

DISPATCH *from* ABROAD



IT HAS BEEN A BUSY TIME as we close out the fall semester at the American College of the Mediterranean (ACM), and I have been traveling extensively. I was recently at our branch campus in Barcelona and then flew to the United States for a conference in Boston. I then went on to our US office in San Diego.

I am now in Marrakesh visiting our campus here.

ACM is based in Aix-en-Provence in France with satellite campuses in Italy, Morocco, and Spain. We offer an American-style liberal education and serve both degree-seeking students and study-abroad visitors. ACM is currently recognized as a higher education institute in France and is working toward full US accreditation. We leverage our Mediterranean setting for direct cultural and historical learning, providing unique field studies, site-specific programs, and internships. Students develop critical thinking about complex global challenges, including race, class, and gender in Europe and North Africa.

I am honored to offer further insights into what makes ACM unique and to share some reflections on the importance of the study of languages and cultures. ACM's focus on creating globally minded citizens is more crucial today than ever before because we as a local and global society must demand much more of our leaders. — Carl Jubran, president, *The American College of the Mediterranean*, December 2025



La Ville aux Mille Fontaines

ACM is an urban campus situated in the historic center of Aix-en-Provence, which is famous for its many fountains. The college's buildings and facilities date back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Romans founded the city in 122 BCE.



Diplomatic beginnings

ACM started out as the Institute for American Universities (IAU). Founded by US academics and diplomats in 1957 during the Cold War, IAU aimed to train Americans for foreign service careers, focusing on political science and diplomacy. This history underpins ACM's master's in international relations and the college's overall focus on global issues, conflict resolution, and developing leaders for international careers.

In this moment of political extremism and other world challenges, we must expand study abroad to more students in order to strengthen diplomacy and international understanding and work toward peaceful coexistence.



Who *Carl Jubran*
 Title *President, The American College of the Mediterranean*

A pioneer of study abroad: IAU was among the first to offer extensive English-language, liberal arts programs for US students in Europe, extending beyond language study. ACM continues this legacy with IAU now serving as ACM's study abroad provider and by offering a range of undergraduate and graduate degrees, from art history and international business to peace and conflict studies and even wine studies.



International collaboration: IAU's early membership in the Association of American International Colleges and Universities connected it with other prestigious institutions striving to offer quality American higher education outside the United States. ACM remains part of this network, sharing resources, upholding high standards for American education globally, and integrating students into a broader academic community.



Global citizenship is an intensive engagement with at least one other culture that allows you to develop transferable cultural competencies to better understand the interconnectedness of our world today. It is not a destination but a continuous journey.



More than 50% of ACM students engage with at least two languages and study in at least two ACM Mediterranean locations.



Study abroad is more important than ever. While the internet connects us, it can't replace the deep cultural immersion needed to truly understand different worldviews and overcome biases. Study abroad programs move students beyond textbooks and their comfort zones to a firsthand understanding of diverse customs. Students develop the skills and mindset to not just live in but to actively lead and innovate within a complex, interconnected world. Companies operate globally, needing employees who can work with international partners, understand diverse markets, and leverage global talent.

Less than 9% of US students study abroad, according to the most recent data from the Institute of International Education.



35% of the 2,800 students who attend ACM each year are international. Besides those from France, current students hail from countries including Brazil, China, Mexico, Morocco, Israel, Palestine, Georgia, Peru, England, Spain, Germany, Chile, Lebanon, and Vietnam. ACM offers flexible, individualized curricula, allowing students to design their own majors or minors, fitting personal goals and interests.

70% of the faculty are international. A diverse group from France, the United States, Spain, Italy, Morocco, Israel, Palestine, England, Iraq, Egypt, and Germany, faculty members include diplomats, artists, and journalists who bring real-world context to studies on global issues, identity, and culture.

The work ahead: Colleges and universities internationally are already working together to promote cross-cultural study, but the opportunities are often limited to a select few students who can afford the privilege and luxury of a high-quality international education. We need to invest more resources in increasing student mobility from one country to another. However, recent Trump administration policies are hindering international students from studying in the United States. New enrollments of foreign students studying in the US dropped by 17 percent between the 2024–25 and 2025–26 academic years, according to the Institute of International Education. Next academic year, foreign student enrollment is expected to drop another 20 percent.



In response, we are encouraging students to join us at ACM where they can still live and learn in the tradition of the American liberal arts model with US students as well as students from other countries. We are currently at a historic 73 percent discount rate on tuition for undergraduate and graduate degree programs. We have created access programs for study abroad students from partner institutions with high numbers of Pell Grant students and first-generation students. But it is incumbent upon all of us in higher ed to seek new and innovative ways for students to study beyond their home countries. [IU](#)



Parlez vous...? All ACM students are expected to graduate with at least a high intermediate proficiency in French, Spanish, Italian, or Arabic. ACM has a one-year residency requirement, during which students live with a host family. Other intensive language study throughout the undergraduate experience includes field studies and internships in the target language.