace brought along a friend to document her time in the program: Grayson, a Lego figure given to Wallace by her boyfriend, Sean Martin.

“I told him before I left I’d like to take something with me to remember him by,” says Wallace, a senior at Florida Atlantic University. Grayson was among other items included in the little box of items Martin presented her with.

Grayson traveled all over Europe, including Barcelona, Madrid, Paris, and Rome. In the photos, he can be seen at the Colosseum and dining on paella. Wallace likes to take pictures of food because “it’s a common meeting ground,” and because it’s “most difficult to document in the specific way I am with places, unless sometimes I can actually set up something, like the Colosseum.”

Likewise, Martin has a Lego companion named Amelia, whom he took on his summer U.S. vacation. “Florida is home,” Wallace says, “and the Legos are all about the travel aspect and keeping someone close to you while you’re away.”

As of the end of July 2017, Wallace had shared the photos of Grayson only with Martin and close family, but she was also planning to publish Grayson on other media platforms besides Snapchat, specifically Instagram and Facebook.

In a more vintage turn, Brittany Argote used Polaroids to document her 2017 summer in Spain. She was given the camera the day of her departure from the U.S. by a good friend, which turned out to be a beneficial twist because Argote fell in love with the timeless photographic style. She even put away her professional camera and instead chose to pick up her Polaroid to archive her memories.

Argote says watching the fireworks over the Eiffel Tower on Bastille Day was “the most incredible experience I’ve had my entire life—I was in awe the entire time.” I have about six or seven PolaroId photos from Paris, a lot from the Eiffel tower.”

Her favorite PolaroId was taken in front of the Eiffel Tower. She took a picture of the tower during the day and then again at sunset.

Argote singles out her PolaroIds as an alternative way to archive your time. She enjoys them more than a picture from her digital camera because “you’ll able to hold them in your hand,” she says. She also believes the aesthetic of the pictures is more valuable.

“The pictures of being in Valencia and Paris are nice on their own, but with the PolaroIds they become that much better,” Argote says.

Jamie Freas of Michigan documented her time as a First Year Abroad student with FSU between the fall of 2016 and the summer of 2017 by writing in a journal. However, her journal is much more than her thoughts and ideas; it includes letters, maps, plane tickets, travel guides, and even articles from her time in Florence, Italy.

Freas writes in it every after trip she goes on, or if she hasn’t been on a trip in a while, every week or so. She keeps the journal to “write the memories and crazy things she’s done,” she says, and as a way to remember the people she has met.

What makes Freas’s journal different from other students’ archives is the physicality. “On social media, you can only put so much,” Freas says. “Of course there are going to be some stories that you just can’t put out there. I’m worried that when I’m old I’m going to forget details, so I want to describe them now.”

Freas’s journal did have an audience at one point. For her ENC 1102 class in Florence in fall 2016, Freas was required to keep a journal. Even after warning her instructor how personal the journal was, she decided to share it with her instructor for the assignment. Freas’s ENC 1102 class does not stand alone. Other FSU classes also encourage students to archive their time abroad. For example, in the Editing, Writing, and Media Program in Valencia, students are required to create a blog post each week. One 2017 blog post, for example, was based on describing the differences between living in Valencia and living in Florida. Another weekly assignment for the EWM program included Insta- tagram posts that could be seen on the program’s Instagram account, NomadicNoles. Topics included food, the program’s trip to Madrid, and doors or doors around Valencia. Unfortunately, we can’t recreate the memories we’ve shared, but we can try to preserve them. Whether it be through a blog, an Instagram post, or a journal, the way in which we archive our memories is important.

In years to come, the way we document our memories will change. But for now, keep on posting, writing, and enjoying.
Belmont, meet FSU; FSU, meet Belmont . . . in Valencia

By Madison Manley

“My sister did this program when she was a student at Belmont and had the time of her life,” Elias says.

Albright and Elias were just in time and luckily snagged up the last two available spots in the program.

“Megan texted me and told me she had enrolls about 8,000 students, has offered spots in the program,” Elias says.

“Megan texted me and told me she had the time of her life,” Elias says.

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A student at Belmont and had the time of her life, Elias says.

While Albright and Elias’s friendship and luck brought them to Spain, Karen Roggenkamp, an international business major at Belmont, was persuaded by the academics.

“I really wanted to study abroad, and this study abroad program had classes that would count towards my major,” Roggenkamp says. She had no idea that her excitement to learn would lead her to places like Italy’s Amalfi Coast, Rome, and Florence.

While Roggenkamp, Elias, and Albright all had friends coming into the program, Belmont student Emma Svedin came in not knowing anyone. She walked into the program excited about the business and marketing classes offered and was thrilled when she got to Valencia and had the opportunity to experience the diverse culture of both Spain and Florida State University.

“Everyone is so nice,” Svedin says. “That was what was most surprising to me.” Even after only two weeks of being in Valencia, Svedin had already formed a close bond with four other Belmont students and was planning to travel all around Europe with her new friends. Basically, Svedin walked into the program knowing no one but walked out with close friendships with both Belmont students and Florida State students.

While the Belmont students stayed busy exploring the cultures of Spain and other European countries, they still had time to talk about meeting the FSU students.

“I was like ‘OK, my goal, I am really nervous to meet these people,’” Svedin says. “But everyone has been so welcoming, and it has been a really fun time.”

The Belmont students interviewed for this article felt varying degrees of nervousness about being around so many students from a different school, but they say the FSU students made them feel right at home.

“It is a different culture, actually two different cultures: FSU and Spain,” Albright says. “It was a bit of a shock to me, but I’ve adjusted really well, and FSU students are all very nice people.”

While Albright was a bit nervous about meeting the FSU students, Elias couldn’t wait to be around the FSU students. “It has been fun,” Elias says. “I am glad the FSU students are here. I think it would be a completely different experience if it was just Belmont students. I think it is better that we are with FSU kids.”

The Belmont program, which enrolls about a dozen students each year, is held during FSU’s Summer II session, which sometimes enrolls around 200 students.

While the 2017 Belmont students weren’t able to take part in many of the cultural activities offered by FSU because of their own personal travel, they thought their time in class with FSU students allowed for plenty of pleasant interaction.

Just as the four Belmont students spoke positively about their interactions with FSU students, FSU students—including Amber Lewis and Carter Floyd—had positive things to say in return.

“Roggenkamp was friendly when I first met her and told me how much she wanted to visit FSU and go to a football game,” Lewis says. “I always tell her that she should just come.”

Even though Floyd, a sports administration major, noticed that some of the Belmont students weren’t as interested in football as he is, he says, “They’re very friendly and open to meeting new people.”

Lewis and Floyd were not the only ones who picked up on how well Belmont students blended with FSU students. “I think that the Belmont students mesh very well,” says Ignacio Messana, Director and Dean of the FSU Valencia Study Center.

“The mixing is perfect, and in all cases it has worked very well.”

The FSU/Belmont affiliation was created collaboratively by Messana, a Valencia native, and by former FSU faculty member Jeff Overby, now at Belmont University. Messana and Overby, both business professors, saw the potential to create something special and jumped right in to it. When Overby was at FSU, he regularly taught at FSU Valencia and at FSU London during the summers.

“We offered our facilities and our program to another university; our business is to use the best fit and expertise of our facility,” Messana says. “Jeff used to come, like many others, as a part of FSU, but when he left FSU he went to Belmont and established a partnership between Belmont and Florida State,” says Jose Gonzalez, who teaches business courses at Belmont and at FSU.

“This program is particularly appealing because of the wide variety of classes, the relatively large number of faculty and staff, and the opportunity for Belmont students to interact with culturally diverse students.

The joint program has been a winner for both universities. What grew out of the collegial relationship between Messana and Overby several years ago has allowed for students of Belmont and FSU to create new friendships and shared memories at a pivotal time in their lives.
Embracing her lessons learned

FSU Florence alumna Candi Obrentz shares her journey from English major to entrepreneur

By Samantha Gertis

The time Candi Obrentz spent as a study abroad student in Florence, Italy during the summer of 1992 taught her a valuable lesson: The world is bigger than it seems and holds endless opportunity.

Born and raised in St. Petersburg, Florida, Obrentz seized the first chance that she had to travel overseas when, between her junior and senior years of college, her gloriously eager mom and stepdad made this possible.

Obrentz always had the curiosity to see beyond her hometown and seek out adventure, and Florida State University’s study abroad program in Florence was a perfect fit.

Exposure to Italian culture led Obrentz to broaden her view of what spending time in a foreign country offers and how she could take advantage of such possibilities.

“I remember walking alone through Florence one morning and as usual stopped to gaze up and marvel at the glorious Duomo,” she says. “I felt like, if someone was looking down on me in that moment, I would be a little pinpoint on the map. The idea of being there made me feel alive.”

The thought then of being a pinpoint, however, has not held her back from taking risks and aiming for challenging goals. After graduation in 1993 from FSU with a degree in English and vivid memories of Europe, she moved to the South of France in a different country, for various reasons, “I transitioned from having a secure job at a 200-plus year-old global company to forming a start-up and being my own boss. I have returned to Florence many times since the summer of 1992 and my last visit was momentous because I had RestoPresto with me. I will never forget the feeling of pride that I had while using my own product invention on the streets of a city that holds a special place in my heart.”

A lasting impression from Florence

Obrentz’s exposure to a foreign land through an open-minded lens stemmed from her decision to study abroad in Italy. Knowing that she wanted to travel overseas and take on adventure when the chance to apply to FSU’s International Programs presented itself, she chose Florence to have exposure to a non-English speaking and entirely new culture.

“It was one of the best decisions I have ever made,” she says.

Courageously, in search of more insightful experience, Obrentz applied for the program without knowing anyone else attending her session. Going abroad on her own gave Obrentz the opportunity to discover an entirely new group of friends—one that could represent exactly who she was at this point in her life.

“You are drawn to certain people, with whom you connect the dots to accelerate a project is even better. I asked Siri to find the best portable ground cover so that I could purchase it to avoid the wet jacket problem in the future, and I was shocked that nothing like this was available in stores or online,” she says. “I could not believe that my options were a tarp, a huge picnic mat, or a kids’ blanket and that what I wanted to buy did not exist. So, I decided to create it myself.”

With little design and retail knowledge, Obrentz “took a leap of faith” and taught herself how to navigate the creation and e-commerce process, hiring specialists when needed to help her bring her vision to fruition. After 15-plus prototypes, RestoPresto, a lightweight, durable, and multi-functional water-repellent wearable blanket was launched to the market and was subsequently granted a patent. In September 2016, RestoPresto was featured on The Today Show “an innovator’s dream come true,” Obrentz says.

“I have achieved remarkable milestones for RestoPresto as a sole business owner, so when my inventory sold out, it confirmed to me that the future of this product is very bright,” she says, adding that she is now entering partnerships to expand the business. “I transitioned from having a secure job at a 200-plus year-old global company to forming a start-up and being my own boss. I have returned to Florence many times since the summer of 1992 and my last visit was momentous because I had RestoPresto with me. I will never forget the feeling of pride that I had while using my own product invention on the streets of a city that holds a special place in my heart.”

The huge accomplishments of finalizing the prototype; running a successful Kickstarter campaign to fund the first production run in the USA; obtaining a patent; scoring fantastic TV, radio, and digital press; and having a waiting list for out-of-stock colors because of its popularity have been the most rewarding moments of my professional life.

Once again discovering a gap in the market, this time for a trustworthy advisor to help people navigate all stages of the creation process, I launched a second business as an idea execution strategist. Having an invention idea but not knowing what to do next and who to trust are very common challenges. I know firsthand how to successfully turn a vision into a working product, how to form a business, and how to manage the critical steps in-between, so I apply this knowledge and share my vast network of specialists with clients who want to bring their own ideas to life.

Launching a product or service to the market is very challenging, so I devise customized plans to process the more efficient and less confusing for others since I have been there and done that. Using a search engine is great for research—collaborating with an experienced, ethical expert who can connect the dots to accelerate a project is even better.

Before RestoPresto, I did not plan on becoming an innovator; however, once it became evident that there was a large, unmet need when people asked me if I had seen this type of gadget heavily outweighed the supply, I decided to go for it. After all, you miss 100% of the shots you don’t take!”

RestoPresto magnifico

Editor’s note: Candi Obrentz did not know she wanted to start a business and work for herself until that fateful day in Central Park. In her own words, she describes her process, including how the experience sparked the idea for a second business.

Starting my own business was not on my radar because I crave structure and always enjoyed working for established organizations.

One of the more difficult challenges for me, aside from figuring out how to create a product from scratch, was to find a factory to quickly and efficiently manufacture RestoPresto because it is a complicated production process. I know that doing the right thing for the product and for my business takes time.

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Once again discovering a gap in the market, this time for

Top photo) When Candi Obrentz studied in Florence in 1992, the streets of the city were filled with tributes like this bust of Lorenzo de’ Medici to commemorate the 500th anniversary of his passing. (Middle) Obrentz is standing in front of the FSU Study Center, which is located in a renovated Renaissance palace on Borgo Degli Alibizi in the historical center of Florence. (Bottom) Sculptures and fountains are abundant in Florence, and this structure is on Via Nazionale in the San Lorenzo neighborhood, which is a short distance from the hotel where Obrentz and her classmates lived during the summer of 1992.

For more information, please visit RestoPresto.com.

Candi Obrentz with her patented RestoPresto on the Arno River during a return visit to Florence in 2015.
Celebration time

In June 2017, FSU International Programs (IP) celebrated 20 years of being in Spain. The festivities culminated in a dinner at the architecturally stunning L’Umbracle, part of the City of Arts and Sciences complex alongside Valencia’s Turia Gardens.

On hand were IP Director Jim Pitts (right), FSU Director and Dean Ignacio Messana (above, holding package), retired music professor Larry Gerber (top right with hand in air), the FSU Valencia staff and faculty, as well as many FSU Valencia alumni, summer students, and friends of the program.

All photos courtesy of FSU Valencia
Summer sounds

It’s fair to say there is no better time than the month of July to be in the city of Valencia.

The sun is shining, travelers from many countries line the local beaches, and extra special music is in the air. From festivals to local venues, a music lover’s to-do list can easily be filled during the heart of summer.

All month, the area celebrates the Feria de Julio, also known as the Gran Feria de Valencia, a cultural festival local and visitors to the city look forward to every year. For students studying abroad during Session II, the timing is perfect to be immersed in this cultural experience, and some of the venues just happen to be right in the heart of the city.

Marcia Porter is an associate professor in FSU’s College of Music, specializing in voice and opera singing, and she has taught in Valencia for three summer sessions, including two classes in 2017, Music in World Cultures and Music of Spain. She says Valencia serves as a great opportunity for students to not only learn about the region’s music but also to experience the scene in person.

Porter asks her students to attend at least two live musical performances during the Feria de Julio. In addition to the events of the fair, though, Porter appreciates Valencia’s live music scene in general.

“There is always something to see and hear and much of it is free,” she says. “In mid-July, I went to the ‘Nit a Les Artes’ event with a couple of colleagues for an opera performance. It was great – the weather was beautiful, the singing was lovely, and there was such a large crowd, at 10:30 p.m., for opera. It was standing room only.”

Porter says local clubs such as Café del Duende and Radio City are popular stops for local culture, especially flamenco performances.

“I’ve gone to Café del Duende several times for flamenco. I’ve heard several concerts in Turia Park and traditional Valencian music in the Plaza de la Virgen,” Porter says. “I love the music scene here.”

If classical or traditional music is not your thing, Valencia offers every genre you could think of: jazz, pop, hip hop, reggae, and, of course, Spanish bands. For example, Tsarango, a fusion band formed in Barcelona in 2010, kicked off Valencia’s Concerts de Vivers as part of the Feria de Julio. Tsarango’s sound is inspired by the styles of reggae, pop, Latino, and dubstep music, and they performed music off their new album in Valencia.

The lineup for Concerts de Vivers always includes bands that have experienced international success. In 2017, UB40, which is widely recognized for its chart-topping reggae cover of Neil Diamond’s “Red Red Wine,” played during the series.

Among the other performers were Chick Corea and Béla Fleck, Alpha Blondy and Colombia’s Carlos Vives, who had a hugely popular duet with Shakira, “La Bicicleta,” which had 1 billion views on YouTube as of mid-July, I went to the ‘Nit a Les Artes’ event with a couple of colleagues for an opera performance. It was great – the weather was beautiful, the singing was lovely, and there was such a large crowd, at 10:30 p.m., for opera. It was standing room only.”

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Among the other performers were Chick Corea and Béla Fleck, Alpha Blondy and Colombia’s Carlos Vives, who had a hugely popular duet with Shakira, “La Bicicleta,” which had 1 billion views on YouTube as of August 2017. If you love a good cover song, the fair usually schedules several tribute bands. Valencia-based bands The Troopers, an ABBA cover band, and Momo Queen, a Queen cover band, performed in 2017. The musical lineup for the Feria de Julio is always diverse, and catching a concert should be on the “bucket list” of every study-abroad student.

Besides the Feria de Julio, perhaps one of the most anticipated musical events of the summer in the Valencia region is the Festival Internacional de Benicàssim, which is similar to the likes of Bonnaroo in the US. The event takes place in the town of Benicássim, about 15 miles and an hour-long train ride from Valencia.

The fest combines music and camping with an all-star lineup, and people flock to the beach town from all over Europe. The most notable headliners in 2017 were Red Hot Chili Peppers and The Weeknd.

“It was an opportunity to meet people from all over Europe and even run into people who were from Florida,” FSU Valencia student Shelby Ridener says. “I made new friends and got to enjoy music in a crowd of people all just coming together and enjoying life,” adding that “seeing The Weeknd perform live made sleeping outside worth it.”

While sleeping outside is one way to get close to live music, anyone walking through the Plaza de la Virgen on the evening of July 17, 2017 would have stumbled upon a live orchestra concert. La Banda Sinfónica Unió Musical de Llíria is a full orchestra with close to 80 musicians, and they played until midnight to a packed crowd.

Looking around at the people, it was easy to get a sense of euphoria. Here they all stood on a warm summer night, amid this beautiful classical music, with an ancient cathedral in the background, and a glass of wine in hand.

While this sounds like the scene of a romance movie, it’s just another night in Valencia during the Feria de Julio.
In fact, Zoë Crook, a program coordinator for International Programs, was an FSU student and co-worker of Stuart’s, both hired at the same time to market study abroad programs around campus. Crook remembers Stuart “pouring herself into her meteorology degree” at FSU. “I have never met anyone who is so obsessed with the weather,” Crook says with enthusiasm for her friend’s commitment. “When she wasn’t studying for her meteorology class, she was updating her friends about the forecast, monitoring extreme weather conditions around the country, or talking about her experiences at weather camp.”

Stuart’s entire family graduated from FSU, so she was “born and raised a Nole.” Her grandfather David Stuart was, for a time, the director of the meteorology department at FSU. “It was a bit of a shock coming from Tennessee because Tennessee is very conserva- tive—it’s pretty rural,” Stuart says. “It’s much different than Panama, so going from Tenn- essee to Panama was definitely a shock, but I handled it pretty well I think.”

Stuart describes her transition as just a bit stressful, but she says it influenced her overall attitude about tackling difficult situations and about problem solving. “I approached it as I know this is going to be a challenge, I know it’s going to push me in ways I’ve never been pushed before, but I’m going to let it happen and let this experi-

“Panama is such a small country, but it’s incredible how diverse it is and how many things there are to do there,” Stuart says. “I was traveling almost every weekend just in Panama and I never got bored of anything.”

On one outing, she visited an indigenous community in the rainforest in an area accessible only by canoes. Because of the extended dry season, however, the area was in a drought; the river was so low that their group had to get out of the canoes and carry them up the river.

“It was in that moment, deep in the Panamanian jungle, Stuart remembers thinking, “Wow, meteorology isn’t just calculus and physics and science. It’s something that impacts every aspect of society, and these people are facing serious consequences of being cut off completely from society because it’s not raining.”

Stuart also recalls the moment as one that altered her career trajectory. She still loves meteorology, she says, but as of October 2017 she is finishing a master’s degree in climate change and international development at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England.

“I’m really hoping to take that science aspect of weather and climate and apply it to communities that are really dealing with the impacts of it,” she says. “[I want to] figure out ways that we can help them adapt and respond and build resilience to these impacts.”

Crook, who studied abroad in Costa Rica, says that when she and Stuart were working as student recruiters for International Programs and not discussing the weather, they swapped stories from their time spent abroad.

“Lauren loved telling me about her experiences in Panama shaped the path for her education and fueled her passion for working on the social impacts of the weather in other countries,” Crook says.

Stuart recently spent three months doing a work placement in Germany with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as part of the Adaptation Framework, specifically with the Loss and Damage team. Essentially, she is involved with a number of projects to reduce losses and damages that are a result of climate change in developing countries.

“The UN very heavily relies on interns to function because they don’t have a huge budget, and because they rely so heavily on them they really just throw you in there,” Stuart says about her time with the organization. On just the second day of her internship, Stuart was assigned to three separate projects, and by the first week, she was assigned to a supervisory role on another. “It’s a great learning opportunity; not a lot of interns get to supervise a project so that’s really exciting.”

Despite her appreciation for the opportunities afforded to her at the UN, Stuart does not plan to pursue a career with the organization.

“I want to go work in developing countries, I want to work directly with local communities, and I want to educate people on how to

Opposite page: Stuart snaps a photo while seated in a canoe floating down a river in the dense Panamanian jungle.

Right: Stuart rests on a tree in front of a waterfall in Boquete, Panama.

“I tell people meteorology chose me—I didn’t choose it. I have actually wanted to be a meteorologist since I was about 4 years old. One of my earliest memories in life is watching the weather radar with my dad, and it’s always been one of my greatest passions.”

— Lauren Stuart, shown here standing on a bridge with the Panama City skyline behind her

See STUART, page 41
Valencian architecture: the old and the new

By Madeline Hoffman

Florida State University students and faculty who travel abroad to study and teach in Valencia encounter a view of great architecture throughout their daily lives in the Spanish coastal city. Two structures in particular, the Metropolitan Cathedral-Basílica of the Assumption of Our Lady of Valencia—commonly known as Saint Mary’s Cathedral or Valencia Cathedral—and Estación del Nord (the North Station) will likely be on the frequently visited list. Valencia has beautiful beaches, a great summer climate, and unique neighborhoods with their rich histories. The sights, shapes, and styles of buildings in the city, though, give sightseers with a passion for architecture something else to rave about. In addition to the cathedral and the train station, Valencians boast about the Central Market and the City of Arts and Sciences as well as an abundance of architectural styles and elements that leave visitors in awe.

According to FSU Professor Juan Salazar, though, the Valencia Cathedral and Estación del Nord are smart choices to highlight because they date back to two “golden ages” of Valencia, with the cathedral from the 14th century and the station from the 20th century.

A landmark you can’t miss

During their stay in Valencia, students likely will spend time in the lively Plaza de la Virgen, located near the FSU study centers and next to the Valencia Cathedral. Whether spending evenings wisely at a paella dinner with friends, enjoying the performances entertainers put on in the plaza, or tossing a coin into the fountain for good luck, the location offers a stunning view of the cathedral.

Located in the heart of Valencia, the cathedral’s main entrance is approximately 500 feet south of Plaza de la Virgen, in Plaza de la Reina. The cathedral is considered one of the most prominent landmarks in Valencia, as well as the religious center of the city. Some people even believe that the Holy Grail from Jesus Christ’s Last Supper is kept there.

The Roman Catholic structure combines architectural styles from Gothic to Baroque and Neo-classical, including Romanesque and Renaissance elements. The cathedral was built between 1252 and 1482 on the site of the main mosque Mesquita de Balanysia, directly after the Reconquista of the then-predominantly Islamic state. In 1262, Bishop Andrés de Salát laid the cornerstone of the building.

According to sacred destinations.com, the cathedral encompasses “unusual open arcades around the northeast-oriented apse [that] recall the Roman Colosseum. The portal on the north transept, Puerta de los Apóstoles, is richly decorated with Gothic sculpture and a 14-century rose window, while the entrance portal is Ali El Boraqui.” The primarily Gothic interior excels in the quality of its religious and artistic relics.

The cathedral houses notable treasures such as its nine-14th-century lanterns, the main silver altarpiece, and numerous paintings from artists including Valencia Joan Segura de Lugo, Madrid born Fernando Cueva, and two from Goya. According to oral tradition, however, the most significant historical relic of Christianity is stored deep in the cathedral as well.

The holy chalice, used at the Last Supper to serve wine and commonly known as the Holy Grail, is purportedly kept in the cathedral. A Rough Guide to Spain states the chalice “has been enshrined in the cathedral since 1437, and can be viewed in a dark, simple stone chapel in the corner of the cathedral.” Salazar, professor of archaeology at FSU Valencia and a native Valencian, says while the cup housed there is from the first century, the gold ornaments around the cup are not. Christian relics such as this one were in high demand during the medieval ages, and “everyone would say they had the original!”

While he does not think the cathedral has the real Holy Grail, he believes the “sacred relic” serves as a means to bring Christians from near and far to Valencia, saying some people travel hundreds of miles to see the shrine.

How to get the best out of your visit to the Valencia Cathedral, the tallest and one of the most-visited religious monuments in Valencia

1. Climbing the 207 steps to the top of El Miguelete, right by the cathedral’s renowned bell-tower, prior to 7 p.m., and feel the power of the bell as it strikes while watching the sunset—a truly unforgettable experience. Also worthwhile is a visit to the cathedral’s museum, which holds a collection of paintings as well as 2,300-kg monstrance made of gold, silver, and jewels donated by Valencians.

2. More insights from Professor Salazar about the Valencia Cathedral:

The orientation of the cathedral is supposed to be east-west, but it is slightly changed in the case of Valencia, and this is because the cathedral is built on top of the main mosque of Valencia, which was an Islamic city with thousands of people and when Christians conquered the high ground, they built the Muslim mosque, and very soon after they began to build the new cathedral.

The main tower, El Miguelete, the big bell tower of the cathedral, was not present at the beginning of the cathedral. Another smaller tower was built, then destroyed, then the cathedral was built and re-built and has gone through multiple transformations. The central area of the cathedral, you have paintings of angels playing different musical instruments from the Renaissance era, and these paintings were covered until around five years ago…The cathedral has many mysteries in multiple places. It is a medieval building. Like any other Gothic cathedral it has all of these symbols like animals, devils, images to be scared of, representations of saints, you have the chapel of the Holy Grail, you have the chains that one of the kings of the Aragon crown wore, and the Holy Grail is in the south of France and given to the cathedral as a present.

The cathedral is the absolute center of the Christian culture within Valencia. When the Christians conquered the city from the Muslims, the cathedral was the first thing they put all of their interest and energy into. It’s the only building that we have that of this size from the fourteenth century, of course, because they put all of the money and all of the resources at the time into the cathedral.

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Valencia Cathedral’s main entrance, located in the Plaza de la Reina.

Quick tip

For future FSU Valencia students and instructors

By Madeline Hoffman

Valencia’s North Train Station shot in the midst of the city’s midday hustle and bustle.

“More important than distinguishing whether the Holy Grail here in Valencia Cathedral is real or not is the impact it has had on the followers and believers of Christianity in Valencia,” he says. “The church created a successful narrative that the people believe to be true, and that belief brings them together.”

El Miguelete, the cathedral’s impressive Gothic octagonal bell tower at the tallest and one of the most visited religious monuments in Valencia. Its 207-step climb to the top offers spectacular views of the old town, which is dotted with blue-roofed churches.

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Climb aboard for trips out of town

If you plan to explore other Spanish cities during your time abroad, you most likely will find yourself at Valencia’s main railway station, Estación del Nord, located a mile away from the FSU study centers. Watch the station come to life as both locals and tourists file in and out of the ticket lines to catch their trains, as the sound of sweet hellos and Saddened goodbyes fill the air.

Considered the main train station in Valencia, compared to the newer, high-speed Joaquín Sorolla Station, Estación del Nord is a “perfect example” of Modernist architecture within the city, Salazar says, due to the “de-pictions of cultural elements that are key to Valencia, such as steamboats, trains, oranges,” with the latter being the most commonly known producer of the city. Built between 1906 and 1917 by Valencia architect Domenico Ribes, the “Sección Vienses” style of the interior and exterior of the station offers insight into Valencia’s culture. In addition to the oranges, the front facade of the station is covered in other Valencian elements, such as traditional houses known as baracques, lakes, and women depicted in customary Valencian style dresses. Not only is the North Train Station known for its architectural beauty, its location is convenient, directly next to the building, Plaza del Toros, and 200 meters from city hall. The attraction was declared a Cultural Heritage site in 1987, making it a relevant building in and of itself within Spanish architecture.

When studying or teaching abroad in Valencia, if you stay close to “home!” and the Plaza de la Virgen or travel to other cities in Spain or throughout Europe, you will experience two of Valencia’s architectural gems.
Valencian visionaries:

By Rachel Dranetz

Summer 2017

SOROLLA §

BLASCO IBÁÑEZ

Jacquín Sorolla produced around 2,000 paintings in his lifetime (1863-1923), and his works are displayed in museums throughout the world, including the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Museo d’Orsay in Paris, the Prado in Madrid, and the National Portrait Gallery in London. Associate Professor Carrie Ann Baade, who has taught two summers at FSU Valencia, has an expertise in artistic technique and has dedicated it to Blasco Ibáñez.

“Toward the Orange Trees,” which is just a short walk from the FSU Valencia campus and at FSU Valencia, is a specialist in 20th-century Spanish poetry with research interests in Spanish literature and cultural studies. "I became acquainted with Blasco Ibáñez when I was a student in high school, really, because Blasco Ibáñez is one of the staple names of Spanish literature in the 19th century,” Alvarez says, who grew up in northern Spain.

“Not only the base, but also the base of his work is interesting." Alvarez says. "It is about the process of modernization in Spain. It is a fierce critique of the Spanish colonial history—because the novel was released during the Cuban war. It’s about how the Spanish soldiers were mistreated, because they were conscripts, that means they were the sons of very poor peasants that were being conscripted and sent to right for Spain overseas. And then when they returned home they were completely marginalized, and this is the story being told in Cañas y barro."
Valencia, Spain teems with culture brought on by a mix of religion and tradition, historic sites, beautiful street art, and jaiishi festivals. Some of these traditions, such as the Fallas or Corpus Christi, trace their roots as far back as the city’s beginnings.

Students studying abroad and other visitors can learn more about the history of these festivals and sites by visiting some of these less-frequented attractions.

**Museo Fallero**

Museo Fallero is a multi-level collection of some popular Fallas and Ninots from the city’s annual Fallas Festival. Ninots (puppets or dolls), lifelike figures made from wood, cardboard, paper, foam, and plaster, are mounted on Fallas to complete structures that are burned during the festival.

Valencia’s Fallas festival is held each year from March 12 to March 19 in commemoration of Saint Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foster father of Jesus. He is the patron saint of many Christian denominations, unborn children, fathers, immigrants, and workers.

In the weeks leading up to the festival, hundreds of Ninots are made, polishing fun at and providing social commentary about issues in Spain and around the world.

The museum houses about 100 Fallas and Ninots from past years, ones saved from burning. The museum also exhibits the history of the construction of the Ninots and how that process has changed over time.

The Fallas is one of the most important festivals in Valencia, and the Museo Fallero does a wonderful job at capturing and displaying the extravagance of the festivities.

**Museo del Corpus Casa de las Rocas**

Located across the street from Museo Fallero and nestled in the Turia Gardens, Parque Gulliver is a giant concrete statue of Lilliput’s Jonathan Swift’s fictional tale, Gulliver’s Travels. The park depicts a scene from the novel when Gulliver has washed ashore on the island country of Lilliput and finds himself prisoner of the Lilliputians.

Commissioned by the city of Valencia in 1990, artist Manolo Martín, designer Josep Vicent “Sento” Llochell Bisbal, and architect Rafael Rivera created Parque Gulliver. The statue of Gulliver is a giant playground in disguise, with hidden steps, ropes, and inclines that provide access to the many levels and slides. Visitors will feel like Lilliputians as they climb in and around the giant structure.

“Gulliver Park is massive and has to be seen in person,” FSU senior Ian Goldberger says. He recommends looking at the park from the nearest bridge to get a true idea of the statue’s size.

Parque Gulliver is a quick bus ride, bike ride, or taxi from Torres de Serranos and is well worth the visit.

Unique taxi driver will lift your spirits

Headed to Parque Gulliver or the Museo Fallero by taxi in Valencia? Hop on Facebook and contact the Unique Taxi Driver, Giuseppe Esposito (right, with the article’s author), one of the happiest taxi drivers in Spain.

“I want to spread happiness and show people why I love Valencia,” says Esposito, as he breaks the out of the mold of what a traditional taxi driver is supposed to offer.

He will get you to your destination, feed you snacks, and play you classical music with the biggest smile you’ve ever seen. -
A city within a city
Valencia’s stunning showcase of arts and sciences

A must-see collection of buildings is located in Valencia for anyone visiting the city, especially Florida State University students who are studying abroad. The beautiful Ciutat de las Artes y las Ciencias, or, the City of Arts and Sciences, stands out along the southeastern edge of the Turia Gardens, approximately 2.5 miles from FSU’s study centers.

Whether you want to watch a dolphin show or take a stroll through a crochitisian forest, the cultural and architectural complex has something for everyone.

“It’s iconic to Valencia,” says Paula Acosta, FSU Valencia’s cultural program director. “It’s important for students to see it.”

The striking white buildings are located on the right bank of the final stretch of what was once the Turia, a river that flowed through the city. After a catastrophic flood in 1957, the Spanish government diverted the river and turned the greenspace into a gorgeous park that spans 10 kilometers.

Gothic, Baroque, Romanesque, and Modernist architecture define the majority of Valencia’s buildings, especially those near the FSU study centers and in the city center. When arriving to La Ciutat, however, visitors immediately see how different these buildings are from anywhere else.

Spanish architects Santiago Calatrava, who was born in Valencia, and Félix Candela designed the modern-looking Ciutat de las Artes y las Ciencias, which shine in beautiful contrast against traditional city buildings. It’s easy here to forget that you’re even in Valencia.

Calatrava and Candela wanted to create an almost futuristic feeling to show that La Ciutat is all about the present day.

The Oceanogràfic, the Príncipe Felipe Science Museum, and the Hemisfèric, which in 1998 was the first building opened to the public, are the three main buildings. The others are the Palace of the Arts Reina Sofia, L’Umbracle, and the Agora, which don’t require tickets to visit and are used mostly for public events. The Assut do l’Or Bridge runs between the Ágora and Oceanogràfic and the other buildings.

All together, surrounded by a gorgeous pool of blue water, these structures make up La Ciutat.

Oceanogràfic
The Oceanogràfic is the largest aquarium in Europe, with 1,250,000 square feet of space. “The Oceanogràfic was my favorite...there was so much to see including a dolphin show; which was amazing,” FSU student Kelly Keeth says. “We also got to see whales playing together which is something I’ve never seen before.”

Each part of the aquarium represents the different main marine ecosystems of the world. Walking through here is like taking a journey across the world via aquatic ecosystems.

The Oceanogràfic offers an array of activities, such as meeting the animals up close, a 4D movie, and even sleeping with sharks! Some exhibits are seasonal but a wide range of activities are offered year-round in experimental classrooms. In “Science on Stage,” for example, the public can take part in spectacular and amusing experimental demonstrations in order to learn basic scientific principles.

The first floor is for technology lovers and houses exhibits such as “Techno Revolution” and “A highway behind the wall” and “Electro Revolutions” where users learn about electricity and the electric supply process. Also on the first floor is one of the longest pendulums in the world, which is mesmerizing to watch.

History buffs will find interest in the second floor, which is devoted to “The Legacy of Science,” an audiovisual exhibit about the lives of three Nobel Laureates in Medicine: Santiago Ramón y Cajal, Severo Ochoa, and Jean Dausset.

The third floor is for science geeks and is home “Chromosome Forest” with nearly 28,000 square feet devoted to one of the biggest milestones in modern science, the sequencing of human DNA. A large-scale reproduction of the 23 pairs of chromosomes of the human species is exhibited, and around each one, an interactive display engages visitors to learn more information relative to that gene.

Another part of the floor is the marine aquarium, where students can discover how geologists and paleontologists try to reconstruct the world from 230 million years ago.

“The layout of the exhibits and architecture was really impressive,” FSU student Marc Hollingsworth says.

Príncipe Felipe Science Museum
The Príncipe Felipe Science Museum is designed for interactive and entertaining ways for visitors to engage with exhibits. The motto is “Forbidden to not touch, not to feel, not to think.”

The Príncipe Felipe Science Museum is located on Stage,” for ex-

Walking into the dome is surreal: as you enter, you actually forget you’re learning. The imagery is breathtaking and you can watch the films in your native language with the headphones they give to each viewer.

Hemisfèric also turns into a planetarium for a journey across the world via aquatic ecosystems. From the moment visitors enter the museum, they are encouraged to be hands-on and are submerged into every exhibit. Acosta, who lives in Valencia and has worked for FSU’s study-abroad program since April 2017, says “the really cool experiments” are her favorite part. From simple touch displays to a virtual reality simulator, you can engage with so many fun displays in the museum, you actually forget you’re learning.

Arts palace, L’Umbracle, and Ágora
The arts palace has separate areas that host operas and other musical performances. L’Umbracle, a separate building, is an open-air art gallery that offers panoramic views of the complex. FSU used this space in June 2017 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Valencia’s beginning with International Programs.

The Ágora, yet another separate building, is a multi-purpose event space that can also be used for exhibits. Together, these three unique buildings add to the visual “wow” factor of the area.

Even if you’re just passing through, La Ciutat is surrounded by a shallow pool and you can rent a kayak or blow-up hamster ball to roll around the water. It’s always nice to watch kids and adults alike enjoying themselves and having fun.

Walking up to La Ciutat is an experience in itself to see the stunning architecture. After exploring what La Ciutat has to offer, it is clear that the goal here is to have visitors wanting to participate and to leave them wanting more.

Above: Part of an art exhibit in the pool outside L’Umbracle.
Right: People enjoying the activities in the water surrounding La Ciutat.

The museum’s motto is Forbidden not to touch, not to feel, not to think.
Quigley from page 7

than those of her track team. “I was really hard on myself about running,” she says. “I wanted to be the best I could be. I remember getting stressed out if I couldn’t hit workout times, and my dad would always be the one to tell me ‘Hey, it’s just running. It’s not the end of the world. This one workout won’t make or break you.’ He always had a level head about things when I was emotional.”

Family has always played a huge role in Quigley’s life. Being homeschooled from a young age meant that her parents had to fill a variety of roles: role model, teacher, coach, counselor, therapist, trainer, to name several. But she believes that their most important contribution to her success, both on the track and in the classroom, was the ability to use failure as a motivator. ’It’s OK to make mistakes, Colleen. That’s how you do things as well as I wanted. ‘It’s OK to use failure as a motivator. ’”

In late July 2017, Quigley was training in Switzerland to prepare for the Interna-
tional Amateur Athletic Federa-
tion (IAAF) world championships, which took place in London in August. It was a big stage, but she felt she was more prepared this year than ever before.

“This being my third na-
tional team, I feel a lot stronger—more confi-
rident. It’s a whole different ball game,” she says. “I didn’t have to compete in [NCAA championships] this year, so I feel like I’m in much better shape.”

Unfortunately, things did not go as expect-
ed for Quigley during the London event. She placed third in her preliminary heat, earning a qualifying bid in the final. But after the race, the IAAF reviewed footage and found that Quigley had stepped on the line disqualifying her. In the blink of an eye, excitement turned to heartbreak. It was an unfortunate way to end the season.

But true to her father’s teachings and her own nature, Quigley found a way to spin a negative into a positive and shifted the fo-
cus to her teammates. Emma Coburn and Courtney Frerichs, who finished first and second, respectively. She made the following tweets after the final:

@colleenquigley “The media’s job isn’t to reinforce or invalidate people’s ideas; it’s to expose them to differ-
ent viewpoints and different ideas.”

For him, that’s one of the most exciting as-
pects of his job that he can make an impact on real people, regarding real stories that mat-
ter to them, and stories that matter to him. “It’s nice to feel like you have a role in shaping how we talk about or frame and commu-
nicate stories that matter to you,” he says.

Part of what you learn from studying abroad is that stories that matter to you often matter to many other people, and that those people have interesting, thought-provoking perspec-
tives on important subjects. Given the vari-
ety of stories being told in the news today, Alexander says that “this is a time to hear more voices, not fewer,” a time for people of differ-
ent backgrounds to be open rather than resis-
tant to others’ ideas and takes on events.

Alexander with Laura Ingram, a student in the London program when he was a graduate counselor.

Alexander from page 11

The hope is that the viewer, through watching Stelter’s analysis of media cover-
age, will have a better understanding of the nuances of the news.

“It’s good to, at least for one hour a week,” Alexander says, “have a moment 
where you [the viewer] can say, ‘OK, so what did we get right this week, and what did we get wrong? What lessons can we learn from what’s happened?’”

Alexander believes those moments of reflec-
tion are crucial at a time when partisan perspec-
tives are important. “The media’s job isn’t to reinforce or insulate us, but to develop through experience—of new people, of new places, of new ways of life. Studying abroad provides the opportunity to cultivate these new connections.”

While abroad, students can follow Alex-
ander’s adopted “Why not?” motto to de-
velop a greater understanding of the world around them.

In doing so, they can create stories to last a lifetime. Stories that matter. Stories that should be told.

When Lee Alexander first arrived in London as a student, he remembers it as quietly very enthusi-
astic about all the city and the FSU London Program of-
fered. His lively interest was no obvious. He approached every opportunity with open-minded curious-
ity. He was on the theater program, and his excitement at having the world of London theater so accessible to the study center was an absolute pleasure to observe.

As a London program student, Lee shared his love of London theater with a newfound enthusiasm for the city itself freely and often with staff, faculty, and his fellow students. So when he applied to be a program assis-
tant, I was certain he would do well in the position. When he returned to the London program as a col-
league in the office, all my impressions of him as a student were confirmed. Lee was committed to help-
ing the students have as positive and rich an experi-
ence as his own. He took pleasure in introducing them to the multifaceted world of London theater so they knew there was a lot more available than the ob-
vious big West End shows. He helped the students learn to travel confidently to locations around Europe, as he had done, by advising them on every aspect of trip planning.

I’m really proud of Lee and all he’s accomplished. I’m also extremely grateful to him for generously sharing his love of London and travel with me, our coworkers, and the program students.

Photo courtesy of Colleen Quigley

Quigley (second from left) celebrates with teammates, after FSU won the 2014 Outdoor ACC Track and Field Championship.

Quigley (from left) with friends in Pamplona, Spain for the annual San Fermin Festival.

The result wasn’t what she wanted, but Quig-
ley still did her university and her country proud with the way she conducted herself.

Photo courtesy of Colleen Quigley

Quigley (third from left) celebrates with teammates, after FSU won the 2014 Outdoor ACC Track and Field Championship.

Alexander with Laura Ingram, a student in the London program when he was a graduate counselor.

Alexander from page 11

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Humans from page 13

Not only did Scaman enjoy the lifestyle, but he got a lot of practice with his Spanish, which was one of his goals before entering the program.

“I take every chance I can to practice,” he says. “I have definitely gotten a lot better conversationally.”

When interviewed in late July, he revealed that he was not ready to go back home and that he hopes to one day move back to Spain.

“Every time you turn down a street, it’s another picture, it’s another view, it’s another

that he was not ready to go back home and

he says. “I have definitely gotten a lot better

the program.

but he got a lot of practice with his Spanish,

Netherlands.

you’ve bought costs €2.50, and for them to

the market. For them to boil or fry what

restaurant right across from it called El Tro -

very busy place, it was well kept.”

Despite it being a very busy

city, it was not surprising to me

that the market was so clean,” says Emily

It’s such a huge

opportunity for you to expand your world-

view and experience another culture and

make memories that are really going to affect

the rest of your life.”

Sara Muñoz, a University of Valencia stu-

dent from Alcanea, Spain, was taking entre-

preneurship classes through FSU! Valencia

in summer 2017. Entrepreneurship is a new

field for Spanish schools, so for Muñoz,

studying in an American classroom meant

more than just practicing her English.

“I think it is quite interesting because

you are getting to know a lot about the cul-

ture,” she says. “You [Americans] have a lot

of ideas related to business, or you’re quite
good with business, and you have a lot of

new startups that are a really good example

for here, so I think I am learning quite a lot.
So I am really happy, and I am also improv-

ing my English.”

Market from page 17

such a clean city, it was not surprising to me that the market was so clean,” says Emily Nolan, an FSU student who studied in Va-

lencia in summer 2017. “Despite it being a very busy place, it was well kept.”

Once you have gathered all of the food you purchased from the market, there is a restaurant right across from it called El Tro-

cito del Medio, where the owners will cook any meat, fish, or seafood you purchase from the market. For them to boil or fry what you’ve bought costs €2.50, and for them to

golf it costs €4.20.

The eatery also offers drinks and a full menu of side items if you want to complete your meal. This place is highly rated on Tri-
pAdvisor, is popular with locals, and is not
crazy packed with tourists. Not only can you get the fresh ingredients from the market, but for all those who don’t want to cook, this place will make sure you enjoy your market meal. However, before you plan on going there, either call or stop by to make a reserva-
tion so that you can arrive with your mar-

ket buys and a table all ready.

The Central Market gives visitors a sense

“Since Valencia is such a clean city, it was not surprising to me that the market was so clean. Despite it being a very busy place it was well kept.”

— Emily Nolan, an FSU junior

of Valencia and the diverse foods the region

has to offer. The combination of a lively at-

mosphere, reasonable prices, free samples, and a true taste of Spain are what make the Central Market special to both Valencians and to the visiting FSU community.

Stuart from page 29

deal with climate change,” Stuart says. “You can’t do that at the UN behind a computer desk, so I don’t see myself staying at the UN at least in the immediate future.”

At the end of the day, she attributes much of her drive to work in the field to the time she spent in Latin America.

Overall, Panama completely changed the course of my life and career goals and where I am now,” Stuart says. “Oh man, I could write a book on this. Maybe I will one day.”

During her time as a student recruiter for

International Programs, after she finished her first year in Panama and relocated to the FSU campus in Tallahassee, Stuart encour-

aged other students to do what she did.

“I would say ‘absolutely do it,’” she says, acknowledging the costs but pointing stu-

dents toward loans and scholarships. “The reality is you might not have this time again to live and immerse yourself in another country; so there really is no better time to do it. It will be the greatest challenge you will ever face, having to adapt to something so different and so new, but because of that it will be the defining experience of your life.”

She specifically talks up the Panama pro-

gram, knowing how much it tested and pushed her.

“I also recommended Europe, but Eu-

rope won’t push you in the same way Pana-

ma will,” Stuart says. “That challenge, that’s what is going to shape you as a person and that’s what going to make this experience so much better.

“Yes, it’s going to be hard, yes, you’re go-

ning to have days when you want to quit and go home, but pushing through those experi-

ences is what’s going to make it worth it in the end.”

Sara Muñoz spending her weekend in Budapest, Hungary.

Photo courtesy of Sara Muñoz

studying in an American classroom meant

more than just practicing her English.

“I think it is quite interesting because you are getting to know a lot about the cul-
ture,” she says. “You [Americans] have a lot of ideas related to business, or you’re quite good with business, and you have a lot of new startups that are a really good example for here, so I think I am learning quite a lot. So I am really happy, and I am also improv-

ing my English.”

Not only was Muñoz learning about en-
trepreneurship, but she was learning about American culture as well.

“Well there is the one stereotype that you [Americans] are always eating fast food,” she says jokingly. “I think [my American class-

mates] are really nice, and they are trying to help me with whatever I need.”

Muñoz hopes to visit America one day and learn even more about business so that she can return to Spain and start her own.

Sara Muñoz

NOMADIC NOLES

NOMADIC NOLES

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About the contributors

Brittany Argote
Originally from Miami, Argote is a junior at Florida State University studying criminology and English with a concentration in editing, writing, and media (EWM). After graduation, Argote plans to attend graduate school for her master's of science in criminology, and she hopes to one day be employed by a federal law enforcement agency. She is an avid lover of travel, creative expression, and learning, all aspects that she hopes to continue to incorporate into her future life.

Alyssa Blanco
Blanco is 20 years old, born and raised in South Florida. She is majoring in digital media and minoring in computer science at the University of Central Florida. She enjoys technology and travel, and she hopes to make a living involving both.

Kamille Catala
Originally from Davie, Florida, Catala is a junior at FSU double majoring in English (EWM) and media/communications with a minor in film studies. Growing up, she would read books with her sister as a bonding activity. She enjoys spending time with her dog Buffy, drawing, and collecting films.

Rachel Dranetz
Dranetz is a junior at FSU, double majoring in English (EWM) and classical civilizations. She is currently interning as a writer for Uloop, and in her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, and playing soccer. In the future, she aspires to be an editor for literary fiction.

Carter Floyd
Floyd is an FSU junior from Seattle majoring in both sport management and English (EWM). He enjoys reading, writing, and screaming at his television during football season. His ultimate goal is to work in collegiate athletic administration.

Amber Lewis
Lewis is a junior at FSU, double majoring in media communication studies and English (EWM). With a love for hard-hitting news, he hopes to one day work in broadcast journalism and provide the public with accurate and helpful information.

Taylor Goggin
Goggin is a senior at FSU majoring in English (EWM), while also obtaining a minor in communications. Although unsure of what career field she wishes to pursue, her passion for writing and seeking more internships will guide her in the right direction. Goggin is a highly motivated, self-directed, and relationship-oriented person with a thirst for learning, travel, and career advancement.

Jessica O’Connor
O’Connor is a senior at FSU majoring in English (EWM) with a double minor in communications and hospitality. Besides traveling the world, she enjoys doing press at music festivals with her internship at Alternative Nation, and hopes to work in entertainment broadcast journalism after graduation.

Sarah Silva
Silva is a senior at FSU majoring in English (EWM) and minorin in communications. After graduating from FSU, she hopes to pursue a job in public relations or journalism for a magazine like Vibe or Rolling Stone. Her passions include music and travel, which she hopes to incorporate into her career.

Teaghan Skulszki
Skulszki is a sophomore at FSU who is majoring in English (EWM) and communications. She is involved in water polo and is a lifeguard at FSU. She aspires to be a journalist in the future.

Ian Tramm
Tramm, a senior at FSU studying English (creative writing) and Italian, is a 22-year-old aspiring writer who hopes to break into the field of freelance travel journalism. In his free time, Tramm enjoys ironically likening himself to Hemingway, getting himself lost in new and exciting places, and pushing himself to shatter the boundaries of his comfort zone. In his immediate future, Tramm plans on enlisting in the Peace Corps to teach English in Southeast Asia.

Madison Manley
Manley is an FSU English major (EWM) and an aspiring double major in public relations. She would like to go into the field of production or entertainment. When Manley isn’t studying and writing, you can catch her binge watching Netflix or rollerblading around Tallahassee parks.

Kamille Catala
Catala is a junior at Florida State University studying criminology and English (EWM) and classical civilizations. She is currently interning as a writer for Bascom Communications Consulting LLC in Tallahassee, and she will be interning with a start-up hospitality company and hospitality group in New York City spring 2018. When Goggin is not at school or work, find her at a dance studio, her home away from home.

Morgan Silva
Silva is a senior at FSU majoring in English (EWM) and minorin in media and education. After graduating from FSU, she hopes to pursue a job in the publishing industry, with a focus in manuscript work for fiction and creative nonfiction. When she’s not reading Jane Eyre for the fifth time, you can find her watching Disney Channel Original Movies with her friends or asking her dog, “What are you eating now?”
Obrentz, in her office in Manhattan in 2017, is committed to helping others launch their own invention ideas through her customized advisory services business.

“I remember watching the local Florentines go about their daily lives around the city and thinking how incredibly fortunate they are to be surrounded by such beauty every day,” she says. The food, she says, was amazing, even for a picky eater like herself, adding she found it easy to eat well in Florence. “I remember my first gnocchi al gorgonzola like it was yesterday,” she says. “Did I care that it was probably too heavy of a dish to be eating on a hot summer night in Florence? No! I tried new pastas, new sauces, and different pizzas literally every day of the week and I loved everything.”

She enjoyed many of the culinary delights native to Italian culture, such as “the rich taste of the olive oil, the nutty sharp flavors of Pecorino cheese, the scent of garlic wafting from the trattorias, and of course the incredible wine.”

The delicacy of the dishes she enjoyed combined with that feeling of “being self-sufficient” on her journey made each dining experience to be surrounded by such beauty every day from her exposure to Italian culture as a young adult. Her study abroad journeys stemmed from her exposure to Italian culture as a young adult. Her study abroad journeys, and adoring Italy so very much, New York City. She wished to maintain as much as possible the whirlwind of exposure to so many cultures and lifestyles in Europe.

“I get to admire it with. I love the Plaza de la Virgen the most. Every time I walked by it would take my breath away, from the first time I saw it ‘til the last.”

― Teaghan Skulski

“I loved the beautiful buildings, the Central Market, and most of all, the jamón.”

― Marc Hollingsworth

“I just love going on adventures with my fellow Noles. In Spain, there’s never a dull moment and there’s always new, incredible places to discover.”

― Rachel Dranetz

Oblentz began thinking about a possible future in New York City. She wished to maintain as much as possible the whirlwind of exposure to many cultures and lifestyles in Europe.

“I live cities with abundant opportunities and rich cultures, so after living in France and adoring Italy so very much, New York fit the bill,” says Obrentz, who has been a member of The Seminole Club of NYC for over 20 years. “Moving to Manhattan made sense for me.”

Obrentz understands how the decision-making process to study abroad as an undergraduate is different from one student to the next, but everyone who does it can find a common purpose.

“I believe that those of us who embrace the lessons learned about ourselves and others from experiences, like living abroad, will be furnished with memories and tools that enrich our lives for years to come,” she says.

Obrentz’s choice to study in Florence ignited her adventurous mindset and taught her that the world provides boundless possibilities if you go out in search of them.

“From Florida to Florence to New York

Obrentz’s desire to continue exploring after her four years at FSU stemmed from her exposure to Italian culture as a young adult. Her study abroad journey brought her to the realization that the phrase “variety is the spice of life” holds true for her. Having the chance to be delighted by diverse places and individuals fueled a motivation to continue her travels domestically and internationally to this day.

Upon graduation from FSU, her mom and stepfather gave Obrentz a round-trip ticket to any destination of her choice. There was one rather important condition: She was on her own financially and she had to find a job to support herself.

Obrentz set out for France because French was the second language she knew best. Solo, she used her open-ended student ticket to fly to Paris and traveled around a bit with no lack finding employment. Fortunately, she took advantage of an offer to stay with her aunt and cousins while she searched for a job.

A short stay led to her living in Valbonne for almost a year, during which she was an au pair caring for a 13-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy. She had the freedom to travel around France, Italy, Austria, Spain, and England, which was another incredible learning experience for Obrentz. When a timely job prospect arose through her aunt’s company, the challenge of choosing a place to live emerged, and Obrentz began thinking about a possible future in New York City. She wished to maintain as much as possible the whirlwind of exposure to many cultures and lifestyles in Europe.

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What I love about Spain . . .

Text and photos by students in the summer 2017 magazine course

“I love the wonderful adventures FSU takes us on, and I love the wonderful people I have been able to experience them with.”
– Madison Manley

“What I love about Spain is all of the different food and activities I have tried since I’ve been here, including surfing at a beach in Cullera.”
– Amber Lewis

“What I love about Spain is the elaborate street art hidden throughout the maze-like side streets of Valencia.”
– Ian Tramm

“What I love about Spain is its wealth of history, like this stained glass window in the Alcázar of Segovia.”
– Carter Floyd

“I’m in love with how the modern aspects of Spain have had to weave themselves into the historical sites and monuments. There is history everywhere you look, whether it’s at the Roman aqueduct in Segovia or in La Plaza de la Virgen in Valencia, and modernity has respected these important sites and monuments as it has developed. It’s just the most beautiful experience to be knee-deep in the building blocks of what has made Spain the country it is today.”
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See more student photos on the course Instagram page, instagram.com/nomadicnoles

“ What I love about Spain is living in a place so beautiful the pictures look like a movie set. ”

– Jessica O’Connor

“I love not only being able to taste the great food, but also actually getting to make paella at one of the group activities. I definitely recommend going on those.”

– Kamille Catala

“I love the ability to watch the sunrise and sunset, with the best people, in the most beautiful city in the world. . . Nothing will ever be able to top this experience. Thank you, Valencia.”

– Madeline Hoffman

“What I love about Spain is no matter where you go, you’re surrounded by history.”

– Sarah Silva