



CASA GRANADA ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



BROWN



Consortium for
Advanced Studies Abroad

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Located at the heart of the prestigious University of Granada, CASA Granada offers academic programs for students at all levels of Spanish language proficiency, from beginner to bilingual. Through intentional and innovative programming, students are encouraged to engage with the local and university communities in meaningful and collaborative ways and to reflect on their roles as global citizens. The city's beauty, both natural and monumental, its manageable size and welcoming atmosphere, all provide the perfect environment for language immersion and personal growth.

AT-A-GLANCE

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Students with any level of Spanish are accommodated by one of five different academic programs, from beginner to advanced, at University of Granada and the University's Modern Language Center.

STEM RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS & VOLUNTEERING

Unique hands-on internships are available at cutting edge research labs across the University of Granada for students in STEM fields. New volunteering sites are added every year to give students access to meaningful work with local communities.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Among the wide variety of carefully planned excursions and activities, new experiences were added in both semesters connecting students to the realities of agriculture in Andalucía (fall) and to the moving story of an artist who creates masterpieces with discarded plastics (spring).

FEATURE STORY

Inclusion and belonging in action. Two events take place, one long-awaited and the other unexpected, and give everyone involved an opportunity to be seen and heard.

LOOKING AHEAD

Based on extensive staff training during the past year, priorities for 2025-2026 include new community-building initiatives that foster inclusion and connection.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Students are able to choose among five academic programs according to their level of Spanish language proficiency and their specific goals.

The **Intensive Spanish Language Program** has proven to be an exceptional opportunity for students arriving with beginner to intermediate levels who wish to rapidly advance their Spanish language skills.

The **Spanish Language and Culture and the Hispanic Studies** programs allow students to take both language and elective classes.

The **University Studies and Translation & Interpreting** programs provide advanced level students with a direct enrollment experience at the University of Granada.

All programs begin with an intensive language course and may be complemented with one of our custom CASA courses and/or a STEM Research Internship.

- *Expert in Immigration Law, Ana Bibang, came down from Madrid to deliver a presentation on the immigrant experience in Spain and the impact of recently implemented changes in the law. Although part of the CASA course, **“Identity, Diversity and Prejudice in Contemporary Spanish Society: A Multidisciplinary Approach,”** the event was open to the whole university community.*
- *Students learned about the importance of local bread bakeries during the years of hunger and participated in a bread-making workshop in small town outside of Granada, as part of the **“Grappling with Spain’s Traumatic Past: The Spanish Civil War, Francoism and Historical Memory”** CASA course in Spring 2025.*
- *According to student feedback, each of these CASA Granada courses gave them the context to understand current Spanish society and their own personal interactions within it.*





Students directly enrolled at the University of Granada took these interesting classes (among others) alongside Spanish and international students:

- Introduction to Ethnomusicology
- Migrations, Interculturality, and Managing Difference
- The History of Sickness and Medicine
- Introduction to Marketing
- Social Anthropology
- Psychology of Social Interaction and of Groups
- Introduction to Social Change
- The Fundamentals of Political Science: Actors and Processes
- The History of Women



25%

Homestays are back on the rise with 25% of Spring '25 students opting for families!

13

the **number of languages** that can be studied in Granada in addition to Spanish.

10

Students spend 10 full days exploring Andalucía on **CASA Granada day trips & excursions**.

#1

UGR's School of Psychology top choice among CASA students in 2024-2025





RESEARCH & VOLUNTEERING

Students at all levels of Spanish can apply to do research or engage in volunteering opportunities. Students volunteer at local schools and various organizations in and around Granada, working closely with the Student Services Coordinator to identify an opportunity that aligns with their interests and their schedules. Students involved in the STEM Research Internships are placed in labs across the University and have the opportunity to be involved in projects related to their general fields of study. Through these hands-on experiences, students gain new skills, vocabulary and contacts.

For several years, and 2024-2025 was no exception, the prestigious **Center for Mind, Brain and Behavior Research (CIMCYC)** has welcomed CASA students to its dynamic research groups via the STEM internship program.

During the early spring of 2025, the **CIMCYC** was designated a “**Maria de Maetzu Unit of Excellence**” by the **Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities**. Among research centers across all scientific fields, the CIMCYC was chosen for its demonstrated international leadership and capacity to significantly contribute to advancing the frontier of knowledge, generate high-impact results, and attract and train talent.

*This recognition places the CIMCYC among **the best scientific centers in Spain**, highlighting the international impact and relevance of their work. On April 1st, H.M. Queen Letizia visited the Mind, Brain and Behavior Research Center to discuss CIMCYC's research excellence and its impact on improving the quality of life and advancing knowledge in psychology and neuroscience.*

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

CASA Granada offers a program of cultural activities that are carefully and intentionally designed to give students the opportunity to engage with significant topics and communities through the local lens. Our excursion destinations are all within Andalucía to provide a deeper understanding of the region's history and its natural beauty and resources. With an increased focus on climate action and sustainability, several of our trips and hands-on activities take students off the beaten path to more remote gems in southern Spain.

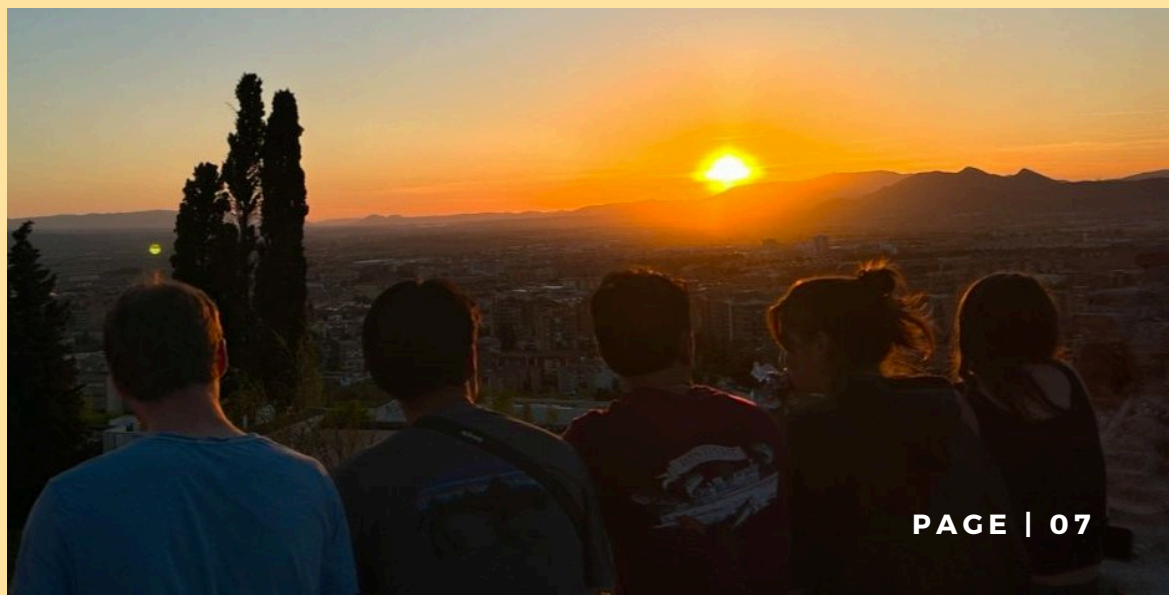
Some of this year's highlights:

- Activities throughout the year included culinary delights such as traditional churros con chocolate and study-break sushi lunches at the CASA Granada Center, group meals at Moroccan and Andalusian restaurants, olive oil tastings at a nearby olive oil factory, and the fabulous Spanish meals the students themselves prepared during cooking classes in Málaga and Jerez de la Frontera. On all occasions, every student's dietary restrictions were carefully taken into consideration and accommodated.
- In one spectacular day, Fall students harvested grapes at a small family-run vineyard and learned about the wine-making process, ate at a farm-to-table restaurant committed to sustainability and protecting their natural environment in hilly Beas de Granada, and visited the nearby Civil War trenches with a knowledgeable reenactment group.





- During our weekend in Cádiz, Spring students spent time in the gallery of a local artist who shared his creative process and his amazing life story with them. [Arsenio Rodríguez](#) transforms discarded plastics that he collects from the beaches, the city and the Sea, into colorful masterpieces. His inspiring work has been displayed in Madrid, Milan and Qatar. Arsenio loved chatting with our students and they loved meeting him!
- Brown University's Associate Provost for Global Engagement and Director of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, Dr. Asabe Poloma, and Director of Global Partnerships & Programs, Adeline Wong, joined the fall group during our Málaga excursion, delighting in the Picasso Museum, the paella workshop, the caves of Nerja, and the company of the CASA students.
- During our spring semester weekend excursion to the remote, white-washed villages nestled in the valleys of La Alpujarra, on the other side of the Sierra Nevada, students enjoyed what could have been a disappointing trip. Rather than let the weather get them down, students made the most of the cozy, country hotel and each other's company, playing board games and singing show tunes, while it rained and snowed (!) outside. It was with this same attitude of appreciation for quiet moments, gratitude and community that spring students celebrated the pause produced by the nation-wide black-out in April (photo below).



Inclusion in Action

In line with our ongoing mission and our specific goals for 2024-2025, inclusion played a critical role in our overall program development and day-to-day operations. Centering our students of all identities, while including the voices and experiences of local partners, educators and community members, as well as those of national experts, CASA Granada provided opportunities throughout the year to engage in important conversations around topics such as immigration, national identity and racism in Spain, as well as, inclusion in international higher education across Europe, among others.



One example was the long-awaited and much-anticipated visit of writer and journalist, Lucía Asué Mbomío Rubio, in April 2025. CASA Granada had originally invited Lucía to speak in the spring of 2020, a plan which was derailed by the Covid pandemic. After subsequent attempts to coordinate a visit from the highly committed activist from Madrid, a date was finally confirmed and we had the pleasure of hosting Lucía and sponsoring a talk on her book, *Hija del Camino*, that was held in the patio of the Centro de Lenguas Modernas and open to the entire University of Granada. Lucía's vision and perspective spoke to many of the students in the audience via the unique avenue of shared experience. The event also provided a rare opportunity for listening and learning to a broad range of participants including local faculty and teachers, study abroad program colleagues and host families. Most significantly, it was an evening of community and connection during which our Black students, and Lucía herself, were seen and heard and, above all, validated. After a full afternoon of back-to-back presentations on identity and racism, Lucía (and the CASA students) enjoyed chatting over tapas at a local restaurant, the perfect end to an amazing day.



Lucía Asué Mbomío Rubio on her experience in Granada:

“Para mí esto no es solo trabajo es una oportunidad de cuidados hacia las generaciones que me suceden....Qué sensación tan buena me ha dejado. A veces una habla o escribe y no sabe a dónde llegan sus palabras ni si llegan siquiera. Qué bonito saber que tantas hijas del camino se han podido encontrar entre las hojas del libro. Muchísimas gracias por organizar algo así.”

At the conclusion of the academic year, CASA Granada Director, Christine Kelly-Vereda, and two program alums, Dani Kaufman-Sedano and Leadra Reeves, presented together at the Global Inclusion Regional Summit in Barcelona, organized by DA Global. The process of establishing and operationalizing the unprecedented CASA Granada Travel Grant that provided the funding for the two alums to participate in the Summit was a creative and intentionally inclusive collaboration with colleagues at Brown University and across Europe. The result was a very successful deep-dive session, “Identity & Inclusion at the Crossroads: Involving Students in the Development of Practical Support Strategies in the European Context,” and an extraordinary and truly meaningful experience for Dani, Leadra and Christine.

These two concrete examples help to illustrate the story of how inclusion continues to show up and evolve at CASA Granada.





LOOKING AHEAD

As we prepare to look ahead, the CASA Granada Team will first be looking back on all that we learned in conferences, workshops and webinars over the past year:

- The Forum's Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA) Conference
- The 2025 Global Respectful Disruption Summit
- The Forum's Regional Seminar "Cultivating Connection: Encouraging Deeper Student Engagement in Popular Education Abroad Destinations"
- Risk Management, Legal, and Practice Considerations at the Intersection of GDPR, PIPL, and US Safety and Equity Laws When Travelling Abroad
- Resilience in Action: Advancing Global Opportunities for All Students Amid Uncertainty
- APUNE-sponsored "A turning point for US Education Abroad"
- Brown Watson Institute-sponsored "Dialogue Across Difference"
- DA Global's Global Inclusion Regional Summit

Via continued engagement with the greater field, and with our host and home institutions, the team looks forward to putting new tools and approaches into practice in the coming year.

2025-2026 GOALS

- Work closely with APUNE and our host institutions to ensure that all students have access to student visas, and facilitate the application process in collaboration with students' home schools.
- Create new spaces for inclusive conversations and improve on existing identity-focused resources.
- Increase efforts to center climate action and sustainability in our program operations and extra-curricular programming.
- Transform the existing Al-Andalus seminar into a credit-bearing, experiential learning-based proseminar for students with all levels of Spanish.
- Deepen collaborations with neighboring centers for Arabic, Chinese and Slavic studies.
- Continue to foster students' personal growth, cultural humility and community-building skills through inclusive support, deep listening and education by example.



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