

# STUDY SUMMER 2023 STUDENT REFLECTIONS ABROAD



**MY NAME IS ZUNAIRA NAEEM, AND I AM A JUNIOR CONCENTRATING IN BIOLOGY AT ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY.** I am from Pakistan, and I enjoy traveling and discovering new locations. This summer I studied abroad in Europe through a program coordinated by Dr. Nneka Nora Osakwe, a professor of English at Albany State University. Dr. Osakwe also led the study abroad class I enrolled in as part of my program, a special topics course on intercultural communications. We visited the places I've always wanted to see in Europe, including London, Paris, Florence, Rome, and Assisi.

The first city we visited as part of our cultural study was London, which is known for its multiculturalism, with people from various backgrounds, values, and beliefs. Some of the places we visited in London were Piccadilly Circus, Buckingham Palace, and Windsor Castle. We tried the famous fish and chips, which were so delicious. We also went to see the musical "Wicked," which was my first theatre show. In France, while exploring, I tried the famous thing France is known for—the pastries—and the interesting and positive fact is that they weren't sweet at all, which surprised me. The last country we visited during our study abroad trip was Italy. In Italy, we went to Florence, Rome, Assisi, and a surprise visit from the tour guide to Pisa. Trying authentic Italian dishes and visiting local markets teaches one about the importance of food culture, the art of cooking, and the significance of sharing meals with loved ones. I tried pasta one day, and it was so delicious that I am still craving for that fresh pasta.

Another interesting experience is that being a Muslim I have always wanted to visit a church, and I did just that on this cultural study abroad program. We went to the Cathedral Square, and the visit taught me about the importance of accepting those of other faiths. The surprise we got on our last day in Rome was tasting some gelatos, the famous Italian style ice cream, which was just mind blowing. My favorite place in Italy was the Colosseum, which was so old but still looked so modern and clean that it felt like it was just built recently. This study abroad trip provided me with many cultural lessons for my personal life, my future, and my career. The program had a great positive impact on me, made me more patient, and taught me how to work with different people from all around the world and to accept them for who they are, despite any cultural or religious differences.

