

# kylegarner

Aix-en-Provence,  
France

**KYLE'S MAJOR(S):** French, German and Spanish

**YEAR/TERM ABROAD:** academic year 2001-2002

**REASON YOU CHOSE THIS PROGRAM:** I knew that I wanted to spend the most amount of time abroad to better absorb the language and culture. It fits with what I want to study.

**FAVORITE CLASSES:** Creole and German

**BEST MEMORY:** Christmas Day. There were several foreign students who stayed in the dorm, including myself. Everyone cooked something from their own country, and it was our Christmas dinner; it was neat. And we danced all afternoon.

**GREATEST CHALLENGE:** Myself, fearing that my language wasn't good enough.

**BIGGEST SURPRISE:** That there were no seats on the toilets, and the bathrooms in general. They were co-ed — the showers had stalls, but it was still a bit weird at times, but you got used to it.

**WHAT I WISH I KNEW BEFORE I LEFT:** I wish I personally did not have a tendency to jump to conclusions, especially with 9/11 going on at the time. There are many North African immigrants in France, and I let 9/11 impact the way I saw that group. I think I could have handled that better personally, maybe try to seek out those people and talk to them more.

**EXPERIENCES WITH CULTURE SHOCK OR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK:** I feel like going there, there was no culture shock, but coming back, there was. Over there, they are much more politically aware, and politics is often a topic of conversation among friends. Here, you don't talk about it that much with your friends.

**GOING ABROAD VS. STAYING ON CAMPUS, DISCUSS:** No question — definitely go abroad. I think people have various reasons to go. Going abroad to me was definitely academically sound. You don't know how things are until you go through it, and now, I can't imagine not having done it. Being a language major, it's just much more practical.

“Studying abroad affects your world view. It opens your mind up to a lot of possibilities *it's a confidence-builder, but it's not all roses. But sometimes it is.*”

**ADVICE TO FUTURE STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS:** Just don't be afraid to be yourself. Try new things and don't limit yourself.



■ Kyle Garner enjoys the scenery of Les Calanques, an area near Marseilles he and his friends would often frequent on their weekend trips. Since his return to the US, Garner has found that he has more patience and tries to be more reflective and more understanding of where people are coming from.