

Madison Collins
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Sevilla, Spain

I am so grateful to have received a scholarship through West Chester University's Department of Languages and Cultures. Thanks to this award I was able to take financial pressure off both myself and my family while I followed my dreams of studying abroad. While studying in Sevilla, Spain I grew not only academically, but individually as well. Without this funding I would never have experienced the thrill of traveling and being independent, nor would I have had the opportunity to learn so much about other cultures.

The expenditure of the money I received from this scholarship mainly went to the airfare to get to Sevilla. While this may seem like a boring item to spend the money on, I believe it was my most important purchase while studying abroad. Having the money to buy that was my ticket to a whole new world, literally. Once that ticket was purchased my dreams started to become reality. I was going to study abroad.

When abroad I took five classes for university credit to make sure that I was continuing to push myself to academically. Being in classes where the professors were native speakers, majority not able to speak English, really pushed me to work on my Spanish to receive a good grade. Many of the classes I took in Spain were focused on Sevilla. One of my classes was 'Architecture and Painting in Sevilla,' while another one was 'History through Literature: The Case of Sevilla.' Being in a city filled with so much history and being able to learn about it in class made excited to come to class and learn about the city that was quickly becoming like a second home to me.

Growing academically was my initial purpose of studying abroad, but I received so much more than that. The personal growth I experienced in just four short months I believe is more than I have experienced in my lifetime. I made lifelong friends from all over the world, two being my host mom and host sister that I grew very fond of. I traveled to countries I never imagined ever setting foot in. I learned so much about the Spanish way of life and became comfortable using my Spanish in day to day conversations. I took part in two huge cultural events in Sevilla, Semana Santa and Feria de Abril. I became confident while traveling and more excited than ever to explore new places. Before studying abroad I liked being close to home, but now I have become a more independent person that looks forward to new adventures. I could never had realized that without assistance in funding from the West Chester University Department of Language and Cultures.

Once again, I am grateful for receiving this scholarship from West Chester. It allowed me to live out my dreams and grow both academically and personally in ways I could never have imagined before studying abroad. Sevilla now holds a huge piece of my heart and I am forever thankful for having the opportunity to live in this amazing city.