CSUSB Palm Desert Campus hospitality management students return from Italy with memories to last a lifetime

PALM DESERT, Calif. – A group of hospitality management students from CSUSB recently returned from a study abroad trip to Italy that provided them with an opportunity to immerse themselves in Italian culture, learn about the country’s hospitality management and travel and transportation systems, and develop their intercultural communications skills.

Visiting the cities of Reggio Emilia, Parma, Modena, Bologna and Florence, the students participated in a variety of activities, including guided tours of food producers and businesses, and museums such as the Uffizi Gallery and the Palazzo Pitti, where they were able to view masterpieces by artists such as Michelangelo, Botticelli and Leonardo da Vinci. They also visited iconic landmarks such as the Duomo and the Ponte Vecchio, and participated in cooking classes where they learned how to prepare traditional Tuscan dishes as well as dishes from the Emilio Romagna region.

The itinerary included academic coursework that focused on Italian gastronomy, history and art, and lectures by local experts, business owners and chef instructors from the Florence University of the Arts.

“This study abroad trip provided students with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn about Italian culture and history, while also helping expand their horizons and make lifelong friendships with students from different campuses,” said Joseph Tormey, director of the hospitality management program at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus. “Studying abroad in Italy, a country known for its natural beauty and history, is a transformative experience and a terrific opportunity for personal growth. Traveling away from home,
internationally, helps students develop independence, resilience and a great appreciation for diversity. We are thrilled to be able to offer this program and look forward to continuing to provide opportunities for more students to explore the world.”

Many of the student travelers were equally enthusiastic.

“This experience has been incredible,” said sophomore Alejandra Portillo. “I was so happy to meet fellow travelers and experience Italy together. I really loved getting to know the other students and the trip was truly life-changing for me,” she said.

Senior Emily Zurita said, “The study abroad experience in Italy was an opportunity that I couldn’t pass up. I knew I had to apply and challenge myself in order to get out of my comfort zone, so I did without thinking twice about it. I traveled away from the Coachella Valley for the first time and what better place than Italy,” she said. “During the trip, I had the opportunity to learn more about myself, the others who traveled with me, and about Italy in general. Now that I am back from the trip, I realize that this experience has improved my global thinking, and ultimately built on my management skills along with so much more which I believe makes me eager to take these new experiences and skills to the next level at my future employment after I graduate this semester.”

Evyanah Campa, a junior, echoed the sentiments of her peers.

“This was the best trip ever, and it has truly changed my life,” she said. “I came home inspired to work even harder than ever because of the lesson learned that dreams are never impossible.”

For more information about the hospitality management program, visit the CSUSB Hospitality Management webpage.

About PDC: The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees, a doctorate in educational leadership, teaching credentials and certificates. Serving more than 2,200 students, it is the Coachella Valley’s four-year public university and plays a vital role in educating and training the region’s growing population.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Strategic Communication at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the PDC website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.

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