

The World as a Classroom

*International and Study Abroad Students
Learn and Grow Away from Home*



Photo by: Kristina Elise Furuseth

Andy Furuseth '23

“I’m learning a lot about people and myself,” said Andy Furuseth '23, an international student from Norway who is majoring in finance. “More than just learning the language and the curriculum, it’s about learning to understand different people with different backgrounds.”

Furuseth sees his studies at Mercy as opening all kinds of possibilities for his career: “I know a lot more now about what people actually do when they’re working with financial markets. The professors here at Mercy have a

great understanding of the academics and also relevant experience from the business world. Just being here in New York City and getting to know professors with really good professional networks, it’s a huge benefit.”

Furuseth and more than 200 other international students from 60 countries are currently pursuing degrees at Mercy College. In addition, dozens of Mercy students study abroad in 11 countries every year, and dozens of students come to Mercy from other countries to study abroad in the U.S.

Marques McKinney '23, a finance and data analytics major, described his experience studying abroad in Madrid, Spain, as "...life-changing and fantastic. It taught me how to be independent and self-sufficient. And it made me a better person. There's something about learning from other people who are different from you and then applying those experiences to your own life."



Marques McKinney '23

And even just a semester abroad has influenced his post-graduation career plans: "I want to go into the banking world, and now I'm being more purposeful about not limiting myself to only U.S. opportunities."

Mercy's Department of International Student Services is a central pillar of the support that the College provides for international students and study abroad students. Through group workshops and one-on-one advising, the department helps students navigate Mercy and partner institutions and ensures that students understand how to maintain their immigration status. For international students and study abroad students who come to Mercy, the department gives guidance on everything from immigration and cultural acclimation to getting a social security number and applying for employment. For Mercy students who are studying abroad, the department provides guidance in securing visas, determining funding options such as scholarships and grants and enrolling in classes at partner institutions.



Bogdana Vladescu '99, M.B.A. '03, Ed.D.

"I'm very passionate about giving our students global opportunities both inside and outside the curriculum where they can really expand their horizons, grow as individuals and develop the cross-cultural competencies that employers are looking for," said Bogdana Vladescu '99, M.B.A. '03, Ed.D., senior director of International Student Services.

The department aims to provide meaningful cross-cultural experiences for both American students — especially those who cannot study abroad — and international students by setting up networking opportunities.

Vladescu knows the challenges and joys of coming to Mercy from abroad. In the 1990s, she was recruited to study at Mercy by Paul Thaler — then director of Mercy's journalism and media program — when he visited her high school in Bucharest, Romania, while traveling on a Fulbright Scholar grant to promote democracy and authentic journalism. He inspired her to choose Mercy, and when she arrived in the United States, "Mercy immediately felt like home to me," Vladescu said. "I absolutely loved my professors, and the staff were so welcoming."

After earning a bachelor's degree in journalism and

media, Vladescu worked in broadcast journalism for a few years before returning to Mercy to work in a variety of capacities over the years ranging from international admissions to academic affairs to her current role in international education. She earned a Master's in Business Administration from Mercy and later an Ed.D. in international studies from Nova Southeastern University.

"I like to joke that when I took over the international department, I came full circle," she said. "I've always had international education in my heart, even while working in other capacities in higher education." In addition to leading international education services, Vladescu teaches courses on globalization at Mercy.

Yaqueline Flores '23, a finance and marketing major who studied abroad in Athens, Greece, relied on Mercy's Department of International Support Services for support both before she left for Greece and while abroad.



Yaqueline Flores '23

"They were responsive and knowledgeable," she explained. "It was a huge help and a huge relief knowing that I still had support back at Mercy while abroad."

Flores reflected on the personal growth that resulted from being away from home for a semester: "It bettered me as a person and made me more independent. It made me grow and take on my daily life completely differently. I'm a commuter student, so I never got to 'go away to college' before studying abroad. When I got back, my family told me that I'd grown more mature."

Dulok Nayeem '26, an international student from Bangladesh who is majoring in computer science, also sees his own growth in studying

far from home: "I had to start 'adulting' after getting here. I've never had a bank account before and just going to the bank to set one up felt super scary, but I did it. I've also become more politically aware and active. In Bangladesh, I avoided politics because it felt like nothing would change, but here, I don't feel as hopeless about politics. I realized that people have to come together at a grassroots level and fight for the smaller changes that can lead to bigger changes."



Dulok Nayeem '26

Every student described studying in another country — either as an international student at Mercy or studying abroad for a semester — as a life-changing decision. "Studying abroad is one of the most beautiful things you could ever do," said Flores. "Life felt enhanced while I was abroad, and I appreciated every single little thing. Even just going to the grocery store was an adventure. I'll keep these memories forever."