

# BADGERS BEYOND ABROAD

alumni interview series

## Taylor Hebel

Spain

### Life After Study Abroad

Since completing my study abroad program in Madrid, Spain, I returned for my senior year at UW-Madison and graduated in May 2013 with a Bachelor's degree in Spanish and Political Science. After graduation, I worked in the Madison area for a year and a half before living abroad again while teaching English in Prague. When returning from study abroad, I knew that I wanted to live abroad again but wasn't sure where. When I began researching and looking into going back abroad, I found that teaching English was probably the easiest way to do it. I found a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) program that was a good fit and what I was looking for in Prague so that's where I went. After my month long TEFL course, I was employed by an English school and taught intensive English in elementary schools, and I also taught numerous private lessons to children and adults. My favorite part of teaching English was the interaction with my students and learning more about them and the Czech culture. I just returned from Prague after living there for eight months and am currently in search of my next international adventure.

### Impact on Life, Goals & Career

I selected the yearlong study abroad option in Madrid because I wanted to live abroad more than a semester to be able to better improve my Spanish skills and better accustom to living abroad in a different country. It was also a program that allowed me to live in a large, vibrant city and had the most opportunities available for improving and practicing my Spanish. Spanish has always been a part of my life and a career goal. I knew that studying abroad in a Spanish speaking country would be instrumental in that life goal. I've used my Spanish skills in every job I've had since studying abroad. My time overseas has been, without a doubt, the most rewarding experience of my life. It has impacted my life in so many ways, from traveling and experiencing new cultures, to the new people I've met and friends I've made, and has instilled the spirit of adventure and travel in me. In terms of goals and my career, the Spanish language skills from my time in Spain have been a key part of my career and will continue to be important.

### Advice for Returning Students

My advice for students returning from abroad would be to take as many aspects as possible from your study abroad life and incorporate them into your life back at home. Don't forget the lessons learned, experiences, or memories from your time studying abroad. Also, keep in touch with your friends/acquaintances from living abroad. I am still friends with so many people from my program and the Spanish friends that I made while living abroad. While we don't talk or communicate as much as we did when we were living in the same city, they are always the best reminder of one of the best years of my life. I have made trips to visit study abroad friends in other parts of the States and have been able to go back to Spain and visit/stay with my Spanish friends. My other piece of advice would be to consider living abroad again and keep traveling to new places. Even though I had lived abroad before, living in Prague was a completely different, yet equally challenging, unique, and worthy experience. There are so many amazing and unique places to see and things to experience in the world so don't let your study abroad experience be the end of your adventures abroad!

Interview from October 2015



Taylor on a sunny day in Retiro Park in Madrid, Spain

**Without my  
time abroad, I  
wouldn't have  
half of the  
opportunities  
that I have in  
front of me  
today.**

**study  
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