



INSPIRING EDUCATION ABROAD

The quirky newsletter from your friends at Academic Solutions

EQUITY & INCLUSION ON THE GROUND & IN ACTION

From theory to action – check out
what we've been up to this year!



OUR STEPS TOWARD A CULTURE OF BELONGING

As many of you already know – since January 2020 we have been fully committed to systemic change at Academic Solutions to foster a culture of belonging. We are aware that the path to an inclusive, anti-racist, diverse and equitable environment is one that will require multiple, creative steps throughout many years of consistent observation, reflection, dialogue and actions. We believe that the only way to achieve effective change is to incorporate these practices into our daily lives, rather than a mere annual diversity training.

We are excited to share a glimpse of what we have been working on this past year. We are especially thrilled to put our work into practice now that we have students on the ground again.

In this edition of the newsletter we'll tell you all about our newly revamped student programming, our team trainings, and our social identity student resources and workshops.

MAKING DISCOVERING BARCELONA'S DIVERSITY MORE ACCESSIBLE THAN EVER

RAVAL TOUR We roamed the Raval with our students this semester! Or rather, we ravalejar-ed it - a term adopted by locals to describe hanging out in this vibrant, diverse and lively district. The Raval is Barcelona's most ethnically and racially diverse neighborhood, which unfortunately leads to many negative stereotypes and oftentimes gets labeled as the most dangerous neighborhood in the city. This tour helps to unpack these biases and show students an insider's view through the personal experiences of different community members, including our guides - Diana from Syria and Mamadou from Senegal. We got to finish the event with some lively debate and reflection over Senegalese tapas!



"EL CLÁSICO"

BARÇA-REAL MADRID!

DON'T MISS SEEING ONE OF THE MOST DOMINANT WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAMS IN THE WORLD

BARÇA FEMENÍ VS REAL MADRID

Considering women's professional soccer is on the rise worldwide, and FC Barcelona's women's team is currently dominating the field in Spain and Europe, we decided that the students couldn't pass up the chance to see this team live! FC Barcelona won the last UEFA Women's Championship League and Spain's Copa de la Reina, and this year the Ballon d'Or and Best Fifa Women's Player awards went to our very own Alexia Putellas! We have a solid group of varying genders ready to cheer on Barça against Real Madrid this March 13th. Visca el Barça!

FLAMENCO QUEER Students enjoyed a night of traditional flamenco that reclaims inclusion and is a modern-day expression of the confluence of the queer, transvestite, and flamenco community that took place in the Raval and Poble-sec neighborhoods at the beginning of the 21st century. We were lucky enough to see the show in La Federica, a well-known gay bar in Poblesec, where the tradition of queer culture thrives more than ever. The strength of this project lies in the authenticity of identity and the combination of elements of drag and performance with dance, song, classic Spanish guitar, and *palmas* in the purest Flamenco Queer style.



JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF TRADITIONAL FLAMENCO THAT RECLAIMS INCLUSION AND IS A MODERN-DAY EXPRESSION OF THE CONFLUENCE OF THE QUEER, TRANSVESTITE, AND FLAMENCO COMMUNITY.

BARCELONA (DES)COLONIAL This activity is designed to have students actively reflect on Barcelona's colonial past through an interactive Monopoly-esque game around Old Town. Students discover how the city's history is inseparable from that of the Americas and colonialism. The game is meant to take a look at Barcelona's history from a critical, decolonized lens in recognition of the wealth with which the former colonies provided Barcelona and Spain. They learn about the city's transformation in the 19th century, who the "indianos" were, and together rearticulate the meaning of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade. They walk away with an understanding of how some of the most important topics of the past are still very much present today in newly acquired dimensions.



JEWISH BARCELONA Barcelona was one of the Jewish capitals of the Middle Ages but its history and relevance have been forgotten. Students joined the folks at Mozaika, the Barcelona Jewish Cultural Platform, for a walk around the old Jewish Quarter to learn about its history from the middle ages to today's contemporary Jewish culture. The evening ended at Casa Adret, the Barcelona Jewish Heritage Hub for a vermut and conversation on Spain's relationship with its Jewish past and present and how this reflects on the many complex layers that define the country's relationship with its history and the case for reparations. Students shared their thoughts and impressions of the evening in a relaxed atmosphere.





IDENTITY WORKSHOPS This workshop takes students on a journey of their lived experiences, reflecting on concepts of identity such as self vs perceived identity, the importance of one's roots. This hands-on activity guides students into rediscovering themselves as intercultural beings and reflecting on how our cultural contexts impact our identities. We hold these workshops at the start of the semester and encourage students to unpack these ideas throughout the length of their time abroad.

BARCELONA SCAVENGER HUNT This scavenger hunt is one of our newest additions to our student programming! It is intended to help students discover important and unique spots in the city that bring them in direct contact with Barcelona's diversity. They are given challenges to solve and photos to capture, which encourage them to engage with the people they come across at the bookshops, community organizations, public offices and supermarkets they discover. In this way, the students have these establishments and institutions on their radar from the very beginning so they may tap into their resources or expand their network while in the city.



DEI TEAM TRAININGS Ever since we embarked on the continuous journey of our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, we have participated in various team trainings in addition to regular conversations and reflections on current affairs. The trainings we have done thus far include Working from an Intersectional DEI Lens; Best Practices for Gender Violence Management; *Girl, Woman, Other* Book Club, Implicit Bias, and currently Inclusive Communication. The tools and knowledge gained in these trainings are directly informing the changes and improvements we are making to the work we do and the support we give to your students!