

Study Abroad and International Week
help students engage with ideas

Creating enlightened citizens of the world

BY JIM HEFFERNAN ('96) AND MICHELLE HITE ('88)

"JMU is serious about wanting students to be engaged with ideas and the world to learn how to be citizens, not just in the United States, but also citizens in a global community and participants in a global economy," says JMU President Jonathan R. Alger. "I really do believe that study abroad should be a necessity and not a luxury for an institution like JMU. If

we're serious about wanting students to be engaged with ideas and with the world, there's no substitute for this kind of experience. Study abroad opens the door to the rest of the world for our students. At James Madison, we encourage our students to see the world and to participate actively in it. I think that is a very exciting combination for any student."

In July Alger visited faculty members and students participating in JMU's Study Abroad programs in Florence, Italy; Salamanca, Spain; and London. "I am impressed with how organized our Study Abroad programs are," says Alger. "We have staff and faculty on the ground in these cities who know the local culture and have valuable contacts with local universities in

'At James Madison, we encourage our students to see the world and to participate actively in it. I think that is a very exciting combination for any student.'

— JONATHAN R. ALGER, President



JMU also brings the world to campus every September.

For 16 years, JMU has sponsored International Week and celebrated cultural diversity. This year, the JMU Office of International Programs presented International Week, Sept. 23–27 with the theme “Borders and Boundaries.”

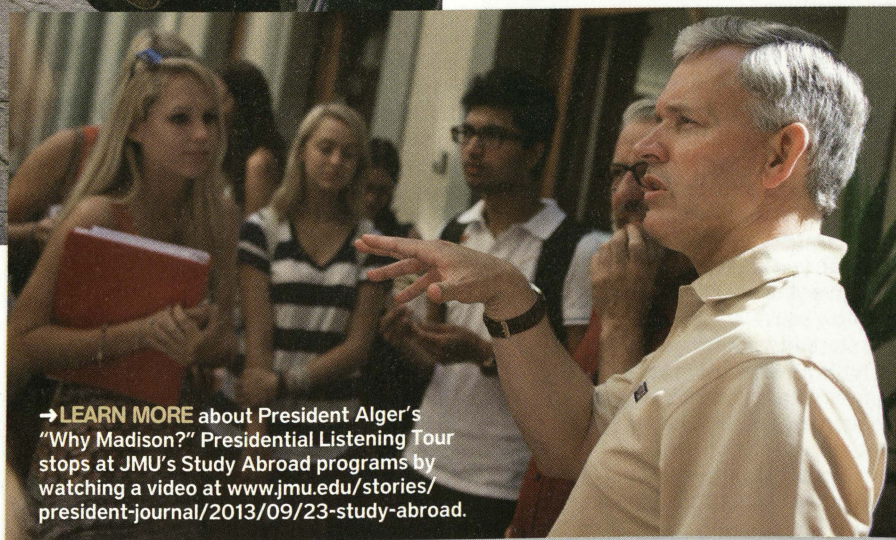
International Week 2013 was designed to emphasize ideas that span countries and cultures. “At first glance, ‘Borders and Boundaries’ does introduce an idea that relates to barriers that exist in the world,” explains Lauren Franson, assistant director of JMU Study Abroad. “The planning committee’s goal was to design a week that would help participants to transcend these barriers.”

International Week 2013 events explored the historical, cultural and social constructs that create barriers. Students were offered opportunities to engage in discussions related to political change, social movements and appreciation of the differences that these borders and boundaries create.

One of the community discussions, “The Ethics of National Borders,” was moderated by William J. Hawk, JMU professor of philosophy and chair of the leadership team for The Madison Collaborative: Ethical Reasoning in Action, JMU’s bold new effort to teach ethical reasoning skills to the entire student body.

The week kicked off with a bazaar on The Commons with street vendors, exhibits and a sampling of world cuisine. Other events included a public debate hosted by the JMU Debate Society, the annual Study Abroad fair, a concert in the Forbes Center featuring JMU faculty and student musicians, a photo contest and a world cup soccer tournament. **M**

these countries. Many of our Study Abroad programs have been active for more than 20 years. JMU Study Abroad programs offer something for all students; so, students from all different majors and disciplines and interests can get something wonderful out of one of these programs. JMU students gain a clearer picture of their places as citizens in an increasingly complex global community.”



→ LEARN MORE about President Alger’s “Why Madison?” Presidential Listening Tour stops at JMU’s Study Abroad programs by watching a video at www.jmu.edu/stories/president-journal/2013/09/23-study-abroad.