



Student Quotes Aix Spring 2011

OVERALL AUCP EXPERIENCE

I am immensely satisfied with my choice of the AUCP program. The classes were interesting and enriching, and the professors and staff so kind and helpful. My language partner made me feel like a real part of the French community. I learned so much and was so happy and comfortable in my French homestay family, and my volunteering in a class of 6 year olds and hiking club, were enjoyable and involved me in the community. I have learned so much, grown as a person, and have had an incredible time doing it.

*Grace Thompson, **Franklin & Marshall College***

AUCP made my time here in Provence extremely fulfilling. The program guides you and provides you with as many activities as possible to immerse you in French culture. You feel a part of your surroundings and by the time you leave, you will feel like you will have changed skins for a while.

*Lauren Mermelstein, **Ursinus College***

Overall, AUCP has been an excellent experience. I really feel as though I have benefited greatly from this program.

*Virginia Rhomberg, **Rhodes College***

My AUCP experience in general was very fun and amazing. I do not think I could have had the same great experience without the opportunity of being in a cultural immersion program.

*Sue-Jean Sylvia Yu, **Ursinus***

I'm really glad I chose this program. The other students were amazing, and having a really motivated group of classmates helped push me to do better. The field trips and excursions were great as well – they helped us get to know places in Provence that I wouldn't have been able to see otherwise.

*Melissa Benhaim, **Cornell University***

The AUCP system challenges you to adapt and immerse yourself in French culture. You may only stay in France for a semester, but your experiences here will certainly stay with you for a lifetime.

*Jon Selzer, **Oberlin College***

Although it was very challenging at times, I got a much more comprehensive, extensive, and hands-on look at French culture than I could have anywhere else. Through AUCP, I was able to create lasting ties here in France with the people I met. I am very glad that I chose this program!

*Annie Harper, **Rhodes College***

Great!

*Angelica Canizares, **Oberlin College***

The AUCP experience was a lot of fun and incredibly difficult. However, those two qualities made it a great program. I'm leaving feeling like I've learned so much while still having an ideal semester abroad.

Gillian Dryjanski, **Grinnell College**

My goal for this program was to learn French, and I think AUCP helped me achieve this goal better than any other program could have. Studying abroad is incredibly stressful, but I had a lot of fun and cry every time I think about learning France...

Eva Valenti, **Scripps College**

My experience was difficult at times, but overall very rewarding.

Katherine Ferraro, **Grinnell College**

I loved it! It might have been hard at times (homesickness, etc.) but we lived in a beautiful setting and got to live something quite amazing.

Lena Enzlinger, **Barnard College**

SETTING

Aix is very pretty, quaint, and stylish. It's a college town full of young, fun, attractive people, which makes the nightlife and making French friends much easier...

Eva Valenti, **Scripps College**

There is no city quite like Aix. It is a blend of sights, sounds, and people. It is a city that pleases all of the senses. Somehow... you know that this city is unique and there isn't any other quite like it. It is beautiful, historic, lively, quaint, vibrant...

Lauren Mermelstein, **Ursinus College**

Aix-en-Provence was the perfect destination for my study abroad experience. Aix has a slower pace and safer atmosphere than a bigger city, but just as much to offer culturally.

Meredith Acocella, **Tulane University**

Aix is a great place to spend a semester – it is not too big or too small. I was able to feel comfortable here and still find new things to do and see. The weather is also beautiful!

Cecily Wegmann, **Grinnell College**

Aix-en-Provence is the perfect study abroad setting. Filled with shops, cafés, fountains, and restaurants, there is never a lack of things to do. Aix isn't far from the mountains or the beach, and is right in the heart of one of the most beautiful places in France – Provence. The sunny days, friendly people, and beautiful weather can only add to the enjoyment of the study abroad experience.

Grace Thompson, **Franklin & Marshall College**

Beautiful! My favourite thing about Aix is that you can be lost, but never really be lost. Just keep walking, and you'll find where you're going!

Angelica Canizares, **Oberlin College**

Aix-en-Provence is the perfect city – small enough that you can walk everywhere, but big enough that there is plenty to do – lots of cafés, restaurants, and shops. I couldn't be happier with my decision to study abroad in Aix.

Virginia Rhomberg, **Rhodes College**

A beautiful town that's a happy medium – not too large, not too small, with lots of students and a vibrant nightlife, plus lots to do as far as cultural and leisure activities. It's also really easy to get from Aix to other areas in the region, which is great for taking day trips.

Melissa Benhaim, **Cornell University**

I don't think people who were born in Aix understand how beautiful it truly is. Particularly in spring, the town is just stunning, with its renowned eternal sunshine, trees in bloom and charming, but confusing maze of streets.

Gillian Dryjanski, **Grinnell College**

Aix is great! I loved being surrounded by a community. It's like having a support group at all times, or professors that are of all ages and with whom you can talk about anything. Aix was a really nice place to live too because you can walk everywhere. And there's great shopping, food, night-life – everything you need.

*Torrey Luttrell, **Rice University***

Aix is the perfect size for a study abroad program. Not too tiny, but totally manageable.

*Katherine Ferraro, **Grinnell College***

Beautiful, small, quaint, a bit expensive, but that is most everywhere.

*Lena Enzminger, **Barnard College***

Aix is the perfect place for this program. It is beautiful and typically French. It has a metropolitan feel without the overwhelming size of a city like Paris. And it's status as a university town makes it a great place to meet French students our age.

*Annie Harper, **Rhodes College***

INDIVIDUAL FRENCH HOMESTAY

My homestay was absolutely the key element in my French language education, as it gave me the chance to have full-length conversations in 100% French, every day. It was definitely challenging at times, but it taught me a huge amount about French culture and was ultimately a great learning experience.

*Eva Valenti, **Scripps College***

Being placed into the home of a French family gave me insight into the French culture that I couldn't have acquired any other way. I could see how the French live, eat, and act, practice my French speaking with my family, and I was accepted into their family and cared for as if I was their daughter.

*Grace Thompson, **Franklin & Marshall College***

The homestay is such an important part of the abroad experience. Living with someone from the area immerses you into the culture immediately and lets you experience a much more personal Provence culture.

*Lauren Mermelstein, **Ursinus College***

The homestay was by far the richest and most helpful aspect of my time in Aix. I feel I learned the most by spending time and talking with my host Mom. I am certain I will remain close with my host family long after I leave.

*Cecily Wegmann, **Grinnell College***

The homestay is an incomparable way to get to know French people and their ways of life. It also definitely helped my language skills. I became much more confident as a speaker thanks to my host family. AUCP also really makes an effort to match you with a family that corresponds to your needs and interests.

*Melissa Benhaim, **Cornell University***

My homestay was the very best part of my semester!

*Katherine Ferraro, **Grinnell College***

I was worried about staying with a host family at first, but once I arrived they were amazingly nice. I definitely could not have had such a great experience in France without them. Although my French friends showed me around Aix, my family showed me around the region and helped me really feel integrated into French life.

*Sue-Jean Sylvia Yu, **Ursinus***

The homestay will benefit your French immensely. Although challenging and intimidating, it forces you to become comfortable with the language and the culture.

Gillian Dryjanski, **Grinnell College**

Living with a French family is the best way to really understand the French culture. I really enjoyed getting to know my family and hope to keep in touch for a long time.

Virginia Rhomberg, **Rhodes College**

A French homestay is the only way to get a legitimate French experience. Eating dinner with my host family every night while the French news played in the background is something I would never trade.

Meredith Acocella, **Tulane University**

It was nice to come home to a home-cooked meal after a late soccer practice or whatever had kept me out.

Torrey Luttrell, **Rice University**

My French family was lovely and so helpful! I'm so glad I did it. I had a "French" home and I can really say "I lived in France".

Angelica Canizares, **Oberlin College**

I attribute the biggest part of my language improvement, as well as my cultural comprehension, to my experience with my French host family. My host parents were so welcoming and it was wonderful to have such a comfortable environment to call home during this overwhelming experience.

Annie Harper, **Rhodes College**

COMMUNITY SERVICE

As a unique aspect of AUCP, I found the volunteer aspect to be a draw to the program. Working at a local Catholic school gave me a unique view into a part of France that I might not have otherwise experienced.

Gillian Dryjanski, **Grinnell College**

I volunteered as an English teacher's helper in a middle school. I had three girls who were very interested in American culture and I was able to tell them all about it. This was a very memorable experience that I will always treasure!

Virginia Rhomberg, **Rhodes College**

The community service lets you have even more extended interaction with the people of Provence. Also, you feel like you are giving a little something back to the area that has been kind enough to host you.

Lauren Mermelstein, **Ursinus College**

My community service activity helped me learn a lot about French culture, in particular the education system. Additionally, I met new and interesting people that I would not have had the chance to meet any other way.

Cecily Wegmann, **Grinnell College**

This was a new experience where we got to speak French. I was at the French Red Cross, which opened my eyes to a different side of Aixois society.

Lena Enzlinger, **Barnard College**

It helped me develop skills I didn't know I had – creativity, patience, an ability to teach.

Melissa Benhaim, **Cornell University**

Through my volunteering in a class of 6 year-olds at a local Catholic school, I received insight into the French schooling system, and was able to be integrated into the community in Aix.

Grace Thompson, **Franklin & Marshall College**

The volunteer work didn't feel like work to me. I bonded with the students I taught, who were so cute, and I ended up really getting to know them. I was so sad when I had to say goodbye!

*Torrey Luttrell, **Rice University***

For my community service, I met with an older French woman each week. It was a great way to practice speaking, as well as become more immersed in the Aix community.

*Annie Harper, **Rhodes College***

I worked in a school, so I had contact with a section of the French people that I wouldn't have had otherwise.

*Katherine Ferraro, **Grinnell College***

The community service is a great way to be involved in the community of Aix-en-Provence. It offers another way to see French culture and society in action. Whatever your work – as a tutor, or at a nursing home, it's a great opportunity to further immerse yourself in a more functional aspect of the culture here.

*Jon Selzer, **Oberlin College***

Community service here for me was very interesting. I had a chance to help high school and middle school students with their homework or English after school and it was very nice to be able to see the culture from this side of the youth.

*Sue-Jean Sylvia Yu, **Ursinus***

LANGUAGE PARTNER

Language partners are a terrific part of the program. They ended up being so much fun! Even more than that, I was able to make true friends here. That is a truly invaluable experience.

*Gillian Dryjanski, **Grinnell College***

The network of language partners was a great way to meet young French people, as well as get to know the life of a French college student, which is often different than what we are used to in the US.

*Annie Harper, **Rhodes College***

My language partners introduced me to their friends and helped me feel more comfortable in Aix. I was able to ask questions about French culture and gain insight in a casual setting.

*Melissa Benhaim, **Cornell University***

The language partners were an easy way to make French friends and integrate into French social life. We spent a lot of time with our partners; having coffee; dinner, drinks and going out.

*Cecily Wegmann, **Grinnell College***

I had a great time with my language partners. I got to know more about Aix quickly and learned more about the current language. It was great being able to get my ears used to young French people.

*Sue-Jean Sylvia Yu, **Ursinus***

My language partners were tons of fun. They were especially useful when it came to learning slang and more informal French styles

*Eva Valenti, **Scripps College***

This is one of your most important parts of the cultural exchange because it is the direct link to the youth culture of Aix and enables you to bond with other French students.

*Lauren Mermelstein, **Ursinus College***

Having a language partner allowed me to both practice my French speaking skills and feel like a citizen of Aix. My language partner and I had so much fun together, and through him I could

experience more of the town, and because of him and his friends I didn't feel like a "stranger" in this city at all.

Grace Thompson, Franklin & Marshall College

Language partners are not only a great way to learn how young French people actually talk, they're also a great "in" into the culture and life in Aix. I met a lot of people and did a lot of cool things through the language partners.

Torrey Luttrell, Rice University

It was so nice to have a French person our age to hang out with.

Virginia Rhomberg, Rhodes College

My language partner was an important resource.

Katherine Ferraro, Grinnell College

PERSONAL INTEREST ACTIVITY

Choosing a club or another activity is yet another way of getting yourself into the culture, while giving you time to disengage and relax when things become overwhelming. I was in a chorus because I love to sing and it was a good way to relax after a long day. I was also in a hiking club, something I had never done, but it allowed me to experience the beauty of Provence first-hand.

Lauren Mermelstein, Ursinus College

I chose to join a yoga class here in Aix. I enjoy yoga at home, and I thought it would be a good way to meet French people outside of AUCP's planned programs. It was a great way to unwind during the week!

Annie Harper, Rhodes College

I loved my club. My instructors didn't know English, so I learned a new skill entirely in French! It helped me get to know more French people, and I'm really happy to have something tangible of my club to bring home.

Melissa Benhaim, Cornell University

As a participant in the volleyball team at *l'Université des Arts et Métiers*, I was able to both play a sport I love, and meet new people. If you can find an activity that suits you, the personal interest activity can be a great addition to your time in Aix.

Gillian Dryjanski, Grinnell College

My hiking club was a great way to see the beautiful mountains and landscapes in Provence, enjoy the incredible weather, and interact with people from Aix.

Grace Thompson, Franklin & Marshall College

Although it was hard to find a women's soccer team for my age in Aix ..., I found a team in Gardanne. The girls I met there were great, my coach paid my entrance fee – everyone genuinely welcomed me onto the team.

Torrey Luttrell, Rice University

I really enjoyed my yoga classes. My professor was very kind and helped me with my French too!

Sue-Jean Sylvia Yu, Ursinus

ACADEMIC PROGRAM/FACULTY

Classes were very enriching, as well as interesting, and I have learned so much. The professors were all engaging and intelligent, as well as kind and always willing to help.

Grace Thompson, Franklin & Marshall College

Having all of my classes in French helped my comprehension skills immensely.

*Melissa Benhaim, **Cornell University***

The professors at the AUCP are the strongest part of the program, in my opinion. They are clearly passionate, engaged, and willing to help. They make the program infinitely better.

*Gillian Dryjanski, **Grinnell College***

With small classes, I felt I was able to establish a pleasant personal relationship with AUCP professors. The class dynamic was wonderful in a smaller setting!

*Meredith Acocella, **Tulane University***

The classes were perfect. The subjects were interesting and I was very happy to have a wide range of classes to choose from. Professors really seemed to care about the students.

*Virginia Rhomberg, **Rhodes College***

AUCP teachers are stimulating and interesting people who like what they are doing and are able to get us interested even though everything is in French.

*Lena Enzlinger, **Barnard College***

Classes were interesting and rewarding. AUCP is home to some very good teachers!

*Katherine Ferraro, **Grinnell College***

I found it easy to adapt to the classes because they were small, like what I already know back at my school at home. All of the teachers are great! They are all helpful and available.

*Lauren Mermelstein, **Ursinus College***

The classes were interesting and the professors really give you another taste of France in another aspect. Although these courses are uniquely for American students of this program, it has a French structure that really helps one understand the culture. All the professors and faculty are so kind and funny and make the semester amazing during our stay at AUCP.

*Sue-Jean Sylvia Yu, **Ursinus***

Since most of the professors I had at AUCP were French university professors, I got a really good feel for what the French classroom experience is like. They all took a very personal interest in our learning and improvement!

*Annie Harper, **Rhodes College***

It was helpful to be taking intensive French classes and be living with a host family at the same time – to be able to immediately apply what I was learning.

*Cecily Wegmann, **Grinnell College***