Program: IES Liberal Arts & Business Program, Spring

Alexandra’s Major: Social Work

Academic Life: The classes through IES were smaller than many at UW. Normally ranging from 10-20 people. They felt like discussion sections which made it easier to get to know classmates and instructors. All IES classes were with Americans. The majority of IES classes offered were taught in English. A Spanish language course is required, and I took an intensive-7 credit course, which improved my Spanish a lot more since I was practicing my Spanish two hours a day, four days a week.

Recognizing Change: My self-confidence and confidence in trying new things has skyrocketed. My love for learning has grown in a way that never would have been possible if I did not live in a new place with a diverse language and culture than my own. I am much more independent after going abroad and I now seek new learning opportunities and diverse experiences that will challenge me and what I’m used to. Also, my Spanish improved a ton because I learned that it’s ok to make a lot of dumb mistakes.

Advice for Someone Considering Barcelona: Barcelona is a wonderful city that you can definitely find your place in, but if you’re certain you want to use Spanish all the time while abroad, this program might not be for you. If you are not very comfortable taking non-language courses in a foreign language, then IES in Barcelona could be a good option for you.

A Learning Experience: I’ve learned how small my place is in the world, how many ways of life there are, and the differences and similarities between various cultures. In turn, this realization creates a lot of exciting possibilities for growth in unimaginable ways.