

MADRID, SPAIN

SAM ALHADEFF

Program: WIP Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spring

Sam's Majors: Political Science; Economics

Academic Life: Three of my classes were part of Reunidas where the other classmates were peers from Wisconsin and from around the US. I also took two classes in the university with other Spanish students. In both of my classes I was the only American expected to fully participate and excel in classes normal for Spanish students. All of the classes had at most 30 people.

Apartment Life: For the first month of my program I lived in a homestay with a lovely empty nester named Victoria. Every day she provided breakfast and dinner for me, including all of the other amenities of a host. We talked daily about politics and other topics of the day, completely in Spanish. After that, I moved into an apartment in a great neighborhood close to the university. My apartment of 7 consisted of another American guy, an Italian guy and girl, a Belgian girl, and 2 Spanish guys. In the house we spoke exclusively in Spanish.

An "Aha" Moment: While visiting the Oceanographic aquarium in Valencia, at the featured presentation the presenter spoke in Spanish, and I understood her completely!! It was an unbelievable moment in my life to realize that I spoke and understood Spanish, and not only get by, but excel.

Advice for Someone Considering Madrid: Know that it is actually a hard program. You have classes most days of the week for hours at a time and will have a lot of hard work to do. However, you will improve your Spanish incredibly and learn a lot in these classes.

Career Advantage: I am now bilingual. After I returned from abroad, I secured two different internships because of my fluency. I hope to continue using my Spanish fluency to explore new career paths in the U.S. and around the world.



Sam atop the cathedral in Valencia at sunset.

“The ability to speak two languages will prove to be incredibly invaluable.”

