



Global Engagement  
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

# BRONCOS GO GLOBAL SCU STUDENT EXPERIENCES





# GLOBAL PROGRAMS AT SANTA CLARA

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For students of all majors and career goals, going global sets the stage for learning and building connections for their future. It gives students a chance to immerse themselves in another culture, learn or enhance language skills, launch lifelong pursuits, and gain an invaluable edge in an increasingly competitive global job market and grad school admissions process, among many other benefits.

Through international academic experiences, SCU prides itself on inspiring students to explore and transform their lives, Santa Clara University, and the world. Approximately one-third of juniors at Santa Clara University study or intern abroad on a quarter, semester, or summer program.

# BRONCOS GO GLOBAL



## ALISHA BURCH



### Area of Study

Chemistry

### Program Location & Term

Brisbane, Australia - Summer 2022

### Highlights

Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Recipient

Financial Aid Recipient

LEAD Student

First Generation

Internship Participation

## The Impact of Going Global

My name is Alisha Burch and I'm a senior chemistry major who studied abroad in Brisbane Australia. I'm originally from Greenwood, Mississippi and I discovered Santa Clara University while scrolling on Instagram and catching a glimpse of the beautiful campus. My first time ever riding a plane was when I flew to campus to move in my sophomore year of college. After overcoming my worries about flying for the first time, I wanted to experience more, which pushed me to take the leap to visit my first foreign country. My internship abroad influenced my career goals because I was able to pinpoint what area of chemistry I'd specifically like to pursue. Before the internship, I struggled with finding an area of chemistry I particularly enjoyed enough to pursue. After working at Cement Australia, I realized that I enjoy the more material side of chemistry and working to solve environmental issues to increase sustainability. My coworkers were also chemists, so they gave me advice when we discussed my career goals. It was because of that internship that I am now a senior with a sense of direction in how to take my next steps. I would never be this encouraged if I wasn't able to get that professional experience so early in my career.



## The Journey Begins

My initial thoughts of studying abroad were full of anxiety. This was the biggest transition I've ever experienced considering I'd lived in the same small town my whole life. I was worried about finances and being able to navigate properly in an unknown country. My expectations were that I would be a little confused at first when it came to adapting to this new environment, but my aspirations were to be able to learn quickly and gather skills to navigate successfully around the city.



To prepare, I researched the area I was going to reside in to get an idea of what I would be facing. Is this a fast-paced city or is it calmer? What is public transportation like, will I be able to maneuver around the city without complications? Is the city safe, and what are the typical customs and traditions I need to know beforehand to avoid culture shock? Lastly, as an African American woman traveling for the first time, I wanted to know if the area was diverse and English speaking for my own comfort. Since it was my first time traveling to another country, I wanted to make sure I was welcomed and that I could communicate with ease. Thanks to this research, I did beforehand I was able to ease my concerns and continue the onboarding process with a better state of mind.

## Academic Insights

My professional experience abroad was impactful because it was my first time using my laboratory skills in the work industry. It was so unique because all the work I did was completely independent, and I did not have a lecturer guiding me to do each experiment. This gave me the opportunity to practice my problem-solving skills. One task I remember specifically was using titrations in a real-world setting. I'd always hated titrations beforehand when performing in the classroom, but I performed well with them when I was at the company. I received good results, which helped with their sample analysis and improved customer satisfaction. This experience has helped me greatly mentally because I was able to enjoy research more and decided to continue pursuing it as a career path. Academically, I performed better in the laboratory especially when it came to any analytical work because I received so much experience during the internship. Lastly, professionally it's a great work experience to have on your resume because it showcases adaptability and professionalism.



## Personal Growth

I learned how to live fully independently. This includes utilizing public transportation to get to my internship and stores to obtain important necessities, developing time management to ensure that I always arrive at work on time, and problem-solving used in my role as an intern laboratory technician to strategically perform the experiments. I think I adapted to the area well after familiarizing myself with the landscape. Initially, I faced the challenge of not always having an online GPS because it took me a while to get an international cellular plan. However, this challenge allowed me to be more observant of my surroundings because I had to remember the area to avoid being lost. Through this process, I learned that my memory is dependable, and I never got lost!

## Overcoming Challenges

While abroad, someone stole my debit card information. This allowed them to spend hundreds of dollars from my account. My debit card was my only source of financial support because I was unaware of the importance of having multiple cards. My bank wanted to freeze my account to correct the issue but I was worried because my debit card contained all my money. I began to spend every day trying to get another card. I only had three weeks left in my program and many of the processes to get another card were tedious.

Although this process was very stressful, I had a great support system. I was constantly communicating with my mentor provided by the program and my bank to find alternative steps to take to solve this issue.



My coworkers at my internship also helped me by giving me advice about how to navigate through each process. In the end, I was able to receive another card, and I never had another issue with my card for the remainder of the program. I learned more about financial maturity, and I made sure to open another bank account and purchase a credit card so that I would never encounter this issue again.

## **Cultural Immersion**

A memorable experience for me to immerse myself in the culture was when I was given the opportunity to visit the village of the Aboriginal people who are indigenous to Australia. Before visiting the country, I'd never heard of this group and its history before. After learning about them, I would visit museums and exhibits to gather more information about them and their culture. At my residential area, I was able to meet and talk to some aboriginal women who were close in age to me. It was amazing to hear about how they grew up and how they wanted to work to have more impact and gain more opportunities for their community. When I went to visit the village, I was able to visually be present to take in the essence of their community and see their stories reenacted. I was also able to talk to more people and even try their traditional foods. It was an amazing opportunity and my understanding of the country deepened greatly.

## **Global Connections**

The friendships I formed with residents and students were very diverse and impactful. This includes going to get lunch with my coworkers everyday, conversing with them about their everyday lives and gathering recommendations for fun activities to do on the weekend. I also participated in gatherings and events hosted at my residential areas to meet many other students to converse about social issues and to gather information about their



thoughts of their country as well as my own country to hopefully gain and provide valuable insight. Lastly, I took the effort to get out and explore the area to see for myself what made Australia so unique and beautiful. This included going to the botanic gardens, universities, local markets, and festivals. Through this experience, I met and bonded with so many different people.

# BRONCOS GO GLOBAL



## BEAUMONTE TSE



### Areas of Study

Management & Information Systems,  
Computer Science, Business Analytics

### Program Location & Term

Seoul, South Korea - Fall 2022

### Highlights

Direct Enroll Program Participation

## The Impact of Going Global

My name is Beaumonte Tse and I am studying Management Information Systems. I studied abroad in Seoul, South Korea. I enjoy staying active and being outdoors, so living in a city like Seoul was great for me to be adventurous. I had never lived in a city before, so experiencing full public transportation and the walkability of the city amazed me. My biggest motivator for going abroad was to experience life outside of the Bay Area bubble and learn more about other cultures.

A major impact studying abroad has left on me is my desire to be connected to my culture. After my program in South Korea finished, I visited my grandparents in Japan to spend Christmas and New Years with them. I hadn't visited Japan in about a decade, and last I visited I wasn't able to speak Japanese. However, thanks to my mom pushing me throughout middle and high school to study Japanese, I was able to communicate well with my grandparents. My grandparents were so happy that I was finally able to communicate with them. Moving forward, I look forward to strengthening my connection with my Japanese language, culture, and exploring other cultures as well.



## The Journey Begins

Going abroad, I expected myself to feel challenged being away from home. Growing up I always had my parents and friends close by, so going abroad was my first time being alone, away from them in another country. Though I was scared, I viewed it as a good opportunity for me to learn how to live independently and survive. Another worry I had was the change in school environment, which meant a different academic setting and students around me. Having to make new friends in a foreign country worried me as well, but a lot of opportunities presented themselves through my program and through mutual friends. To prepare myself for this journey, I spent a lot of time with my parents before and asking them about their experiences being abroad. This helped me get into a mindset that regardless of the challenges I faced abroad, I would be able to overcome them. Instead of focusing a lot on the things I was worried about, I knew I would have a good time so I created a list of the things I was excited to do abroad. Going to a PC cafe, shopping at local markets, and trying street food were some of the things on my bucket list that I made plans to do right away when I arrived.

## Academic Insights

One course that was impactful was my Korean food and Culture class. This course was actually not what I expected it to be – my friends and I had expected this to be more of a cooking class, but it turned out to be an anthropology class on many of the East Asian foods. Taking this course gave me insight into the background of authentic Korean foods, such as kimchi. Learning about the origin of kimchi and how it was made fascinated me, seeing how it was served at nearly every restaurant that I went to. In this course, I also learned about some of the special foods Koreans ate during special occasions. One interesting fact is that people eat seaweed soup on their birthdays to honor their mother for giving birth to them. This is because the mother usually eats seaweed soup after giving birth because seaweed soup helps replenish essential nutrients. Small facts like the seaweed soup made me interested in digging deeper into my own culture, as I am half Japanese and half Chinese. Many of the foods that my mom would prepare and serve my family on New Years often had a special significance, but I never paid much attention to them when I was younger. After studying abroad in Korea, I had a newfound appreciation for the background of foods and their purpose in contributing to the overall health of those who consume it.





## Global Connections

Making friends was one of the fears I had prior to going abroad. However, it turned out to be much smoother than I expected, and I would say largely defined my time abroad. I feel that my experience abroad would be nothing without these relationships and friendships I made, since they helped me feel like I had found a new home.

We navigated similar challenges together and learned a lot about each other's backgrounds and how we grew up. Being part of such a diverse friend group opened my eyes to the different ways people viewed going abroad. With my friends, we planned a trip together with our friend group to go to Jeju, known as the Hawaii of South Korea, since it is a tropical island close by. We also had a trip to Japan and Busan, another part of South Korea. These smaller trips alongside the new friends I met made me not want to go home.

Also, since a lot of the people I met were from the East Coast in the US, it gave me a reason to personally visit the East Coast. I also had the opportunity to connect with students from Japan who were studying abroad in Korea, which allowed me to not only practice my Japanese but also made me want to explore more about Japanese culture and my roots.

## Personal Growth

One of the challenges I made was finding inner peace and being happy with myself. I feel that abroad was the first time I had full autonomy over how I wanted to spend my free time (with the ability to go do many things since I lived in the city). Through this, I was able to learn more about myself in general and the things I liked to do. Learning more about myself has given me a better sense of what I want to do in the future with my career and personal life.







## Cultural Immersion

One experience that allowed me to immerse myself in the local culture was going on a 3-day government sponsored tour to the East side of South Korea (Gangwon). The tour had other students studying abroad, so it was a good opportunity to meet other students. We traveled in a singular bus for the 3 days, to visit a palace, a famous beach, and much more. On top of that, we were taken to famous local Korean restaurants, where I got to try a Korean specialty – marinated crab. For the overnight accommodation, we got to stay in a traditional Korean house, where we slept on mattresses on the floor. All of these experiences made me feel particularly immersed in the culture, especially since it was a more suburban area where it was less crowded. On this trip, I actually met 3 other students who would actually turn out to be my closest friends during my time abroad as well.

Post-trip, we bonded about the cultural immersion we experienced and also compared it to the city life we were living in Seoul. The strengthened understanding of the host country sparked my interest in trying more signature Korean foods.

## Overcoming Challenges

When I first arrived, I struggled finding new food to eat since I was scared of going far out and getting lost, especially with the language barrier and my lack of knowledge on how to use public transportation. I ate at the convenience store for the first couple of days (which was still good food, honestly), but there were so many other foods I wanted to try but was scared of using the bus or subway to get to.

To overcome this, I did a little research and decided to try on my own the subway and bus system to try going to a place nearby. The process wasn't as complicated as I thought it would be, which was good. A big thing I learned about myself from this was that I just had to try things sometimes and overcome my mental blockage that was limiting myself. I would say that this was my first step in becoming independent.



# BRONCOS GO GLOBAL



## JAIDA DA LUZ



### Areas of Study

Marketing, Graphic Design

### Program Location & Term

Milan, Italy - Fall 2022

### Highlights

Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Recipient  
Internship Participation

## The Impact of Going Global

I'm Jaida Da Luz, and I'm a senior Marketing major. I studied abroad in Milan, Italy during Fall 2022. Born and raised in San Francisco, I knew that I wanted the opportunity to go abroad and experience living away from home. Going to a new country would allow me to experience a new culture, new food, and new lifestyles that could challenge me to see the world from a different perspective. Additionally, I was interested in the creative side of business, so seeing that there were opportunities to take various courses abroad and gain work experience that relates directly to my career interest motivated me the most to pursue a global education experience.

My global experience has allowed me to take more action and responsibility with what I want in my life. While abroad, I had opportunities to make decisions such as places I want to travel to, people I want to meet, and how I wanted to spend my day to day. Having to make these decisions made me realize that I do have full control over the way I want to navigate my life path, and my family, friends, and U.S. school system do not determine where I may end up in a few years. I've gained more independence and confidence in my ability to figure things out on my own and overcome challenges that may be abrupt.



## The Journey Begins

As a person of color, I definitely anticipated feeling like a minority. Milan being a bigger city, I wasn't sure how accepting of diversity they would be and had fears of being racially stereotyped or discriminated against because of my physical appearance. To prepare, I made sure to do research to grasp current attitudes and politics of people,

as well as learn to be open minded to cultural differences. This way, I was able to be more mindful of the way I will be perceived and possibly treated in the country.

## Personal Growth

The biggest challenge for me going abroad was learning how to cope with my homesickness and figuring out how I can be okay with the feeling of being uncomfortable in a new country. I was able to meet other students who have experienced the feeling of homesickness in previous years and was able to lean on them for support. Additionally, food has always been a big part of my culture and identity, so being able to find ingredients and restaurants that delivered the same comfort as the food that I'd eat at home helped me navigate my experience and helped relieve uneasy feelings while abroad. This challenge made me feel more confident in my ability to handle situations on my own, and find solutions that made me feel more comfortable with my life after college.

## Cultural Immersion

Something that helped me immerse myself into Italian culture was having an internship alongside my academic classes. Most students don't think about working and studying abroad at the same time, but having an internship abroad allowed me to directly engage with my host country in multiple ways.. I worked alongside local



Italians who helped build up my intercultural skills and work with different backgrounds in a professional setting. They were also able to provide me with recommendations for restaurants, special events, shopping locations, travel destinations, etc. which helped immerse myself with Italian culture from a local's perspective. As much as I was interested in Italy, my coworkers were just as interested in learning about my life in America, which made me appreciate our differences despite being from different countries

## Global Connections

While the Milan program has a generous amount of SCU students who went abroad, I was able to branch out and form connections with students from other countries. I met international students who go to school in America, but are from areas from all over around the world. While we all did come from different backgrounds, we were all having the same experiences of immersing ourselves into a new culture that we were unfamiliar with. This allowed us to feel more connected because we were all going through the same challenges and excitement together. The friendships I've made assured me that I can develop connections with others who have a different cultural background as me and we can all learn from each other, despite where we come from.

## Academic Insights

The most impactful course that I took was visual merchandising where I was able to study the window displays of luxury brands. This course broadened my perspective of a potential career opportunity in my field of study because it was a course that I couldn't take at SCU. In addition to that course, I was able to apply my learning to the real world through my internship. I created window displays and reconstructed their floor layout to create a more efficient working environment and shopping experience for customers.



## Overcoming Challenges

One challenge that I've overcome was meeting new people and friends. Because the pandemic caused a virtual freshman year in college for me, I never had the opportunity to be in a pool of completely new individuals and learn how to make valuable relationships from that.

I've always felt comfort in knowing at least one person in the room, but my experience abroad made me realize that I am fully capable of meeting new people on my own.

I didn't know anyone going abroad, and that uncomfortable situation made me more open to meeting others. I also realized that there were others who went abroad alone and were eager to make friends, just like how I would expect the beginning of college to be.

This reassured me I was not the only person feeling nervous about meeting others, and that everyone was just as open to hanging out with new people as I was.



# BRONCOS GO GLOBAL



## NICOLE VAN STRALEN



### Areas of Study

Communication, Spanish

### Program Location & Term

San Sebastian, Spain - Fall 2022

### Highlights

Traditional Exchange Student  
Jesuit Institution Program Participation

## The Impact of Going Global

My name is Nicole and I'm studying Communication and Spanish. I wanted to study abroad to practice my Spanish speaking skills in the real world. I've been studying Spanish for most of my life so I was motivated to travel to a Spanish speaking country and immerse myself in the language. Although I still struggled to understand and speak Spanish in San Sebastián, it was a great learning experience and my confidence in speaking Spanish increased immensely. Studying abroad introduced me to so many different ways of life. I had only been to Spain one time before moving there, so I had no idea what the rest of Europe would be like. On a cultural level, I was exposed to so many new cultures and traditions. I became friends with people from Scotland, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Mexico, and more. It was so fun to bond with them about our shared interests and learn from them and our cultural differences.

Junior year is also a time when people start thinking about their careers after college. I felt pretty lost when it came to what I want to do with my life after graduating. However, being in a foreign country really puts things into perspective. Being a communication major, I want to keep connecting with different people and learn their stories.

## The Journey Begins

When I first thought about studying abroad, I felt really influenced to go to certain programs based on where my friends were applying. I thought it would be easier to apply to the popular programs that a lot of Santa Clara students went to. However, I am so happy I decided to go on my own route and study at a smaller program with only a couple other Santa Clara students.

I expected that studying abroad would push me out of my comfort zone, which it did. It was evident from day one that I would be challenged in social situations in ways that I have never been challenged before. I also expected to make long lasting memories and friendships, which I also did.

One of my fears was being so far away from home. I go to school just an hour away from Santa Clara, so moving to San Sebastian was the farthest I would ever be from home. Surprisingly, I never wished to be back in California. I knew that my time abroad was going to be short, and it was always reassuring to know that I will return to the comfort of Santa Clara one day. I prepared myself by meeting with the Global Engagement Team and asking people who went to my program for advice. I really relied on hearing people's personal experiences of studying abroad. I was constantly compiling lists of questions to ask people whenever I had trouble.

## Academic Insights

One of the most influential classes I took while abroad was a class on global politics. The class was actually virtual and students from all over the world were taking it with me.

I was able to hear so many different perspectives about governing bodies around the world. I found our discussions about the US government to be the most interesting to me because students from Brazil, India, Spain, Canada and more shared their thoughts on our political system.

Taking this class truly broadened my perspective on cultures and politics across the world!



## **Cultural Immersion**

One of my first tasks for a class I was taking abroad was to meet with a local student, get coffee, and just get to know them a little bit. Since my program was direct enrollment, I was going to school with hundreds of local San Sebastian students as well as a group of American/European students who were studying abroad. I went up to a girl in the cafeteria, introduced myself, and asked if I could sit down to chat. Talking to her helped me understand more about my university and the layout of San Sebastian. I found out that San Sebastian is a very expensive place to live in Spain. So many students live in towns outside of the city and commute to school. At that moment, I felt very very lucky to live in San Sebastian and go to such a sought after school. This conversation changed my perspective on what it means to study abroad. It also made me appreciate the city I was in much, much more.



## **Personal Growth**

One of the hardest parts of being abroad was adjusting to the cultural differences in Spain. I had heard that people in Spain live a “late lifestyle” but I had a really hard time adjusting to it. The first couple weeks I was there, my body could not physically change to the different meal times, “siesta” times, and different sleeping patterns. I was also so confused on why stores would be closed in the middle of the day even though that was the prime time to run errands and get things done! I adapted to this challenge by taking better care of myself and setting strict schedules and to-do lists for myself everyday. I also learned that I am not a night owl at all and I really value my mornings and being productive. These experiences taught me how to adjust to changing environments. I learned how to put my mental and physical health at the forefront in order to get through difficult times.



## Global Connections

I made lifelong friends in San Sebastián. I lived with 2 other Santa Clara students who were boys and it was the best experience I've ever had. Every year of college I have lived with over 10 other girls, so I was nervous to be in a different living situation. However, I was not expecting to learn so much about myself while living with two guys. The conversations we had and the memories we made still stick with me today. I also became close friends with two girls who went to LMU in Los Angeles. It felt so good to have a few other Americans in my program so I could feel a little more at home. I still stay in contact with those girls and saw them when I lived in Los Angeles this summer! We could not stop talking about how studying in San Sebastian impacted our lives for the better.

The most influential part of my program was studying with around 80 other European students who were abroad in San Sebastián. There were only about 9 other Americans there, so we were grouped together with the European students. They were from Sweden, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland and more. My absolute favorite part of my program was making friends with people from these countries. I loved that I wasn't in an "Americanized" program and I could learn different cultures by becoming friends with them.



## Overcoming Challenges

The biggest challenge I faced abroad was having my only girl roommate move back home after one week of being abroad. I did not sign up to live with two boys and I was really, really anxious when she left.

I already felt a little lonely when I was there because all of my friends and I went to different programs. I overcame this by communicating with my family back home and my friends abroad.

We talked about how abroad is hyped up to be amazing, however, it can also be extremely hard at times.

Working through this experience taught me how to adjust to changing circumstances and make the most out of a negative situation.

# BRONCOS GO GLOBAL



## ELIZABETH BIELY



### Areas of Study

Communication, Computer Science

### Program Location & Term

Rome, Italy - Fall 2022

### Highlights

Jesuit Institution Program Participation

## The Impact of Going Global

My name is Elizabeth Biely, I am a communications major, and I studied abroad in Rome, Italy. Traveling and experiencing new things is really important to me. I am very fortunate that my parents prioritized travel and the importance of expanding my horizons. I have always wanted to travel and study abroad, and it is one of the reasons I chose Santa Clara. I grew up in Seattle, Washington and I knew I wanted to leave home for college to leave my comfort zone and expand my community. I was super excited that Santa Clara had a Rome program because of its rich history and vibrant culture.

Studying abroad opened up a whole new range of possibilities for the future and allowed me to make lifelong memories of exploring new and exciting places. I am so incredibly glad that I was able to study abroad and Rome will always hold a special place in my heart. Looking back, I know I had a lot of personal growth and independence. Upon returning, I started seriously considering moving abroad to work when I graduate. I felt my priorities shift and I realigned my academic aspirations. It expanded not only my worldview but also presented new possibilities for the future.

## The Journey Begins

I was extremely nervous as I was preparing to study abroad. I kept thinking that I would forget to pack something, that I would lose my passport on the flight over, or that my visa would not be valid. My sister had studied abroad in Madrid and had told me numerous stories about life-changing experiences. I had high expectations, but also a fear that I would not make the most of my time there. I read travel guides and looked at maps of Rome, trying to learn all the different neighborhoods.

I realized that I was overwhelming myself and I tried to tell myself that I would enjoy each day and not get caught up in the big picture. I also triple-checked my packing and made sure to leave extra room to bring back souvenirs.

## Academic Insights

One of the classes I took was Roman Catholicism. I chose it because I knew it would provide insight into the history of Rome as well as how religion shaped the city. The class was also on-site, so each week we met at a different location in the heart of Rome. My professor brought us to historic sights and churches, revealing hidden secrets of the city, and was a personal tour guide along the way. Each week we were given a reading to prepare and a meeting location. My peers and I quickly learned to navigate the public transportation system and mapped our way around the city. One of my favorite takeaways from this class was the familiarity and understanding of the city. I learned much more about Roman Catholicism and history than I ever expected.

## Personal Growth

Studying abroad presents a unique array of challenges and opportunities that both test and teach you about yourself. I have always considered myself an independent person, and abroad was certainly the place to test that.

A very simple part of this was navigating public transportation. Becoming familiar with the public transportation in Rome was a small way to get familiar with the city while also exploring new places. Another part of abroad that I realized quickly was the amount of time you can spend alone.

At school, I feel that I am constantly surrounded by people, but abroad, I enjoyed taking time to explore or travel alone.





It could be challenging or uncomfortable at times, but I had to make sure to be prepared and to advocate for myself. I learned a lot about my priorities while traveling, such as comfort versus cost.

The independence of abroad can be intimidating, but I think that is when I learned the most about myself and truly grew as a person.



## **Cultural Immersion**

One of my favorite things to do was explore the different markets. Many of the larger neighborhoods have weekly markets. My professor explained that the Romans really valued purchasing produce from local vendors.

I was hesitant to jump in because my Italian was very minimal, but the people were extremely friendly and happy to help. Going to the market became part of my weekly routine and I loved exploring the different ones in each neighborhood.

While I had read about the importance of food in Italian culture, going to the market really emphasized the values and traditions of Rome.

## **Global Connections**

My program was through Loyola Chicago on their Rome campus called John Felice. We lived in dorms and took classes with predominantly LUC students. I enjoyed meeting so many new people and forming friendships.

Rome is an Island program, which means I lived on the same campus where I took my classes. I met lots of new people in my classes and through campus events. I became good friends with the other students and went on some weekend trips with them. I still talk to many of them now and I am so grateful that I was able to branch out. Meeting new people while you are exploring a new city and learning so much about yourself is such a special experience and bond.

## Overcoming Challenges

A challenge I faced was adjusting to my living situation. I had never lived in a dorm before. I was excited to have a dorm experience, but I had not thought about the limitations that come with it. While having a dining hall was nice, I was used to having my own kitchen and I adjusted to their scheduled hours.

My program told me before that most students would be in the renovated dorms, but when I arrived, I unfortunately was placed on the one floor that did not have air conditioning. I knew that Rome was going to be hot and sometimes humid, but I was not prepared for mosquitos.

We left our window open one night due to the heat and the next morning I was covered in bites. At first, I thought I would get over it, and they would go away, but closing the window was not an option. Finally, I asked our resident director for advice and he helped me build a screen for the window. The screen worked, the bites went away, and it cooled down.

I can laugh about it now, a minor hiccup at the start of abroad, but at the time it rattled me because it was unexpected and I was still adjusting to all the changes. There will always be unexpected challenges, but asking for help is always a good step.

